

# Getting Started With Knowledge Building

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## **My Authentic Problem/Challenge:**

I was looking for ways to engage my students into more authentic learning opportunities. Specifically, I was wondering if Knowledge Building could be used as a gateway to focus on 21st century learning skills. I wanted to explore whether Knowledge Building could help students acquire skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation and collaboration

## **Major Goals:**

I had a few goals in mind as I began my journey. Firstly, I wanted to promote the “Thinking Classroom” I was interested in creating a place where students asked questions of one another and then formulated ideas, worked together on them and challenged each other in a non-threatening manner. This connected directly to the next goal that I had which was to build a strong sense of the Classroom as a Community. A place where students learned together with one another and were less focused on competition. In essence, a class that is codependent on each other. I also wanted to shift from a teacher centered to a student centered classroom. I wanted them to advocate for themselves and be in charge of their own learning. Finally, I was interested in focusing on “depth” of learning over “breadth” of learning. I wanted students to take less ideas and go deeper with them as opposed to simply covering more curriculum.

## **Promising Practices:**

What has worked well thus far is establishing co-created norms for our classroom. Not only when it comes to the expectations around Knowledge Building circles, the scaffolds we used and build and the Knowledge Forum expectations but also the idea of learning about what we value and what we cared about. Knowledge Building and Inquiry Based learning have married themselves well in our classroom!

## **Advances and Challenges:**

After several Knowledge Building community circles we noticed that students were well engaged and respectful of one another. In short, they started sounding like adults having real life conversations. A challenge for me as a teacher was to let the conversations go and have students completely drive where the discussions took them. Often times, the main problem of practise (that I had in mind) was deviated from by students and it was difficult not to intervene and take them where I felt they needed to go. A work in progress for me! Another challenge we came across was that students were really good at creating theories but not as good with building on the ideas of others. In short, there was still less focus on idea improvements This came to the forefront when we looked at and analyzed the analytics tool in KF. As a class we deconstructed what we were seeing. Looking at this together as a group actually helped us to realize this and we started noticing a difference (slowly)

## **Reflections and Next Steps:**

Our next steps to focus on Knowledge Building as a way of classroom and to continue to focus on releasing responsibility during KB discussions. Another next step is to encourage others to give it a go KB a go and hare our learning with anyone and everyone! We would also like to use the KF assessment tool together with students and continue to reflect on what we see!