



Philosophical Enquiry for KS3

Mars Transporter

Fancy a holiday with a difference?

Philosophical Content

Possible Concepts

- METAPHYSICS: Existing and ceasing to exist, Life/Death, Survival, Numerical Identity, Personal identity, Individuality, Uniqueness, Persistence through time, Psychological Identity, Physical Identity
- MIND: Memory, Personality, Connection between the Mind, Brain, Body, Soul.

Example Questions

Part one:

- Would you want to make the trip?
- Would you survive the trip to Mars? What does it mean to survive?
- Would the person on Mars, be you? What do we mean by 'you'?
- What is it that makes a person? Mind? Body? Something else?
- Can you be sure that you are the same person as you were aged one?
- Can you be sure that you are the same person who got out of bed this morning?
 - What if 20% of your molecules are destroyed and then replaced by exact replicates? Are you the same person?
 - What if 50% of your molecules are destroyed and then replicated?
 - What if 100% of your molecules are destroyed and then replicated?

Part two:

- Would the person on Mars or the person on Earth, be you?
- Could there be two of you? Can there be two of any person?
- Is there a way to determine who is the real you?
- How would you feel if you learnt you would die but your replica would survive?
- How would you feel if you would survive but your replica would die?
- Can these feelings reveal anything useful about how to think about identity?
- What do we mean by personal identity?

Philosophical Method

Participant Skills

- PICTURE the scenario, imaging yourself in it. QUESTION the claims made by the travel company, VARY the scenario to test your intuitions about identity. YEILD to good arguments made by others in the group. *

Facilitator Strategies

- Teacher-in-Role, Continuum Conversations, I wonder **

Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circle of chairs, Whiteboard, Computer, Projector, Pom-pom, paper, pens Continuum Conversation flash cards, Statement Flashcards Question selection criteria Letter from Mars Transporter Inc. Mars video commercial Reordered phone message from yourself to yourself
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a long session and could take up to half a day. If you don't have a lot of time, you may want to split it over several sessions.

* This is the metacognitive language of *Thinking Moves A-Z* by **Dialogue Works**. For more info see <https://dialogueworks.co.uk/thinking-moves/> or ask us about our accredited Thinking Moves Training.

** A list of this language for facilitation accompanies these resources.

PREPARATION		30 min
Introductions	Introduce one another if necessary.	
Ethos	<p>Review your ground rules perhaps flagging something the group specifically needs to work on, like ensuring there is time for all students to speak.</p> <p>To avoid misunderstanding or mistrust, explain to the group that today's session involves you presenting some stimulus materials in role.</p>	
Focus game	<p>Activity: Opinion Continuum</p> <p>Strongly Agree – Agree – Not sure – Disagree –Strongly disagree</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lay out labels on the floor. Ask students to move to indicate their opinion on each of the statements below. Ask for a range of reasons Invite students who have changed their mind to move Ask why First try the activity as a whole group Then facilitate in two or more groups <p>Statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "If I had my hair cut I'd still be the same person" "If I got a tattoo, I'd still be the same person" "If I lost a leg I'd still be the same person" "If I became deaf I'd still be the same person" "If I learned an instrument, I'd still be the same person" "If I changed a core belief, I'd still be the same person" "If I lost my memory I'd still be the same person" "In fifty years from now, I'll still be the same person" "If I lost touch with family I'd still be the same person" "If I changed my personality, I'd still be the same person" 	

STIMULUS		30 min
Presentation of Stimulus 1	<p>Share the following letter claiming that that you have received it from a travel agency. The letter dramatizes a famous philosophical thought experiment by the philosopher Derek Parfit.</p> <p><i>"Fancy a holiday with a difference? At Mars Transporter Inc. we are offering customers a once in a lifetime opportunity to travel to Mars!</i></p> <p><i>We have developed a machine that scans the human body with such accuracy that it can produce a copy that is indistinguishable from the original, right down to the last atom.</i></p> <p><i>Forget the boredom of buses, trains and planes: traveling by Transporter is quick and easy! You simply step into a cubicle here on Earth and when you're ready, you press the red button. The machine scans the exact arrangement of all of the atoms in your body and then poof! Your body and brain are vaporized, the information from your scan is beamed to the replicator on Mars at the speed of light.</i></p> <p><i>Seconds later, the replicator on Mars receives this information and rebuilds your body out of new atoms. But it does it so faithfully that not a hair is out of place on you hear and every memory, personality trait, like and dislike remains. From your perspective you simply 'wake up' in the replicator on Mars having remembered pressing the button only moments earlier. Examining your new body, you will find no change at all. Except you've made it to Mars! Your holiday begins here!</i></p> <p><i>This process has been thoroughly tested by our expert engineers; your safety is guaranteed. Places are limited so don't delay; contact us today."</i></p>	
Thinking Time	A minute in silence	
Sharing Time	<p>In pairs students share their first thoughts with each other</p> <p>Then as a group (Introducing dialogue conventions – using pom-pom, using agree/disagree hand signals)</p> <p>Focus question: Would you take up this offer?</p>	
First thoughts	<p>Activity: I wonder...</p> <p>Model e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I wonder if you'd be exactly the same mentally" • "I wonder how you'd get back" • "I wonder if the machine really is safe" • "I wonder if it's really 'you' on mars" • "I wonder if you can call a copy of you, by your name" <p>With teacher scribing, write up initial wonderments</p>	

QUESTIONS		30 min
Composing Questions	To explore this, we need a philosophical question In threes, develop just one question with support from facilitator and teacher	
Sharing Questions	Each group shares their question. Questions written up on white board by co-facilitator, with names of group members	
Sharpening Questions	Identify themes, duplication and ambiguity. Redraft if necessary	
Selecting Questions	Vote with reasons	
DIALOGUE		1 hour
First thoughts	Hear from the students whose question was chosen. You might ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why did you ask that question?• What answer would you give?	
Collecting Ideas	Gather a range of basic views points on the topic	
Getting Focused	Mentally note ideas that emerge as more fully developed or appear to engage a number of students. E.g. The idea that a person is their psychological processes or the idea that a soul or other immaterial object explains identity. Ask for a fuller explanation of some of these ideas.	
Identifying Conflict	Identify and invite disagreement. You might ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who disagrees with that?• What would someone who disagreed with you say?	
Identifying Consensus	Highlight areas of consensus. You might ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who agreed with that?• What reasons do you share?	

TWIST		30 min
Presentation of Stimulus 2	The facilitator discovers a voice mail message, (or if there is any technical trouble, an email) from her counterpart on Mars tells her she is an exact replica. <i>Hello Grace! It's Grace. This is weird, isn't it? Well you're not going to believe me, but something went wrong last week after my trip, I mean your trip... perhaps I should say our trip to Mars.</i> <i>I'll tell you what I remember. At the end of the holiday, as expected, I entered the cubicle and pressed the red button. But this time, I did not lose consciousness.</i>	

	<p><i>There was whirring sound, then silence. I left the cubicle and said to the attendant: "It's not working. What did I do wrong?" The attendant told me that I am one of the first people to use the new scanner. Then he looked worried and fiddled with his computer.</i></p> <p><i>He tells me that according to his data that Transportation has worked. Next he shows me CCTV of the scanner on Earth. To my astonishment I see someone who looks just like me, open the door smiling and leave the scanner.</i></p> <p><i>"See, you made it" says the attendant.</i></p> <p><i>"Wait a minute!" I reply, "If I'm here on Mars, I can't also be there on Earth!" I continue to watch the CCTV horrified, None the wiser, off she goes, off you go all refreshed from your holiday and back to everyday life.</i></p> <p><i>You look like me, you think like me. But you can't be me, I'm me!</i></p>	
Emergent Questions	<p>In pairs develop an emergent question e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the copy on Mars, be you? • Would the copy be a person? • Can there be two of the same person? • How could you tell who was the real you? 	
Getting Focused	Identify the new key view points. Ask for reasons	
Identifying Conflict	<p>Identify and invite disagreement. You might ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who disagrees with that? • What would someone who disagreed with you say? 	
Identifying Consensus	<p>Highlight areas of consensus. You might ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who agreed with that? • What reasons do you share? 	
Digging deeper	Paired discussion on key emergent issue	
Final Push	<p>Return to the original question pressing for revised answer(s). Compare original question with emergent question.</p> <p>Identify if anyone has changed their mind between the presentation of part one and the presentation of part two</p>	
Last thoughts	As a final round, a chance to hear from everyone.	
REFLECTION		15 min
Reflection on the Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the group to identify some of the concepts they've explored during the session. 	
Reflection on the Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the group to identify some of the Thinking Moves they've used, noting when and where they were useful. 	

EXTENSION		20 min
Further Reading	<p>The original thought experiment that inspired this session can be found in this fascinating paper by the philosopher Derek Parfit in which he argues that 'The Self' doesn't really exist.</p> <p>Parfit, Derek A. (1987). Divided minds and the nature of persons. In Colin Blakemore & Susan A. Greenfield (eds.), <i>Mindwaves</i>. Blackwell.</p>	

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