**You Have to Live in Somebody Else’s Country to Understand** – a lesson about migration

Tell students that you’d like to read a poem together written by a child who immigrated to America from Cambodia. Post or distribute copies of the poem, *You Have to Live in Somebody Else’s Country to Understand* by Noy Chou. Ask for volunteers to read each stanza aloud. As a class or in pairs or small groups discuss questions like:

- What is it like for Chou to be an outsider from another country, and to look and sound different from the other children in her new school?
- How do Chou’s new classmates in the U.S. react to her differences? How do they treat her?
- Is it fair for Chou’s teachers and peers to expect her to keep up with everyone else? What do they think about Chou when she can’t keep up?
- Why do you think that some of Chou’s classmates bother or make fun of her when she hasn’t done anything to them? Why do some people choose to hurt rather than help?
- What groups or individuals have you noticed are treated like outsiders in our community?

Tell students that most of us have had the experience of feeling like an outsider—or as Chou says, “an opposite” or “a loser”—for one reason or another. Ask students to reflect on a time when they have felt this way, and talk about it to a partner. They could be asked to record or write a short story or a poem describing the experience and their feelings. Have students title their poems/stories, “You have to ______________ to Understand” (e.g., “You Have to be Adopted to Understand” or “You Have to be Black to Understand”).

When students have completed their writing, ask for volunteers to share their pieces with the class.

Conclude by reinforcing the importance of demonstrating empathy for others and making “outsiders” feel like “insiders” through kindness and friendship.

For homework, ask students to trace their family’s history back as many generations as possible, and record their own origins.