**Some things to think about**

*If your view conflicts with common sense, you should address that conflict in part 1 of your paper, and explain why we should agree with your view rather than common sense.*

* Common sense says that you were once a very young child (who is different from you in most ways).
  + Common sense also says that the 6 month old version of you was identical to the 4 month old version of you.
  + Note that young children have mental states, but probably not very sophisticated ones – they probably don’t have much conception of their past or future.
* Common sense says that you will some day be a very old person (who is different from you in most ways).
* Common sense says that you can persist through very significant changes to your body (e.g. loss of limbs, or paralysis).
* Common sense says that, if you transplant a living brain from one body to another, personal identity goes with the brain (and mental states), not with the body.
* Common sense says that young identical twins, who have almost exactly the same mental states, personalities, and memories, are still two people and not one person.
* Think about what your thesis says about people with dementia or who undergo other drastic cognitive changes (note that dementia generally occurs relatively slowly; does this affect what your thesis would say about identity and dementia).
* Don’t forget to think about the “Standard view,” or psychological continuity view, which says that “If A is psychologically continuous with B, then A is B, and if A is not psychologically continuous with B, A is not B.”

**Author views**

*Laurie Paul*

* She seems to think that, if A undergoes a personally transformative experience, the A after the experience is numerically identical to the A before it.
  + Why do I say she thinks this? She wants to argue that deciding to undergo a transformative experience is not rational. If she thought that transformative experiences were basically the end of a life, that would be enough to show they were not rational, and she would have just said that, rather than making the arguments she makes.
  + Do transformative experiences create serious discontinuities in our psychology? They can radically alter our preferences, goals, and way we live our lives.
* She thinks that mental states about “what it is like” to experience x (*qualia*) are very important for rationality.
  + This matters if you are writing about mental states and rationality.
  + If rationally choosing x requires knowing what it like to experience x, then groups can only be rational if they can experience what something is like.
  + Tollefsen thinks that groups have mental states because they can act rationally.

*Eric Olson*

* Thinks that each adult human being is identical to some fetus that did not have any psychological states.
  + Says that it is implausible that a being will suddenly cease to exist by acquiring new abilities, so the fetus would not disappear when the person’s mind comes into being.
  + Says that it is implausible that the fetus still exists after the person is born, but is not identical to the person.
* Endorses the view that numerical identity involves biological continuity.

*Susan Brison*

* Looks at the testimony of survivors of trauma, which shows that:
  + *Trauma can prevent persistence*. Sometimes, the person who occupies a body after a traumatic experience is not numerically identical to the person who occupied the body prior to the trauma.
  + *Talking about one’s trauma with others can restore a person’s identity*. Sometimes, the person who occupies a body after talking about a traumatic experience is not numerically identical to the person who occupied the body before talking, but is identical to the person who occupied the body prior to the trauma.
* What is her view of personal identity? She does not say. But it probably has something to do with some of the following:
  + A’s sense of who they are (self-narrative).
  + Other people’s sense of who A is (narration to others).
  + A’s ability to envision their past or future “self.”
  + A’s control over their own psychology.

*Elizabeth Schechter*

* Thinks split brain cases involve two minds, but one person.
  + So, a person is not just their mind.
  + One person can have multiple, separate consciousnesses and psychologies.
* What makes the split-brain person one person rather than two? (this is relevant to numerical identity)
  + Inability to see self as two people; taking responsibility for decisions made by either mind.
  + Seen by others as one person (connection to narration).

*Deborah Tollefsen*

* Groups have mental states.
  + These are distinct from the mental states of their group members: the group can believe or desire things that no group member believes or desires.
  + Are these emergent properties?
* Evidence that groups have mental states:
  + We say they do.
  + We hold them responsible for their actions.
* What are mental states? When do we have them?
  + *Interpretivism:* If predicting or understanding something’s behavior requires ascribing mental state M to it, then it has mental state M.
  + Ascribing mental states has to do with understanding beings (groups or individuals) as rational.
  + So mental states have to do with how others see and understand us. (This is connected to narration)
  + Might personal identity also be partly social as well?

*Carolyn Jennings*

* She denies that mind or identity is socially constructed, or that they are *just* a narrative we tell ourselves.
  + If the mind or self were just a social construction or just a story we tell, we would really be just a collection of sub-personal parts.
  + No sub-personal part can make a choice.
  + So, if the mind or self were just a construction or story, we could not make choices.
  + But, she thinks, we do make choices.
* She says that self and the ability to choose is an emergent property: put enough parts of a mind together, and then a mind exists which has abilities that no part has.