The Wednesday Wars
Gary Schmidt, 1st ed. 2007
4 corners Pre reading Strategy

Context:
This strategy can be used before reading the book. It will help students relate to issues that are brought up in the text, and understand their own opinions and beliefs about the situations they will see in the book.

Purpose:
This strategy will encourage independent thinking and the formation of opinions. It will also help students to understand that other people have different viewpoints. In addition, because the students must provide some rationale or justification for their choices, it will help them to think through and articulate their thoughts.

Materials Needed: 4 Level of Agreement sheets (100% Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, 100% Disagree), handouts with statements

Time: Approx 30 min

Directions:

STEP 1

Give students the handout with the following statements:

It is important to fit in

Approval from peers and family members matters to me

It is okay to get mad at a friend if you think they have betrayed you, even if you don’t know the whole story

You can usually learn a lot about people just by how they look

It is important to always stick up for your friends, even if it means you lose something valuable
Have students fill out the handout stating whether or not they agree with the statement. Have them provide a rationale for each of their answers.

STEP 2

Set up the room with the 4 levels of agreement papers (100% Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, 100% Disagree). Place one in each corner.

STEP 3

Read each of the questions out loud. Have the students go stand by the sign that matches their answers. Have them look around a bit to see how other students answered the question. Have them discuss their answers with the other people in their group, sharing their rationale for being in the corner.

STEP 4

Have 2 or 3 students from each group explain the rationale for their decision. Tell students to listen to one another, they may move corners as their opinion changes. You can ask students to write down other people’s opinions as well to encourage attentiveness. Discuss that different people have different opinions. We should respect those opinions. Even if we don’t agree, we can still civilly discuss our opinions and the opinions of others to understand where they are coming from. Repeat the process until each statement has been discussed.

STEP 5

Tie the activity into the rest of the unit. Explain to students that they will see similar situations come up while they are reading The Wednesday Wars, and as a class, we will be discussing the characters’ responses to these situations, and these responses and reactions reflect on who we are as individuals.

Assessment:
This activity allows students to start making text to self connections. It also allows students to bring their own unique opinions and experiences to the classroom. In order to insure that each student understood the activity, have them write an exit slip explaining how the activity influenced their opinions.

Ryan Palmer, BYU, 2012
Do You Agree?

Directions: Read the following statements. Decide whether you agree 100%, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree 100%. Once you have decided, circle your answer. Last, write why you feel that way in the space provided.

It is important to fit in

100% Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree 100% Disagree

Explanation:

Approval from peers and family members matters to me

100% Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree 100% Disagree

Explanation:

It is okay to get mad at a friend if you think they have betrayed you, even if you don’t know the whole story

100% Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree 100% Disagree

Explanation:

You can usually learn a lot about people just by how they look

100% Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree 100% Disagree

Explanation:

It is important to always stick up for your friends, even if it means you lose something valuable

100% Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree 100% Disagree

Explanation: