

# Personal Identity



London's Language

**Lesson 4**

**Personal Identity**

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## Aims

- To understand the nature of personal identity in *Pygmalion*.
- To enable participants to understand their own personal identities.
- To create a group monologue on the theme of personal identity.

## Materials required:

- **Warm-Ups** (double sided sheet)
- **Appendix 1** (Turn Detective; one per person)
- **Appendix 2b** (Extracts from *Pygmalion*; one per person)
- **Appendix 7** (Personal Identity worksheet; one per person)
- **Pens and paper**
- **Whiteboard or flipchart**

## Duration

- It should take approximately two hours to complete all the activities but the lesson can be reduced or extended as necessary to suit the timetable.
- It is important to stress that the drama sessions will work in a safe and imaginative way, and that participants will be expected to contribute and listen without judgement or criticism of others.

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## Warm-Up

Select a vocal warm-up and a game from the Warm-Up sheet (choose an exercise from either side of the page).

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### 4.1 Discovering Identities

- Participants (preferably standing) read the selected pieces of text from Appendix 2b (*Pygmalion* extracts) through twice, firstly to get comfortable with the text and secondly to identify the characters' thoughts and feelings. After which you should ask the following prompt questions. It may be useful to record responses on the whiteboard or flipchart.

**What was happening in the text?**

**What did you learn about the characters involved?**

**In what ways do you think Eliza changes?**

**Is Eliza's changing a good thing or a bad thing?**

**Does the way you treat somebody change who they are?**

**Can somebody else change who you are?**

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### 4.2 Who Am I?

- Each participant is given an A4 piece of paper and encouraged to trace around their hand. Once completed, each participant should write a descriptive word about themselves in the outline of their fingers and thumb, eg: I am tall; I am good at football; I have two sisters; I have brown hair etc. After which you should pair the participants up and ask each to compare characteristics using the following prompt questions:

**Would you know this about me without being my friend?**

**Would you know this through conversation with me?**

**Would you be able to change these characteristics?**

### 4.3 Stringing Me Along!

- Ask the participants to begin walking around the space encouraging them to walk as individuals, changing direction on your command. After sufficient time, introduce the idea of an invisible piece of string attached to their nose which someone is leading them by and ask participants to walk with this image in mind. Explore this for two or three minutes and then return to walking normally. Develop this exercise further by moving the 'string focus' to the chest, belly and knees in turn. Remember to be specific and really encourage participants to exaggerate their actions. Once completed, ask the following prompt question:
 

**What type of person would walk with their nose, chest, belly, knees?**
- Suggested answers could be:
  - Nose** Detective, Dog Show Judge
  - Chest** Soldier, King or Queen
  - Belly** Greedy or Old Person.
  - Knees** Burglar, Mime Artist
- Develop the exercise further by selecting six or seven of the more confident participants to run the exercise again, encouraging them to play characters suggested by the group. Once completed, encourage feedback and discussion.

### 4.4 Changing Hands

- Leaving space between one another, ask the group to lie down on the floor and close their eyes. After a few relaxing breaths get the participants to think back to the *Who Am I?* exercise where everyone drew around their hands and identified personal characteristics. Ask them to begin thinking about how other people might see them; these other people could be friends, family or teachers. Suggest that they think of two or three particular characteristics that people might notice.
- After sufficient time give each participant a pen or pencil and Appendix 7 (Personal Identity worksheet) which they should use to write down their characteristics ensuring they are completed anonymously. Upon completion ask the following prompt questions:



**Do you agree with other people's view of you?**

**Do you disagree with other people's view of you?**

- Those participants who agree should now think of how they'd liked to be viewed in ten years' time and make a note of their ideas. This group of participants is now Group 1.
- Those participants who disagree should now think about who they really are and make a note of their ideas. This group of participants is now Group 2.
- Collect the worksheets up and then redistribute Group 1's worksheets to Group 2 and vice versa. Each group should then select the most interesting, funny and challenging responses and present them in a tableau form so that the opposite group has an opportunity to identify what characteristics are being shown.
- Develop this exercise further by encouraging the use of some of the phrases from the completed Personal Identity worksheet. The phrases can be used as dialogue building to a group improvisation using tableau, vocal intonation, volume in order to present them most effectively



#### DVD Point

To inspire the group improvisation, select Personal Identity on the enclosed DVD. The scene shown was written by young people in schools and performed by professional actors.

### Turn Detective (HOMEWORK EXERCISE)

- As a homework exercise distribute Appendix 1 (Turn Detective worksheet) and read aloud the homework instruction (right).
- Each participant should collect 'London's Language'.
- Collected material can be displayed as an interesting wall display in the classroom.
- In this instance it should have a 'personal identity' focus.

“Collect two examples of people talking about **PERSONAL IDENTITY**. It might be someone you overhear on the bus, at school, on the street, a character from television or cut out from a newspaper or magazine. It could be something you agree with or something that makes you angry or makes you laugh, essentially something you find interesting.”

