

Identity Quest: Exploration and Reflection of Self in Art

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Introduction

It's true. I'm one of those people. I absolutely loved my high school years, every bit of it. I loved school and all the opportunities it presented- academically and socially. My first year of high school was an easy transition for me because I had an older sister. I loved how easy it was to be "Holly's little sister"; it required no work, no self-discovery. All I had to do was follow in her footsteps. I idolized my sister- my thoughts were her thoughts. Then, at the end of my sophomore year my sister decided to pack up her '72 VW bug and head west. I was devastated. My backbone and life model was leaving me to my own devices. It was during this mini-crisis that my obsession with identity and self-discovery started. I began to ask myself relatively hard life questions for a 16 year old: who am I? What is my purpose? What makes me, me? It wasn't until later that I learned about the importance of adolescent identity formation...but we'll get to that later. After my sister left, it was just me, and though it was scary at first, I eventually embraced it. I was an identity geek...I tried every extracurricular that sparked my interest, played sports that I enjoyed, took classes that engaged me, and I was friends with all types of people. I loved people (still do!) and I loved the differences in the ways people viewed the world. By my senior year, I had found and blossomed into me. By the time I graduated I had decided that personal reflection was imperative. Each year, around my birthday, I dig into my past and examine the choices I made, why I made them and how life experiences have continued to mold me. I agree with Erik Erickson, gaining an understanding of personal identity is the most important task of an adolescent. Personally, my adolescence was the period of my life that had the greatest effect on who I am today.

A couple of years ago, I started noticing a trend in my students' behavior and understanding of the world. I noticed that my students were constantly run down and stressed out- truly gives meaning to the term, "down and out". I became concerned for their general welfare. Why weren't my students enjoying their high school years as much as I did? I started digging. What are the differences between now and my experience ten years ago? I have found three main differences: first, there was less emphasis on testing; second, there was less academic pressure and competition; lastly, there was more time to devote to self.

I transferred to a new school and as a teacher; I had hoped that my experience at my previous school would be an isolated case of overworked students. I was wrong; I saw the same behavior last year at Hough and students' condition this year has not improved. To the identity geek in me, this was unacceptable. I decided to do a little research of my own

about my students' quality of life. I created an informal survey to gauge my students' quality of life. I asked questions about how students spend their time: how many Advanced Placement classes they were taking, if they held a job outside of school, played a sport or otherwise involved in extracurricular activities. I also wanted to know how many hours students studied, slept or engaged in free time. I also offered them a chance to voice their opinion openly. Overall, my students feel overworked, tired and underdeveloped. One student wrote "I always feel overwhelmed" another student "very difficult, it's hard to manage all the school work and still have time for yourself". I had two students say they hated school and several students said they felt like they weren't learning anything. Most of my students are taking 2-3 AP classes and on average get between four and six hours of sleep at night and only have 1-3 hours of free time per day. To me this is loud...How will my students find the time to find themselves in the current state of education?

When I first heard the description for my seminar, *The Body and Identity as Portrayed in the Collections of the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art*, I knew it was perfect for me...My brain was flooded with possibility. What better way to grant my students the time they so desperately need to devote to self-discovery?

Objectives

The very nature of the academic atmosphere at Hough is why I intended this curriculum unit to be a refreshing unconventional approach to teaching development. It is designed as an AP curriculum, but I feel like it could easily be modified for standard level classes. I teach AP Psychology at a new high school in Cornelius, NC, a suburban town on the outskirts of Charlotte. The school has little ethnic diversity and most of the students are on the college bound train. Competition for class rank and academic prestige is fierce. Students overload themselves with AP and Honors courses whilst padding their transcript with extracurricular activities and community service hours.

Trying to explain identity can be difficult. We understand identity implicitly and often describe identity via social relations, career status, personality or interests. Essentially, we understand identity as the sum of our parts- but it is so much more than just the sum, it is the beginning and ending to our parts.

This curriculum is designed to afford students the opportunity to gain an understanding of Identity-both in an academic sense as well as its personal relevance. There are two parts to this curriculum- an in-class portion and a complementary portfolio that students complete outside of class. The following is how I will piece the curriculum together along with their corresponding APA standards¹:

Lesson One: Nature of Identity in Art: An Introduction to Identity and Art

Portfolio- Section 1: Nice to Meet You, Identity - An introduction into studying Identity in Art

APA Standards:

- Discuss how experience and culture can influence perceptual processes.
- Discuss the interaction of nature and nurture (including cultural variations) in the determination of behavior.
- Explain the maturation of cognitive abilities
- Discuss maturational challenges in adolescence, including related family conflicts.
- Characterize the development of decisions related to intimacy as people mature.
- Predict the physical and cognitive changes that emerge as people age, including steps that can be taken to maximize function.
- Describe how sex and gender influence socialization and other aspects of development.
- Identify key contributors in developmental psychology.

Lesson Two: What is Normal?

Portfolio Section 2: Identity that Norms Built- Assessing the Effects of Social Norms on Identity

APA Standards:

- Discuss the role of attention in behavior.
- Identify key contributors in the psychology of learning.
- Identify key contributors in the psychology of motivation and emotion.
- Predict the physical and cognitive changes that emerge as people age, including steps that can be taken to maximize function.
- Describe how sex and gender influence socialization and other aspects of development.
- Identify key contributors in developmental psychology.

Lesson Three: Replacing Deferred Imagination: Rejuvenating the Child Identity

Portfolio- Section 3: Imagine Yourself- How Creativity and Imagination affect Identity

APA Standards:

- Discuss attitudes and how they change.

Articulate the impact of social and cultural categories (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity) on self-concept and relations with others.

Identify the positive and negative consequences of diagnostic labels.

Discuss how experience and culture can influence perceptual processes.

Discuss the role of attention in behavior

Identify key contributors in the psychology of learning.

Lesson Four: Implicitly Identity

Portfolio-Section 4-Identity Onion

APA Standards:

Discuss the interaction of nature and nurture in the determination of behavior.

Describe the influence of temperament and other social factors on attachment and appropriate socialization.

Explain the maturation of cognitive abilities

Discuss maturational challenges in adolescence, including related family conflicts.

Characterize the development of decisions related to intimacy as people mature.

Predict the physical and cognitive changes that emerge as people age, including steps that can be taken to maximize function.

Describe how sex and gender influence socialization and other aspects of development.

Identify key contributors in developmental psychology.

Lesson Five: Individualist Identity vs. Collectivist Identity

Portfolio Summary: Bringing Identity Home

APA Standards:

Speculate how cultural context can facilitate or constrain personality development, especially as it relates to self-concept.

All of the lessons adhere to the new North Carolina Common Essential Standards and expand on the APA's Standard Course of Study for AP Psychology by allowing students to live out the curriculum. The curriculum that is designed for AP Psychology is dry asking students to identify and describe. I am asking students to experience and reflect and when they leave me not only will they have an understanding of psychology and a souvenir of me, but they will also be leaving with a better understanding of themselves.

Through these lessons students will explore the questions of adolescent identity formation by creating expressions and reflections of self. Here students will apply basic developmental theories to their own life.

While studying development of Identity, they will examine the influences of genetic and environmental factors on identity through assessment of their early beginnings and juxtapose those with psychological theories of development.

I would like for my students to meet themselves devoid of societal norms and pressure but also I want them to understand how social standards affect their identity. Students will be able to see themselves as individuals within a society.

I would love for students to see the fluidity of identity and gain a sense of security in uncertainty so they may continue to grow and explore their identity in the future.

For this CU there will be a series of lessons for in class discussion and activities as well as an independent project designed to complement and extend in class dialogue. The project will be a portfolio documenting students' applications of concepts covered in class, it will also serve as the assessment of the curriculum unit. Due to the fast paced nature of the course, I felt it necessary to design a method for students to gain insight into identity development through exploring their personal story outside of class.

The structure of the unit is intended to be modular so it is easily adaptable to any teachers' course agenda. I intend on presenting this material whilst covering the Development Unit as my focus is the development and expression of identity. The in-class portion will include mini-units that are based on the objectives that were mentioned earlier. Each lesson should take between one and two days to complete and the portfolio is designed to last over the course of the lessons...depending on the teacher and how much content teachers want to go over and how deeply they want to discuss the material.

Strategies

Lesson One: Nature of Identity in Art: An Introduction to Identity and Art

This lesson will be used as a means to introduce students to the concept of adolescent development and identity. I will give a brief lecture on the genetic and environmental influences both the development and self-concept of an adolescent. First, I will continue previous class lectures on developmental theorists with Erickson. A great way to demonstrate how students start to gain an understanding of who they are via comparisons is with Industry vs Inferiority. How does stacking ourselves against the progress of our peers color how we think about ourselves as individuals? I think adding Maslow's

hierarchy of needs could further demonstrate how the need to belong drives us to fit in and we are assured of our acceptance by measuring our competence compared to others (industry). I mentioned earlier that often times we describe our identity through social relations. We are students and we are (sometimes) siblings. I would also like to make Erickson's Industry task more personal by including Alfred Adler's Birth Order Theory to the lecture. What happens when we compare ourselves to our siblings, and what's more, what happens when we compare our siblings' parental interactions with our own? At this point I will introduce Erickson's task of adolescence, Identity vs. Role Confusion. Here we can assess how our development thus far has affected our sense of self. In addition, do our thoughts of a hypothetical future affect who we are today? I will discuss the importance of abstract thought through Piaget's idea of formal operational stage of cognitive development. We can use our formal operations to see possible futures as well as possible selves. Can we use that same cognitive function to observe ourselves or express our identity in art? At this point in the lecture I will show various preselected pieces of art to begin our discussions and connections to art. How does this piece an expression of identity?

Classroom Activity

Roundtable discussion on the Nature of Identity- Applying Art to Identity. Students should rearrange the desks in a round table format. Based on class atmosphere, teachers may modify the roundtable format to promote participation. We will focus on the first question posed and then I will show a series of self-portraits by the same artists (Rembrandt, Chuck Close, Frida and Monet) over a period of time and ask if identity is achieved through stages, is it something we can visibly see or is it a continuous evolution? Is art an efficient and articulate way to express identity and what does the viewer get in return- a reflection of themselves? Do we think in words or images and how does this play into our understanding of art? Why do we feel drawn to some pieces and not others? Here I will show preselected artworks to students and ask students why they like some pieces and not others. How can it be a reflection and an expression at the same time? How do we classify art? How do we define art- good, bad? Depending on the class' understanding of art it may be a good idea to read excerpts from *But is it Art?*ⁱⁱ to give students a better understanding of what art is and how we see or value art.

Portfolio- Section 1: Nice to Meet You, Identity- An introduction into studying Identity in Art.

For the portfolio piece for this unit, students can be asked to either complete the entry before the first mini-lesson is introduced to gain an understanding of identity without my influence or as an extension of the information presented.

- A. *Identity Exploration:* Students will create an interview based on the concept of identity and actually question at least ten people of different: ages; ethnicity;

gender; mental capacities; body type; etc about their ideas of identity. Students should be encouraged to challenge themselves and personal comfort zones to gain a better sense of identity constructs. Students' questions should focus on development and expression of self, I suggest offering a few sample questions in addition to having a refresher on research methods and survey etiquette. Students should prepare age appropriate questions to ask the interviewees, they should be instructed to consider the flexible nature of a questionnaire when they create the questions, originally. The interview should be recorded (transcribing or audio recording) so that students can revisit the interview to prepare a magazine style entry for their portfolio.

- B. *Portrait of Identity*: This portfolio entry is designed to introduce students to visual art as a means of expression of self. I suggest a class field trip to an art museum, Bechtler and/or Mint Museums in my case. If field trips are not an option, I would suggest working with the school's art teacher to have a mini-art showing so students may experience artworks in person. I propose engaging the students in a class discussion during the field trip to exemplify the types of questions they should consider asking themselves while they explore artworks. Students will be asked to choose a piece of visual art that "speaks to their identity" or is a reflection of self. Students' choice of art should be accompanied with a personal statement about *why* they chose the piece they did.

Lesson Two: What is Normal?

As a warm-up I will continue the discussion from the previous lesson and ask students to elaborate on whom and/or what decides the value and merit of a particular piece of art. I think this would be a great place to show pieces of art that are considered to be avant-garde as a conversation starter and move on to current trends in art as well as popular art and focus on the quality of the art. Some of the artists that I plan on showing: Nikki de Saint Phalle; Stephen Knapp, Banksy, Sarah Lucas; Jeff Koons and various artists from the DADA movement. As we decide what is good and bad I will transition into how normal is defined. As I shift gears from discussion to lecture I will ask students to define the concept of normal in their own words and we will use those definitions to create a "normal" classroom definition of what normal is. I will then begin the lecture on the effects of social norms on the adolescent. First, I would refresh students' memory of the biological circumstances of the teen: hormones and an underdeveloped cortex, explaining that adolescents should feel completely normal if they sometimes feel and act utterly ridiculous. We will then discuss norms for gender roles, gender identity and body identity. How is identity development affected when a person doesn't feel normal? What are possible side effects to considering yourself as abnormal? Here I will show images and writings of current norms and the effects of the pressure to be normal. Then I will

Salvador Dali's *Anthony* and Pablo Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)* followed by an image of Britney Spears' infamous head shaving that express and reflect the frustration of suffering through normal expectations. Then I will point out that social media may be a widespread avenue for advertisements of normalcy, but there are other social norms that create just as much pressure and are sometimes overlooked because of their proximity. High School Norms! Peer pressure, cyber bullying, academic pressure, conformity...AGH! How does anyone gain a sense of self-identity with so much pressure to fit in, to be normal? What would it be like to live life without social pressure to be normal?

For the *classroom activity* students will break out into groups of three or four and designate a recorder and a speaker. Each person in the group must contribute to at least one idea to the "Adolescent Ideal Plan". Students will discuss the pressures teens face daily and the effects the pressures have on identity development. After students discuss the pressures of societal/family expectations, they will develop the ideal teenage world that allows for healthy identity formation.

Portfolio Section 2: Identity that Norms Built- Assessing the Effects of Social Norms on Identity

These portfolio entries should maintain focus on social norms that students encounter on a daily basis. The entries should be a commentary on students' personal obstacles and pressures to fit in and adhere to social norms while maintaining identity integrity. Students should show the effects of social norms.

- A. *Pieces of Me*: Students will create a "collage" reflecting how they define themselves within the context of their immediate culture: fashion, music, trends, pop media, friends, likes/dislikes etc. Essentially this entry will be used as a social commentary about pop-cultural influences on adolescent identity. Teachers should consider using a model for collaging, such as the works of Romare Bearden. Students should be encouraged to create any type of collage using any type of medium they choose- as long as they feel comfortable using said materials- even allowing musically inclined students to create musical pieces that are capable of evoking feelings traditionally expressed via paper collages. Students should be encouraged to appreciate their own process of analyzing personal influences and be less concerned about whether or not the final product

“looks good”. Students should submit a paper discussing their process and how they feel they are affected by their immediate environment.

- B. *A Different You*: Students will be challenged to step out of their comfort zone and create an alternate version of themselves and actually portray that version for a day. Students’ alternates should be based on current adolescent culture that differs from the selves they defined thru the *Pieces of Me* entry. Students will prepare an essay depicting their experiences as alternates and include hypotheses of how they might have developed differently. After the alternate exercise, why did you choose the influences that shaped that character? How do you identify with that character, even with different experiences? Did you feel left out, ostracized, judged, or discriminated against and how would those negative experiences affect a person’s sense of self? Does a sense of self mean a certain level of comfort and sense of security and safety?

Lesson Three: Replacing Deferred Imagination: Rejuvenating the Child Identity

This lesson is intended to promote and explore the roles that imagination and creativity have on identity. We will discuss why imagination and creativity are attributes that are expected and encouraged during childhood and lost in adolescence. To begin, we will watch a short lecture by Ken Robinson on schools and creativity followed by a brief discussion. This will show students an alternative take on education that should spark good conversation. Then, using the Socratic Method, I will pose a number of questions about creativity and imagination that are connected to (previously discussed) Piaget’s Cognitive Theory of Development. I will use various pieces of children’s artwork to provoke answers. How do we understand the world when we are younger? In what ways do we use assimilation and accommodation to sort information into our brains? How does our perception of the world affect our identity? In what ways do children use creativity when they are younger? Why is there a universal maturation for visual comprehension and expression? What purpose does play time have on our kinesthetic intelligence? Do we lose our ability to imagine as we learn more about the world or is imagination like a muscle that gets more developed with more use? What roles do parents and education have on imagination? Are there ways to successfully introduce creativity and imagination in today’s society? If we were able to nurture creativity and imagination throughout a child’s education, how might that affect the world of tomorrow? Do you remember what it was like to have free time to imagine?

Classroom Activity

We will read a quick excerpt from *Harold and the Purple Crayon* and discuss what types of creative expressions of childhood we tend to identify with. Based on the child-centered lecture, I will ask students to reengage in their creative minds and work to produce a new being from a different planet that is a reflection of students' identities. Students will need art supplies for this in-class activity.

Instructions: Imagine you and your partner are astronomical explorers and you have discovered a being from a distant planet. As renowned explorers, you are known for your attention to detail and have written a report describing the new planet's environment and native population. Of course your report wouldn't be complete without detailed, hand-drawn images of the being and its planet. Remarkably the being and the planet are absolutely unique in design and even reflect you and your partner's combined identities.

Portfolio- Section 3: Imagine Yourself- How Creativity and Imagination affect Identity

These portfolios are personal anecdotes of how creativity and imagination have affected each student's development and perception of the world.

- A. *The Creative Young*: Students will create a personal reflection about their most recent experience of creativity in the classroom- how did it feel to use class time to imagine and create a new being? Students will discuss their opinion on encouraging creativity in the school system, including advantages and disadvantages.
- B. *Treasures of Self*: For this entry students will take snapshots of physical locations and treasures they find that transport them back to the innocence and imaginative state of a child. Students will piece the shots together in a manner of their choosing. There should be captions about each photograph that express why each treasure makes them feel the way they do. Why are they attracted to these treasures? Why does the reminiscence of childhood feel so good? Is it possible to feel the same way as an adult? Students should include at least 5 photographs to complete this entry. Treasures can be reflections of their specific past or images that remind them of the past.

Lesson Four: Implicitly Identity

For this lesson, I intend to revisit and explore the relationship between identity and personality. There are three parts to this lesson...the first will be a discussion about the nature of personality. The second lesson will revisit Maslow's hierarchy and Rogers' self-theory. Lastly this lesson will explore the relationship between how we perceive our experience and the ways we respond to certain experiences depending on our self-concepts.

1. It is a far easier task to describe our behaviors than it is to explain the essence of who we are. Personality is interchangeable, depending on the situation. For this lesson, we will begin with an activity. There will be different pieces of art hanging around my room that vary in style, concept and color. Next to the art pieces will be blank sheets of paper for students to write on. Students will then be asked to make their way to the painting they feel best represents them. When they have found the piece that fits, they should be asked to write a personality trait that is expressed in the art. We will then compare the traits and use factor analysis to get the list as small as possible and pairing the last traits with the traits' antonyms. By effect, we will have created our class' version of the Big 5 Trait theory. After the activity, we will evaluate the different theories of personality. We will also discuss the nature of personality traits...are they constant or do they change based on situations?
2. Then I will revisit Maslow's Hierarchy and discuss the idea of self-actualization. We'll investigate the concept of identity and the necessity for a solid foundation- a core- to become self-actualized. Moving onward and deeper into the humanistic (perspective) understanding identity, I plan on asking students to create two lists. One, for how they see themselves now, and one for the person they want to be. What happens when there is disconnect between the two? Enter explanation of Rogers' concept: actual and ideal selves. Do people who have similar lists value themselves more? We will explore this question with a discussion of Rogers' theory of self-worth and how it is nurtured or hindered. If there is enough time, I would like to do an activity that will allow students to explore their own self-worth. *Imagine you are on a boat and the boat is sinking. Only five will be saved. You have ten seconds to plead for your life...why should you live? Students will hear each person's case and then write on a sheet of paper five names (one can...and hopefully will...be their own name). Students will then drop their names into a box for me to tally out loud. (If your class has the right atmosphere you can ask each student to say out loud their names...this will give a different tally due to the lack of anonymity). When we tally the names, I will ask the last five to stand*

and I will explain to them what a great honor it is to be chosen. Then I will ask the class if they put their own names down, if one of the five didn't then does it matter how much the class as a whole feels about them?

3. Do we create our own reality- or the perception as such? I will introduce the students to the personal construct theory and the importance of how we perceive our self-concept in our own reality through an activity. Students will take part in a series of tests designed by me (and you), that are designed to overwhelm, disregard, challenge, and encourage students' understanding of their personal perceptions of self-concepts. Students will monitor and measure their perception of self-concept through (the not so verifiable assessment) introspection. This activity will involve different stations and will need more space than the average classroom has to offer. Students will evaluate themselves in the following areas: self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-worth, spotlight effect, locus of control. The task of each station should vary in physical and mental natured activities as well as the level of difficulty. Students will be asked to make prejudgments about their ability to complete each task and the amount of time it will take to complete the task. Students' will rank their pre-performance on a scale of one to ten; ten should represent the highest sense of assurance. Students will rate themselves individually but travel in groups of five to six students. Some of the tasks may be group oriented, for that students will rate their ability based on their role in the group. The following are examples of activities I will use, feel free to use these and/or add more: 3-D puzzles, playing a musical instrument by following written directions; jumping rope, tongue twisters, math problems, team building exercises, drawing, solving riddles, balance beam, reading comprehension, common sense trivia...etc. After each task students' will reflect on their performance and rate the following on a scale of one to five, five being high: self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-worth. Was their objective met? Did they feel good about what they did? Did their expectations shape the outcome of tasks? At the end of the activity I will ask students to sit down and answer the following questions based on their experience: Is our personality shaped by our feelings of success and/or failure? Is our identity shaken by success or failure or the fear there of? Does identity determine who bears the brunt of the blame? Do we use or can we use personality as a mask for our true identity?
The next day I will ask students to explore the relationship between self-worth and personality, our perception of self and others' opinions of us and our self-esteem and locus of control. How does our personality change when we feel low? Which tasks did you rate yourself on the lower end of the spectrum, and how did

you display your personality. How do you think your group members would have rated you? We will discuss the role of social facilitation, conformity and the spotlight effect on the way we behave. Which tasks were you most aware of others' watching? Do you think higher rankings of self-esteem and self-worth decreases the chance of conformity in a group setting or the likelihood to express difference of opinion? I want to then move to discussions about scapegoating and locus of control. I would also like to explore the role of success and failure in identity development. Who defines success or failure? What leads us to fear failure? What leads us to fear success? Who do we blame for our failure? Who do we blame for our success? What are the relationships between external or internal locus of control and our self-esteem and success or failure?

Portfolio-Section 4-Identity Onion

These portfolio entries should be about students' perceptions of their life thus far and which events, people, experiences or places shaped their identity. Students' personality or bi-product of identity should be consistently present.

- A. *Illustrated Annotated Timeline of Self*: This entry will challenge students to explore their personal development as it pertains to self-identity and body-identity as it is expressed through personality. This timeline will include facets of a traditional illustrated timeline merged with the standard annotated bibliography. Students should include pictures of themselves at various intervals of their life span accompanied with an anecdote, visual or literary, that depicts a current reflection of body-identity and self-identity. What has been your perception of yourself? Do you rate yourself less or more worthy than others- and would others rate you the same way? What was it about that specific event, time period, sibling rivalry that created the current you? How you have come to understand your body, whether or not you like your body, are you comfortable in your own skin? Does your body shape your identity?
- B. *You in a Haiku*: For this entry, students should prepare two haikus that illustrate the changing seasons of identity development; one haiku as a reflection of self and one for the general concept of identity development.

Lesson Five: Individualist Identity vs. Collectivist Identity

This is a great way to sum up adolescence. Here I plan on bringing it home for my kids. Our society has changed, and our demands of adolescents seem to be harsh. Erickson talks of an identity moratoriumⁱⁱⁱ where adolescents are open to change and exploration, thus explaining their tendencies to dye their hair blonde one week to match their polo and the next week they're out hugging trees. Adolescents are meant to explore, but we are requiring them to (or by default) grow up in a hurry. Erickson's theory is often misunderstood, he does think gaining a sense of identity is important, but entering what Marcia called identity foreclosure was never Erickson's hope for teens (Adolescence). Identity is something that continues to grow as we grow. In today's world we push for a sense of individuality but contradict ourselves by subscribing to the collective society's demands. I would like for my students to read an interesting essay by William K. Kilpatrick that was published in the early 70's- yeah I know NOT a current source, but still relevant. He spoke of the hardships teens in America faced by wanting to instinctively bind themselves in group mentality but also the urge to seek unique individuality. This short essay depicts an interesting conundrum that American teens still face during identity development in America...how does one fit in to a group but still remain an individual and furthermore, how do adolescents develop into healthy adults with such conflicting values? Teens today are inundated and enticed with ideas and images of adulthood, however, we still view them as children and our education model hasn't advanced with the rapidly aging youth. I wonder if Kilpatrick's idea of a teenage purgatory is applicable...I think it is. So how do we address it? We educate. So here I will give a lecture on the pros and cons are of the individual adolescent moratorium or collectivist identity foreclosure. Looking Glass Effect... How does being aware of our attitudes direct our choices, what happens when the attitudes are influenced by others? Theory of Reasoned Action... we change our attitudes based on whether or not we believe that others may or may not disagree. How can we possibly grasp a unique identity? The power of group polarization, deindividuation and group think: caught up in the lure of the group....thus the cognitive dissonance theory. I will open the class up for discussion here about their takes on the storm and stress of identity. What value do they put on the traditional Americanized Identity? How can we remedy the current state of dissatisfaction amongst teens?

Classroom Activity: Art Critiques in break out groups. I preselected images of art implying group, individual and lost underlining themes.

Portfolio Summary: Bringing Identity Home

The objectives of these final entries are for students to gain a sense of closure and understanding of the fickle nature of identity.

- A. *First and Last Impressions of Self*: For this piece of the portfolio, students should revisit artworks and choose a piece that expresses their experience with the self. Students should write a reflective personal essay on the art they choose. Is it the same? In what ways does this piece differ from the first reflection of self? What are the reasons for the change? Why did it stay the same? Do you feel more confident in your body? In your Identity? In what ways do you think you will continue to grow? What are your final thoughts on identity and development of self?
- B. *The Lasting Self*: For the final entry of the portfolio students should write their own eulogy. What are you leaving behind? Who were you? Why were you the way you were? How did you fit in to society? Did you imagine yourself to be different than you were? What were your influences? Students should submit their eulogy before their portfolio is due to allow time for the teacher to read the original statements of self. After students' receive their previewed eulogy, they should condense everything they said about themselves and their development into one single paragraph. The paragraph should be their final thoughts on self-identity; their final paragraph should be one cohesive thought that should resonate with them for a long time.

As I mentioned before, this unit can be used as a continuous lesson or modular depending on the topics covered in class. I personally plan to assign my students the portfolio prior to beginning the unit, and let them explore identity through conversation and personal ponderings. Below I have included the directions I am giving my students to start the entire unit. My students are excited about this opportunity and I hope you have as much fun with it as I plan to! Thank you for reading.

Identity Quest

2011-2012

You have been chosen to take part in a noble quest to discover your identity. You must brave treacherous waters and battle fearsome foes alone, but do not be forsaken, for only success and glory await you. To be an everlasting hero, you must show proof of your journey to self. This quest is of grave importance, take heed: for your life depends on it...two-fold. Take haste and take care.

About

The design and presentation of the portfolio is up to you. Feel free to add personal touches, especially ones that help articulate your entry, but do not alter the structure of the portfolio. Each entry should have a title page, followed by the corresponding section entries. The following is the order and brief description of each section in your portfolio:

Cover Sheet

Forward- A brief synopsis of what I will find in your portfolio.

P1- Nice to Meet You, Identity

A- *Identity Exploration-* Introduction to Identity through Interviews of different people.

B- *Portrait of Identity-* An essay on personal Identity reflected in selected art piece.

P2- Identity that Norms Built

A- *Pieces of Me-* A collage that represents how you are defined by society.

B- *A Different You-* Creation and reflection of an alternative self.

P3- Imagine Yourself

A- *The Creative Young-* Brief Essay of experiences and importance of creativity.

B- *Treasures of Self-* A visual portrayal of the places you identify with.

P4- Identity Onion

A- *Illustrated, Annotated Timeline of Self-* A chronological storyline of personal development.

B- *You in a Haiku-* Exactly.

P5- Bringing Identity Home

A- *First and Last Impressions-* A testament to the nature of identity.

B- *Lasting Self-* A personal eulogy.

Epilogue- This will be a brief reflection that will bring the portfolio closure.

Directions:

Portfolio- Section 1: Nice to Meet You, Identity- An introduction into studying Identity in Art.

C. *Identity Exploration:*

Description- You will create a magazine article based on the information you gather from your interviews about Identity. You may want to read various articles based off interviews for reference.

Focus: Expression and development of identity

Specifics- You must:

Question at least 10 people of various backgrounds. Truly challenge yourself!

Use proper interviewing etiquette.
Prepare age-appropriate questions.
Be flexible and respond to the person...try not to push your agenda.
Record your answers
Write an article, in the style of true journalism.

Entry- You will be required to submit your actual article only.

Notes: **(See Appendix**

A)

Portrait of Identity:

Description- You will visit the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art in Charlotte, and choose a piece of artwork that best represents you. In addition you will write a personal statement explaining *why* you chose the piece.

Focus- Art as a means of self-expression

Specifics- You must:

Visit the Bechtler Museum, either with a group or individually.

Choose a piece of artwork that “Speaks to your Identity.”

Write a personal statement on why you chose the specific piece of artwork.

Entry- You should submit the title of the artwork and the artist responsible for it as well as a personal statement on why you chose the piece you did. **ONLY ONE PIECE!**

Notes-

Portfolio Section 2: Identity that Norms Built- Assessing the Effects of Social Norms on Identity

C. *Pieces of Me:*

Description- Create a collage that represents how you define yourself within the context of your environments.

Focus- Influences of social norms on identity

Specifics- You must:

Create a collage that represents you and is a social commentary piece about the influences of pop culture.

Show evidence of pop culture on identity: fashion, music, media, friends, etc.

Consider your materials as well as the definition of a collage. Feel free to think outside the box.

Show evidence of your progress and finished product...in class.

Entry- You should submit images of your collage, a description of your process of choosing materials and how the collage is an expression of self in the context of your immediate culture.

Notes-

D. *A Different You:*

Description- Creation and experience of an alternative self who is different than the self expressed in P2-A.

Focus- Self-Concept derived from social experience.

Specifics- You must:

Use the norms of current adolescent culture to create an Alternate You.

Get into character and play your role for at least one full day (encouraged to spend two plus days).

Consider this an opportunity to walk in someone else's shoes.

Document your experience.

Entry- You should include a pre-assessment of what you expect to experience and how you chose the elements of your alternate self. In addition you should also include your short answer responses to **Appendix B**.

Notes-

Portfolio- Section 3: Imagine Yourself- How Creativity and Imagination affect Identity

C. *The Creative Young:*

Description Write a reflection on your education and creativity

Focus- Effects of Creativity in the classroom

Specifics You must:

Consider your opportunities to be creative in the classroom. Did this assist in developing yourself?

Think about your experience in high school vs elementary. Did your creativity assist with self-esteem?

Should students be awarded more opportunities to create in the classroom?

Why or Why not?

Write your opinions down...your decision on what format.

Entry- You should actually include your actual reflection, in whatever format you choose.

Notes--

D. *Treasures of Self:*

Description- You will act as a photojournalist, documenting the physical locations that transport you to a childlike state. These can be images from the past or current images of places that spark your memories.

Focus- Importance and validation of nourishing the inner-child

Specifics- You must:

Revisit the places of your childhood that can still evoke a sense of child-like wonder

Include (at least) five photographs.

Consider and reflect on why these locations are still so powerful, include those thoughts with the pictures.

What does it mean to feel like a kid again and why does it feel so good?

What is the relationship of a child and their self-identity? Why are children so unabashedly themselves?

Entry- You should include your pictures and write ups...however you see fit.

Notes-

Portfolio-Section 4-Identity Onion

C. *Illustrated Annotated Timeline of Self:*

Description- A nonconventional timeline that references influential moments and people that have affected the development of self

Focus- Environmental influences of Identity

Specifics-You must:

Create an illustrated timeline using images of yourself and others that have influenced you.

Give an anecdote to any entries on the timeline as it pertains to your current reflection of self-concept.

Give explanations of how your identity has developed over time and experience using key. Use the developmental theorists discussed in class to give the explanations.

Consider how you have developed a sense of body-identity and how it has changed over time.

Entry- You should include your illustrated annotated timeline.

Notes-

D. *You in a Haiku:*

Description- Um. Write two Haikus, that represents you.

Focus- Simple expression of self

Specifics-You must:

Write two haikus.

- One that reflects the changing nature of identity
- One that reflects the general idea of identity development.

Entry-The haikus should be entered.

Notes-

Portfolio Summary: Bringing Identity Home

C. *First and Last Impressions of Self:*

Description- Revisit and reflect on the decision of the first art piece you chose and consider whether or not it is still a reflection of self. Choose a piece that may demonstrate where you want to go in your identity.

Focus- Personal Reflection of Development

Specifics- You must:

Reflect on your quest.

Write (poetry, short story, play, song etc) about your journey and what you found, what you didn't and what you wish you had found.

Choose a piece that represents the future you may be called to and explain the ways that you will grow.

Entry- Include your reflection of your identity development.

Notes-

D. *The Lasting Self:*

Description- Prepare your own eulogy as if you were to die tomorrow.

Focus- The identity we leave behind.

Specifics- You must:

Write your own Eulogy and consider the following:

What are you leaving behind? Who were you? Why were you the way you were? How did you fit in to society? Did you imagine yourself to be different than you were? What were your influences?

Condense your eulogy into one paragraph. Your final thoughts should resonate with you for a while.

Entry- You should submit your eulogy and the condensed version of your eulogy.

Notes

Portfolio Directions Appendix A

Interviewing Hints:

1. When interviewing someone, remain flexible and follow their lines of thought but keep them on track.
2. Always ask why and try not to use yes or no type questions.
3. When interviewing younger children, analogies work great!
4. Record your responses, by audio or handwritten documentation.
5. Be polite during and after...I might suggest sending a small thank you on their willingness to assist you.
6. Example questions to get you started:
 - a. What is identity to you?
 - b. What is the difference between identity and personality?
 - c. How do you think it develops?
 - d. Did you ever experience an identity crisis, how did you deal with it? What were others' responses to your change in identity?
 - e. (For a child) If you were a cartoon, which cartoon would you be and why? Or show them a train and ask them which car they would be...what is it about that car that they think is special?
 - f. Was there a time in your life that you didn't like who you were...what was that person like and how did you change him/her?

Portfolio Directions Appendix B

Alternate Self Response:

1. In what ways do you identify with your alternate? If there are no common identifications what are the social factors that completely separate you from the alternate?
2. Did you feel left out, ostracized judged or discriminated against and in what ways? Why do you think this happened? How would the negative experiences listed about affect someone's self-concept?
3. Hopefully, you completely submerged yourself in this task...did you feel uncomfortable or insecure? If we have a solid self-concept, do we still feel uncomfortable or insecure...why do you think that is?
4. What did you learn from this exercise? Was this difficult for you? Amusing?
5. Free thoughts about this task.

Resources

Cited Works Bibliography

"AP: Psychology." *College Admissions - SAT - University & College Search Tool*. Web. 28 Nov. 2011. <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/sub_psych.html>.

"Common Core State Standards Initiative | The Standards." *Common Core State Standards Initiative | Home*. Web. 28 Nov. 2011. <<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>>.

"Ken Robinson Says Schools Kill Creativity | Video on TED.com." *TED: Ideas worth Spreading*. Web. 28 Nov. 2011. <http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html>.

Freeland, Cynthia A. *But Is It Art?: an Introduction to Art Theory*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.

Johnson, Crockett. *The Adventures of Harold and the Purple Crayon: Four Magical Stories*. [New York, NY]: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1996. Print

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Steinberg, Laurence. *Adolescence*. 6th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2002. Print.

Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

"AP: Psychology." *College Admissions - SAT - University & College Search Tool*. Web. 28 Nov. 2011. <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/sub_psych.html>. This is a website for guidelines and standards for AP Psychology.

Bearden, Romare, Carla M. Hanzal, and Ruth Fine. *Romare Bearden: Southern Recollections*. Charlotte, NC: Mint Museum, 2011. Print. This book is a great source for collage material.

"Chip Conley: Measuring What Makes Life Worthwhile | Video on TED.com." *TED: Ideas worth Spreading*. Web. 28 Nov. 2011. <http://www.ted.com/talks/chip_conley_measuring_what_makes_life_worthwhile.html>. This is a wonderful lecture about what happiness and self-discovery can lead to. This also shows the move towards scientific basis of happiness.

"Common Core State Standards Initiative | The Standards." *Common Core State Standards Initiative | Home*. Web. 28 Nov. 2011. <<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>>. These are the new and improved standards for the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

"Elizabeth Gilbert on Nurturing Creativity | Video on TED.com." *TED: Ideas worth Spreading*. Web. 28 Nov. 2011. <http://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_gilbert_on_genius.html>. This TED talk is brilliant. This short video can be a great extension for the lesson on creativity.

Freeland, Cynthia A. *But Is It Art?: an Introduction to Art Theory*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. Print. For teachers who aren't "art savvy" this book is for you. This book has information on looking at, analyzing and value formation...easy to read.

Johnson, Crockett. *The Adventures of Harold and the Purple Crayon: Four Magical Stories*. [New York, NY]: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1996. Print. Who doesn't love a good children's book every now and then. This book has four to choose from that correlate with the lesson.

"Ken Robinson Says Schools Kill Creativity | Video on TED.com." *TED: Ideas worth Spreading*. Web. 28 Nov. 2011.

<http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html>. Absolutely illuminating and entertaining talk on creativity- the importance and destruction of creativity.

Kilpatrick, William. "Youth and Society." *Issues in Adolescent Psychology*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977. 455-59. Print. Slightly out of date, but is still applicable to identity formation in a more challenging and stressful society.

Myers, David G., Richard O. Straub, and Thomas Ludwig. *Psychology*. New York: Worth, 2007. Print. This is the AP Psychology text book that is used in my classroom- offers curriculum rich information.

Munsey, Christopher. "The Kids Aren't All Right." *American Psychological Association (APA)*. Web. 28 Nov. 2011. <<http://www.apa.org/monitor/2010/01/stress-kids.aspx>>. This article takes a dive into current trends in adolescent life....such as stress.

Saint-Phalle, Niki De, and Simon Groom. *Niki De Saint Phalle*. London: Tate, 2008. Print. This is a collection of works from the famous artists with insights into her work.

Steinberg, Laurence. *Adolescence*. 6th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2002. Print. This is another text book great for in depth information on adolescents not presented in an introductory Psychology text book.

Weiten, Wayne. *Psychology: Themes and Variations*. Australia: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2007. Print. Yet another text book for AP Psychology. This offers an intriguing way of organizing information.

Appendix

Common Essential Standards North Carolina

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Key Ideas and details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. range of reading and Level of text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

ⁱ AP: Psychology." *College Admissions - SAT - University & College Search Tool*. Web. 28 Nov. 2011(pdf)

ⁱⁱ Freeland, Cynthia A. *But Is It Art?: an Introduction to Art Theory*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. Print. (pg 150-154)

ⁱⁱⁱ Steinberg, Laurence. *Adolescence*. 6th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2002. Print. (pg 272-274)