Social-Emotional Development:
Exploring Our Images of Self

Strands:	*Self*	*Social Interaction*	*Relationships*

GETTING READY

Instructional Component(s): Motivator and/or Connection to Experience; In-Class Activity

Strands: This activity can be used to develop familiarity with and deepen understanding of all strands or the individual strand Self.

Focus: Students explore their own self-concept through imagery and symbolism and then have a chance to explore how values are related to culture and upbringing.

AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THIS ACTIVITY

Students will demonstrate **knowledge** and **skills** that are consistent with an increased understanding and application of the concepts addressed in this activity.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of:
- How they think about and portray their self (*Standards 4 & 6*)*
- How their views of their self can affect how they work with young children (*Standards 4 & 6*)*

Students will be able to:
- Reflect on and portray how they think about their self (*Standards 4 & 6*)*
- Describe how their own image of self impacts their work with young children (*Standards 4 & 6*)*

*See Appendix A

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Before you start

This activity is designed to acquaint students with their own images of self. There might be some students who find exploring perceptions of self to be a difficult, challenging, or uncomfortable exercise. It will be important to prompt the idea that people's identities are rich and complex and that it is normal to have a wide range of conflicting notions about one's own identity and sense of self. It is also important to support the idea that everyone has positive attributes that can be brought to their interactions with others.

Getting it started

Tape some large sheets of paper to the wall. Give students about 20 minutes to individually create pictures, symbols, or words to portray images they have of their self. If students are having difficulty moving forward from this prompt, another way to support self-inquiry is to have them think of symbols or images that answer "Who am I" or complete the sentence "I am . . . ."

While students may narrow their focus to their feelings about these images, encourage the inclusion of the qualities that their images represent, as well as the feelings. One way to include qualities is to start by generating a list of words with the class. You may want to suggest to students that they use this list to stimulate their unique descriptions of self. For example, they might identify with words such as energetic, reflective, hard working, or playful.

This activity has the potential to bring uncomfortable or challenging images of self to the surface. The extent to which you further explore the negative images depends on your level of comfort and experience in facilitating this type of discussion.

Putting it together

Slide 2

Depending on the level of group familiarity, you may ask students to respond to the following questions individually in writing, with a partner, or in a group share.

Ask students to reflect on the drawings or the writings with the following questions:

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- What images do you see?
- What does the image on the paper tell you about self?
- Are there some images that reflect cultural influence or other influences on images of self?

Taking it further

Slide 3

Suggest that our images of ourselves reflect our values. Values are principles or ideas that we think are important and can vary with family or culture. Some values are reliability, honesty, compassion, truth, courtesy, independence, interdependence, flexibility, fairness, practicality, and trustworthiness.

- What are some of the values about self that underlie the images that you and your classmates have drawn?
- What might be some implications of this for your work with young children?

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