

Strategy: Class quiz with photos

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Description:

1. Collect about 10-12 photographs of different people. Some should be people who are unknown; some should be of people who are well known, whether locally or nationally (but not of anyone present). This should include a good mix of athletes, celebrities, people in the news, local characters, etc.
2. Space the photos apart and hang them around the room. Give each student a stack of Post-its (or a piece of chalk if the photos are hung on blackboards, or tape up pieces of paper near the photos).
3. Instruct the students to walk around the room and observe the photos silently. They will then write on a Post-it note what class they believe the person in the photo belongs to. They will affix their "vote" next to the respective photo and take down additional notes in their notebooks as to why they made the decision they did.
4. The answers will be shared and discussed with the class.

Reflection:

I believe this exercise would get students thinking about their own definitions and stereotypes about class. This will reveal to the instructor and to the students how it is that they perceive class. Explaining the reasoning behind their choice reveals what different things students believe to be related to class, whether it's race, education, occupation, lifestyle, material possessions, appearance, etc. Many ideas can be explored, such as:

How much of class is visible? How much of it has to do with style, condition and brand of clothing, hair, make-up, teeth, glasses, etc.

How much of class has to do with money? Does receiving a million dollar paycheck constitute an elevation in class for a previously working-class athlete? Does Bruce Springsteen still count as working class?

How do we each arrive at our own definitions of class? How do our perceptions vary from the person sitting next to us? Why do we think that is?