



Writing Privilege

Critical Reflection About Identity and Privilege

Which of your privileges would you be the most reluctant to lose? First year writing students completed a critical reflection essay answering just that. This was after a 3 week in-class discussion surrounding privilege and how it shapes our lives. Students explored the ideas of privilege related to race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, nationality and more.

See also: [Performing Privilege](#) for acting and directing students performing essays.

Course:	FYW 101 - Writing and Inquiry Spring 2015
Learning Objectives:	A scholarly critical reflection is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge and interpretation of a certain set of readings, and also to reflect personally on them. Self-reflection in this context involves a constant questioning of one's own assumptions, and the ability to analyze and synthesize information to create new perspectives and understanding.
Assignment:	The essays here are critical reflections written by students in my academic writing classes at the University of Tampa. Together, we spent three weeks reading a number of personal essays and mainstream media pieces exploring the notions of identity and privilege. We followed each reading by discussing our own evolving notions of the concepts. Students were then asked to make connections between what they read, what they discussed and how it relates to their own lived experiences.
Assessments:	Students were assessed in regard to their critical skills in reading, thinking and writing; ability to integrate a variety of sources with their own experience; ability to focus in their writing; demonstration of scholarly tone; grasp of MLA style; use of proper grammar; and willingness to workshop and revise.
Instructor:	Gina Vivinetto, Assistant Professor Department: English School: University of Tampa Gina Vivinetto is a longtime journalist and creative writer who has been teaching college writing for the past four years.
Comments:	<p>In the past, my students have been reluctant to discuss issues around race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and so forth. As a result, I went into this critical reflection assignment with modest expectations. However, I was surprised to find that, after they vowed to listen to one another in the spirit of respect and promised to not look for what we called "conversational landmines," my students began to feel safe to share personal anecdotes, ask questions of one another, and admit when they were unsure of how they felt about certain cultural issues.</p> <p>It got pretty intense. Several students came out as LGBT. Others addressed race discrimination they had personally experienced. A handful of brave students disclosed that moving away from their hometowns to come to college had afforded them, for the first time in their lives, opportunities to meet people of different ethnicities, races, sexual orientations and socio-economic groups.</p> <p>To say those discussions and essays that followed went far better than I could have ever dreamed is an understatement. All of us learned from this assignment. It's been powerful.</p>