

## Narrative Prompts

1. What culture, ethnicity, and/or race do you identify with?
2. How do your culture, ethnicity, and/or race impact your day-to-day life?
3. Have you ever had a moment when you were “jammed” by someone’s presumption of your cultural/ethnic/racial background? If so, can you describe what happened and how it made you feel?
4. How do you think your cultural/ethnic/racial identity will or will not impact your teaching?

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*22, Colombian, Female*

The culture and ethnicity I identify with are Colombian and Caucasian. I was born in Bogota, Colombia and adopted along with my identical twin sister by [my parents]. Both of my parents are white as was the school I attended. I can recall the fact that during my elementary school years I considered myself white. I blended in with all of my classmates and never really thought about the fact that my skin was darker than theirs. White was the norm and so I positioned myself to relate to a culture of power and luxury.

When I was younger my culture and ethnicity did not really impact my day-to-day life. I had routines that I followed but nothing of the rituals practiced by some cultures such as my Colombian heritage. Now that I am a twenty-two year old woman who has attended college, become immersed with different ethnicities, and found my biological mother, my views as to how I identify myself have changed drastically.

Upon the discovery of my mother I found myself researching all I could dig up about my culture. I find however that engaging in an authentic discussion with a “true” Colombian is the only way

to discover rituals and practices. While I struggle to implement these into my daily life I always find myself thinking, “I am privileged”. I cannot truly identify with my people because I am detached in so many ways. I feel extreme guilt for this. This is why I believe I consider myself to be Caucasian sometimes. I have always had the luxury of ignorance. Excluding a couple of times I received negative attention because of my skin tone, I can honestly say I have never been targeted or been the recipient of racist remarks.

I have been “jammed” many times by the presumption of individuals based off my looks and the fact that I am from Colombia. The usual response to one finding out my ethnicity is to assume I am fluent in Spanish and I know how to make the food my culture consumes. I am sometimes labeled as an ethnicity that individuals believe me to be, even before they know. I have received statements that I look Mexican, Puerto Rican, Italian, Peruvian, etc. This has taught me to never assume the ethnicity of an individual but rather to simply ask.

I believe my cultural and ethnic identity will impact my teaching in the sense that I can relate to both Caucasian students and those of other ethnicities. I am the “minority” along with other groups of people who are not identified as white. Diversity has always been a topic of discussion that needs to be implemented in the schools. I believe that people are scared to have these discussions because they are unaware of terms, how to address topics unfamiliar to them, and the simple fact that people can get offended very easily. My goal as an educator is to create a safe environment where these discussions can be held. We are all equal beings that have the right to be different.