

Epistemology Lesson Plan

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Time: 40-45 Minutes

Age: 5-6 years old

Materials: "We are in a book!" and Drawing materials

Learning objectives:

- Reinforce the topic of philosophy and discussions of philosophical v. non-philosophical questions through review
- Foster skepticism in students about the sources of their knowledge (especially sensory perception) (through introduction and optical illusions)
- Encourage them to think about what is real (in the context of book characters and dreams)
- Practice providing evidence for our beliefs and knowledge-claims
- Promote critical thinking about dreams vs. reality and discuss how we make this distinction

1. Introductions (10 minutes)

- a. Tell us your name, one thing you know, and how you know it
 - i. Make our own examples (using visual observation - for activity 2)
 1. I'm Katie and I know that my birthday is November 9th (I was told this)
 2. I'm Sidd and I know $1+1=2$
 - ii. (we can help each student figure out how they know their fact)
 - iii. at the end, we can also say some things we know about them (show them that we were listening and that we care!)
 1. We know that you are all students!
 2. We know that Sean doesn't like dogs, Lila likes cats, Demilola likes ducks, Xander likes red and green, Katie likes writing
- b. What is Philosophy (recap)
 - i. What is Philosophy?
 1. Refer to what Demilola said last week (asking big questions)
 - a. Does anyone have anything else to add
 2. Philosophical vs non-philosophical questions
 - a. What is something that makes you happy?
 - b. What is happiness?
 - ii. Classroom rules and ways of speaking
 1. Listening is very important!
 2. We all have different opinions and that is great!
 - a. "I think ... because ..."
 - b. "I agree/disagree with ... because ..."

2. Optical illusions (powerpoint!) (5 minutes)

- a. Assuming the children followed our lead with visual examples in 1a, this should get them to think about visual evidence.

- b. Sometimes what we see, is not a way of knowing!
- c. What do you see? Who agrees? Who sees something else? Do any of you see...
 - i. Rabbit or duck
 - ii. Lines are the same length
 - iii. Woman or man paying a horn
 - iv. Old woman, young woman
 - v. Cup or faces
 - 1. We all see different things!
- 3. Transition - Some quick movement activity (30 seconds - 1 minute)
 - a. Simon Says?
- 4. Book: "We are in a book!" and discussion (15 minutes)
(TO DO: on Tuesday read through book and plan where we want to stop to ask each question)
 - a. How do you know that the characters are in a book?
 - i. Separating fiction from reality
 - ii. How do *they* know they are in a book?
 - b. Do you think you're in a book?
 - c. How do you know you're not in a book? What are your reasons?
 - i. (get them thinking about providing evidence for our beliefs and questioning evidence)
 - d. If your friend told you that you were in a book, how would you tell them they're wrong?
 - e. If you can't be sure that you're not in a book, how does that make you feel?
 - i. Do you want to find evidence or are you okay not knowing the answer?

Transition to DREAMS

- Who here has dreams?
- Are you in a dream right now? How do you know you are not dreaming right now?

- 5. Drawing (10 mins)
 - a. Dreams - Draw a dream you've had recently.
 - i. Have you ever experienced a dream? Or heard of a dream that a friend or parent has had?
 - b. Individually ask questions to each kid about their specific dream.
 - i. What dream are you drawing?
 - ii. Have you ever experienced this in real life?
 - iii. How do you know which one is real and which one is a dream?

Back-up: If the students can't remember a dream, we can have them draw on one side of the paper something that is real and on the other side of the paper, something that is not real

- 6. Wrap-Up / Clean-Up (2 mins)

Pictures for optical illusions:

