

Name It Reflection

1. There wasn't one specific response that surprised me. I was surprised however to find that I had eerily similar responses to several students considering the generational, cultural and sociological differences. Even more surprising was everyone's willingness to share considering how personal some of the questions were. Even if they didn't go to the board, everyone was participating in a way in which they felt comfortable. Not surprised but really impressed by the maturity and seriousness with which students participated.
2. The most difficult questions for me dealt with the ideas of perception and/or judgements. Questions like "my peers think I'm..." or "my family thinks I'm..." or the most difficult "I think I'm..." are hard for me to answer because I'm so self-critical and afraid of not living up to expectations.
3. Being reflective, I already understood much of this about myself, even my own willingness to share and comfort with modeling. I am always enlightened, or at least reminded by this activity, of the obstacles students face in their lives outside this classroom. I'm reminded of what it's like to be a teen. I'm beginning to understand the struggles of being of color, of living in poverty, of being targeted, and of feeling unwanted.
4. I am a firm believer in the Ethnic Studies practices regarding identity. As a teacher I feel I need to validate individual stories; to recognize students as individuals, to celebrate differences, and to explore multiple perspectives. Activities like this not only force students, and myself, to think critically about themselves and their experience in the world and to collaborate as part of a team that listens and is supportive of the shyest of voices.

