Lesson Plan: Discovering the Layers of the Self (45 Minutes)

Section 1:

1. Can you write your “life story” in 3 sentences? This can be either facts similar to an autobiography or important things in your life that have made you who you are today. “Life story” is intentionally vague to allow students the freedom to include whatever they want. Give students 5 minutes to write their three sentences and then allow them to share their sentences with a partner.
2. Next, ask the students to write three words they would use to describe themselves. After they write them down, allow students to share with their partner. This exercise should take about three minutes total. Give students plenty of time to choose their words carefully.
3. Then, ask each student to use three words that others would use to describe them. If they are struggling to come up with words for this exercise, have them ask their partner for help! Have students write these down, and share as a larger group to see what each pair came up with. Allow them to explain why they chose each word.
4. What was different between your view of yourself versus how you think others view you? Which perspective is more important to you?

Section 2:

Please note: This next exercise will involve drawing, so make sure each student has access to creative materials.

1. Have each student draw a picture of themselves at school. Ask them to include as much detail as possible. Some prompting questions may include; What do you wear to school? What is the expression on your face at school? Are you happy or sad to be at school? Are you busy or bored at school? What makes school fun? What do you enjoy about school? What do you dislike about school? The idea behind the prompts is to get each student to think critically about their experience at school. Give students about ten minutes to draw a detailed picture. Students are encouraged to share their work with their partner for about five minutes.
2. Now have each student a picture of themselves at home with as much detail as possible. Consider asking the following prompting questions: What do you do for fun at home? What type of clothing do you wear at home? How do you feel when you are home? What types of things can you draw to express these feelings? What activities do you do at home? What responsibilities do you have at home? Again, the idea is to create a space for children to think deeper about their experiences at home. What makes home different from school? This drawing should also take ten minutes and allow an additional five minutes for students to share their artwork with their partner.
3. Lastly, give the students five minutes to analyze the changes they see in themselves. This should be a silent exercise. Ask them to think about the differences they see between the drawings. Is it natural that these changes occur in different settings or artificial? Can you think of another example where you change based on the environment you are in?