

# Unit 2 Metaphysics

## Unit 2 Challenges and Opportunities for Learning

Students relate easily to metaphysics as it concerns issues that are relevant to them and raises questions of interest to them. Questions about a Supreme Being, the soul, free will and determinism, and the meaning of life come naturally to students. Questions concerning the nature of reality, mind, and personhood, however, are less intuitive. With either set of questions, students find it challenging in an engaging way to hear what others have had to say about the nature of reality, and they enjoy comparing it to their own nascent ideas. Plato's theory of Forms is particularly challenging to them (which is a good thing) and is an excellent springboard for discussions of reality, knowledge, truth, and perfection.

Students may find it challenging to move beyond common-sense realistic views of metaphysical issues. Having them debate the merits of their own positions in contrast to the views that they resist can be helpful.

## Unit 2 Culminating Activity (assessment of learning)

The Unit 2 culminating activity—Metaphysical News Report—is a framework around which students develop their knowledge and understanding of metaphysics. Use the ideas that follow to help your students begin working toward completion of their poster display or slide presentation.

### Description of Culminating Activity

In small groups or on their own, students will create a news report, which is either written, dramatized, videotaped, or recorded and played for the class. See BLM 4.5.

### Learning Goals

Using appropriate philosophical terminology and computer technology to report on different issues and philosophical approaches to questions concerning metaphysics. For example, What is real? Is there a Supreme Being? What is the nature of being (reality)? How does metaphysics relate to other branches of philosophy?

### Learning Skills

The development of learning skills and work habits is an integral part of a student's learning (Growing Success, p. 10). Specifically, teaching and assessment of these learning skills—responsibility, collaboration, independent work, organization, self-regulation, and initiative—will enhance students' success in the culminating activity, entire course, and post-secondary life.

Use BLM E to track students' learning skills for this unit and for the culminating activity.

### Prior Learning Needed

Depending on the format students choose for their news report, they may need to be familiar with video-editing software.

### Materials Needed for Culminating Activity

- LCD projector, screen, speakers, and notebook computer
- BLM 4.5 Unit 2 Culminating Activity: Metaphysical News Report

## Motivational Strategies for Engaging Students

Have students complete the Unit Challenge (SE p. 87). Then have students work in pairs to compare their questions and answers and share any insights or similarities discovered during their discussion with the class. Have them use BLM 4.3 Unit Challenge Think-Pair-Share Worksheet to record their work.

Consider creating a “parking lot” (e.g., using a bulletin board or chalkboard) as a space to record questions, concepts, and themes that students discuss and that are addressed over the course of the unit.

## Accommodations

Pairing two groups to offer each other constructive criticism and useful feedback throughout the process may help groups that are struggling or have less initiative.

Conduct frequent progress checks to help the groups select a manageable, focused topic. This can also keep the group members on topic and deepen their inquiry as they work through Chapters 4-6, and prevent them from becoming too ambitious in the scope of their news report.

Consider creating a word wall and include potentially perplexing terms like *ontology*, or *substance* and *essence*.

## Differentiated Instruction (alternative assessment opportunities)

This project could be differentiated from the start. Consider these options:

- Students could conduct a two-on-two formal parliamentary debate, arguing opposite sides of a metaphysical issue.
- Students could write a Manga-style comic book to illustrate the metaphysical topic (see <http://www.mangafox.com/>).
- Students could write an expository essay, developing a topic in metaphysics. They should have your approval of their topic before they begin.

## Assessment Criteria

The Unit 2 culminating activity assessment criteria appear on BLM 4.5.