

## ■ IDENTITY BOX

Rationale: Identity boxes are a graphic tool that helps students consider the many factors that shape who we are as individuals and as communities. They can be used to deepen students' understanding of themselves and others. Sharing their own identity boxes with peers can help students build relationships and breakdown stereotypes. In this way, identity boxes can be utilized as an effective classroom community-building tool.

### **Step one: Preparation**

Before creating an identity box, you might have the class brainstorm categories we consider when thinking about the question, "Who am I?" such as our role in a family (e.g., daughter, sister, mother, etc), our hobbies and interests (e.g., guitar player, football fan, etc), our background (e.g., religion, race, nationality, hometown, or place of birth), and our physical characteristics.

### **Step two: Students create an identity box for themselves**

People have two identities: what the outside world thinks of us (prescribed identity) and an internal identity (the traits we ascribe to ourselves). To illuminate this concept, students can create an identity box; the inside of the box contains words and images that represent how we describe ourselves, the outside of the box contains words and images that represent how we think others view us. Students can use pictures from magazines, create pictures or labels on their own, or include personal items of their choice.

### **Step three: Students present their identity boxes to their classmates**

Students present their identity box to their classmates. It is appropriate for classmates to ask questions or seek more information at this time. In particular, students should begin to see the differences between external identity and internal identity. They begin to understand the profound impact that external forces have upon an individual's identity.