

Pre-college Philosophy lesson 1 - Identity

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subjective/perceptual approach (their own identity)

Goal: Introduce students to the nuance of personal identity and how it might be influenced by external factors. Explore the metaphysical being/"soul" aspect of what makes us individuals.

Drawing activity - 5 minutes

What makes up who you are?

activity where they draw/write down what makes them, themselves: have students draw a web map of themselves (what are their interests, identifiers, characteristics, passions, etc)

Discussion - 10 minutes

What things about yourself did you include? What did you exclude? Why?

How do you differentiate someone else with the same characteristics?

What makes you corporeally yourself?

Potential hypotheticals

- Are you different if you have a prosthetic limb?
- What if you suddenly develop a new taste in music?
- If your physical identity changes, would you still be the same person?
- If you lost all your memories, would you be the same person?
- What about dementia?

Ship of Theseus - 10 minutes

Legos ?! Does a different color of lego change the ship? - it doesn't change the structural integrity, but it does change the color (etc.)

Think of objects - what makes a ship a ship?

People - what makes us us?

What is the difference between the "self" and an object?

Are objects merely what we say they are? What does it mean to "say what they are" - thinking about definitions of things

Perception - 10 minutes

<https://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/megamind/judging-a-book-by-its-cover>

Could we love someone in spite of one or a few of their characteristics?

What's the function of identity? Do we change based on situations?

Do you present yourself differently on social media than you do in-person?

What do you think about reality TV? Is it “real”? Are the people in reality TV sharing their identity?

Super heroes? What is their “true” identity? Do they have one?

Hopefully they might see by this point that there is something to us that is more than just our physical characteristics

- More innate/wholistic
- Maybe we are just out physical characteristics, but maybe we aren't
- There is something malleable to our identities
- Are you still your “self” when you are unconscious?

Wrap-up - 5 minutes

With what we have discussed in mind, would your original web map change? If so, how? What would you change/add/remove? (either a discussion or a journaling activity, depending on how talkative the students are)