

Lesson Plan 1: Teaching Epistemology

Hannah Carter, Abe Attah, Jae Porter

Total Time: 45 minutes

Ages: 5-6

Number of Participants: 4-5

Materials:

- An Extraordinary Egg, Leo Leoni
- 6 Plastic Eggs
 - Mystery items
- Know vs. Think Cards
- Optical Illusion Print Outs

Goals:

Our central goal is to remind everyone how to participate in a philosophical discussion, while introducing them to **epistemology** — challenging them to think about what it means to know something. We will talk about the difference between knowing something and thinking something, and practice using sentence frames to share reasoning. We'll also explore if it's possible for two people to know different things about the same object (optical illusions), and what to do when we disagree with our friends.

Introduction: What do we know?

5 Mins

- Go around the group and have everyone say their names again
 - Ask them to say their names and also tell us one thing that they **KNOW** and how they know it?
 - Ex. that the sky is blue, that their pet is a dog, how many kids are in their class, etc.
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Activity 1: Optical illusions

10 Mins

- Show a series of optical illusions
 - Ask: What do you see?
 - Does anyone else see something different?
 - Can both be right?
 - Everyone can share what they see and explain it. Explain that we see or know things differently based on our perspective.
 - If someone else sees something different, that is ok
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MOVEMENT BREAK—wiggle it out

Activity 2: Know vs. Think Card Game

- We will ask a series of questions, and ask the kids if it's something they think or know.
 - Examples:
 - I have shoes on my feet
 - My mom has shoes on her feet
 - There are seeds inside the pumpkin
 - My friend has food in their lunchbox
 - I have a pet fish
 - Jae writes poetry
 - Hannah likes to take pictures of animals
 - This gives everyone a chance to express their thoughts without having to verbalize them, and then we can work on the explanations.
 - I think ____ because ____
 - I know ____ because ____
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MOVEMENT BREAK—Stretch it out

Read-Aloud

7 Mins

- Read An Extraordinary Egg Book
 - Pause and ask questions:
 - Do we know what's inside the egg, or do we just think we know?
 - Can two people believe different things and both be right?
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Mystery Eggs

8 mins

- Present six mystery eggs filled with items (some empty).
 - Ask kids to guess what's inside — without opening them.
 - Ask: “Do you know what's in there, or do you just think you know?”
 - Let them shake, feel, or listen, then guess again.
 - Open the eggs and compare.
 - Discuss what helped them move from thinking to knowing.
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Closing Reflection: What Did We Learn?

5 mins

- Ask:
 - What's something you know now?
 - What's something you think might be true?

Review the main ideas:

- Good reasons make knowing stronger.
- It's okay not to know yet.
- We can always test and ask more questions.