



LESSON 1: PERSONAL IDENTITY

OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to . . .
- identify various facets of identity;
 - explain the concept of transparent vs. hidden/concealed identity;
 - articulate how their analysis and/or evaluation of a current event is shaped by their identity.

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pens
- Current event story
- Masking tape

SUGGESTED TIME FRAME

- 80 minutes

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this activity, students will be introduced to the concept of “identity” through the creation of personal identity charts. In subsequent lessons these identity charts will help students understand the ‘lenses’ through which they analyze and evaluate historical events and figures. Furthermore, the identity chart process will be applied to historical figures in an attempt to help us understand their individual points of view and motivations.

PROCESS

1. Introduction (3 minutes)

- Explain to students that our perceptions of events – both past and present – are shaped by our roles and experiences. Thus, asking the question “Who am I?” can not only help us understand ourselves but also our responses to historical figures and events. Furthermore, understanding identity can help us recognize, analyze and evaluate the points of view and motivations of groups, nations and historical figures.
- Explain that one of the most effective ways to explore identity is through the use of an identity chart – a web consisting of words, images or a combination of both.
- Explain that in this lesson students will be constructing their own personal identity charts.

2. Creating identity charts (37 minutes)

- Using a “think aloud” strategy to articulate the process construct your own (teacher’s) identity chart on the classroom whiteboard. Should you need an example, a simple internet search using the terms “identity chart example” will provide many images.
- As you construct your identity chart consider including as many of the following aspects of identity. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of aspects of identity.

ASPECTS OF IDENTITY

Community roles	Interests	Place of birth
Culture	Job	Political affiliation
Family role	Nationality	Race
Hobbies	Personality traits	Religion
Hometown	Physical characteristics	



- iii. After you have finished your example identity chart ask the students if they think it represents the “big picture” of who you are. Students are likely to say “no.” Explain that what they see on the chart are the “transparent” aspects of your identity but there are many aspects of your identity you may not make known to others. These are called the “hidden/concealed” aspects of your identity and could include anything you feel uncomfortable sharing. For example: injuries, breakups, traumatic experiences, etc. Explain that although you’re not going to include these aspects on your chart, it helps to mentally acknowledge them.
- iv. Ask students to use the above process to create their own personal identity charts.

As students work on their identity charts, ensure that they are including a high degree of information. Here are some examples of how they can stretch their thinking:

EXAMPLE	ASPECT OF IDENTITY	STUDENT ANSWER EXAMPLE	HOW THINKING CAN BE EXTENDED
	<i>Family role</i>	<i>Sister / brother</i>	<i>Are you the youngest or oldest sibling?</i>
	<i>Hometown</i>	<i>Vancouver</i>	<i>Is this a rural, suburban or urban environment?</i>

3. Identity and current events (40 minutes)

- i. Find a current event (print or digital) that would elicit a wide range of student responses on an “agree-disagree spectrum.” Ask students to reflect on the story with regards to the following question: “To what extent do you agree with . . .” Ask them to use their identity charts to help them reflect on why they agree or disagree with the question posed. Each student should be able to identify a minimum of two aspects of identity that influenced their response.

EXAMPLE: Should public schools bearing the name of Sir John A. Macdonald be renamed?

BACKGROUND ARTICLE: <http://nationalpost.com/news/canada/ontario-elementary-teachers-union-calls-for-renaming-john-a-macdonald-schools>

- ii. While students are reflecting on the story, set up a continuum (masking tape works well) across the floor of the classroom. Label one end “strongly agree” and the other side “strongly disagree.” Once students have read and reflected on the current event ask them to position themselves along the spectrum according to how much they agree or disagree with the prompt. Have students share their responses and explain what 2 aspects of their identities most influence they way they interpret the event.