

Overview

The population boom, immigration, and rural families continuing to move into urban centres have taxed the capacity of schools to accommodate students in their immediate area. Not so many years ago, children walked or rode their bikes to their neighbourhood schools. However, increasingly urban centres are building large community schools to accommodate students being bussed or driven from multiple neighbourhoods. As a result, more and more students feel alienated and isolated, like strangers in their schools. A challenge becomes how to create initial and ongoing experiences for new students so they can increasingly feel welcomed; build relationships with their fellow students, teachers, and staff; find their place; and gradually become active members of their school communities.

Design Rationale

Schools are dynamic and potentially vibrant places. We know that if people feel connected and can find their place, they feel valued and accepted. It only takes seconds to make a first impression. As members of our school community, we need to find ways to welcome newcomers. The first experiences of new students with our school need to be positive, welcoming and inclusive. New students enter each year. Many students enter mid-year and back to school activities are completed. The question becomes—how might members of school communities welcome new students, from a variety of cultures, economic backgrounds, and communities in a manner that creates that much needed positive first impression?

Problem Scenario

A new school is opening in your community. The purpose of this school is to accommodate the overflow student population from 10 different suburb communities across the city. Your team has been selected to develop a prototype or a metaphor of a welcoming experience that will create a sense of warmth and acceptance and will help the new students begin to form a sense of connection and acceptance towards the school and its community.

Your team needs to consider how your welcoming experience(s) will address the issues of sustainability, cost, time, and cultural sensitivity, while creating a long-lasting, positive impact on the new students, regardless of when they first visit the school.

Your welcoming experience must satisfy at least two of the following criteria:

- Be a tangible item that the new students can take home at the end of the day and that will serve a purpose
- Be enjoyable and engaging for new students (Grades 7–12)
- Be reflective of the school culture, mission, and vision
- Develop a sense of belonging and/or connection to the school community
- Foster a connection with classmates

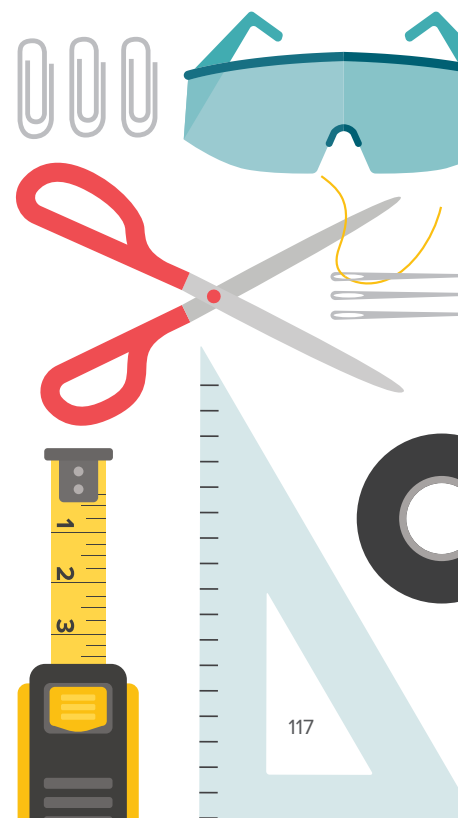


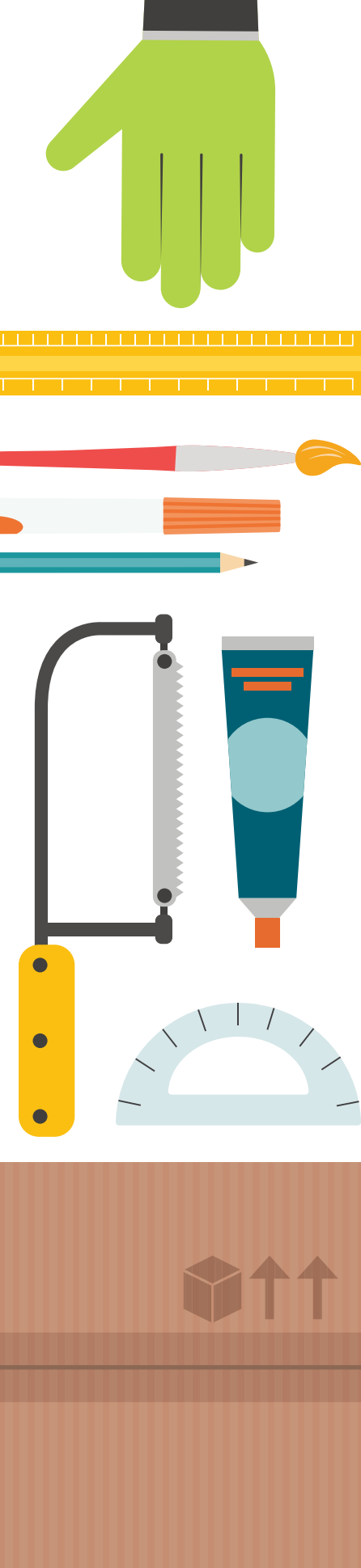
Suggested Grade Level

Grades 7–12

Suggested Subject Area

- Citizenship—including school culture / community
- ADST
- Social Studies





Success Determinants

Success will be determined by:

- ☐ Ability of your item to help the user establish a connection
- ☐ Alignment of the prototype or metaphor with the design sketch
- ☐ Alignment to design motto: “Make it smaller, stronger, do more, be easier to use, be cheaper, be clean, be greener.”
- ☐ Degree to which it is adaptable to all users
- ☐ Degree to which it is culturally inclusive
- ☐ Functionality
- ☐ Uniqueness
- ☐ Usability

Parameters

- ☐ You may use the tools provided to you in the classroom/pantry.
- ☐ You must complete a display panel, which includes your design thinking sketch, your prototype, your design notes, and your reflections on the activity.
- ☐ You must consider how to make your prototype colourful, intriguing and usable.
- ☐ You must use some of all the items in the participant group kit in some way.