

Canon Paleo Curriculum
Unit: The Nature of Science
Lesson Plan 3

Activity Name: Scientific Method Today

Observation and Inference

Supplies:

Use the Six Blind Men poem

Preparation:

- Go over definitions of observation and inference with the class before beginning the exercise. Note the background material
- Copy the poem and cut out the six stanzas separately.
- Divide the class into six groups.

Concept:

Students will learn the process of developing observations and inferences from data they collect.

Activity:

- Have each group find the one observation in the stanza.
- From the one stanza each group has, have them develop an inference about the observation. (such as "What types of animals could they be?")
- Once the group have developed their observations and inference have them join back together as a class.
- Have each group list their observations and inferences on the board.

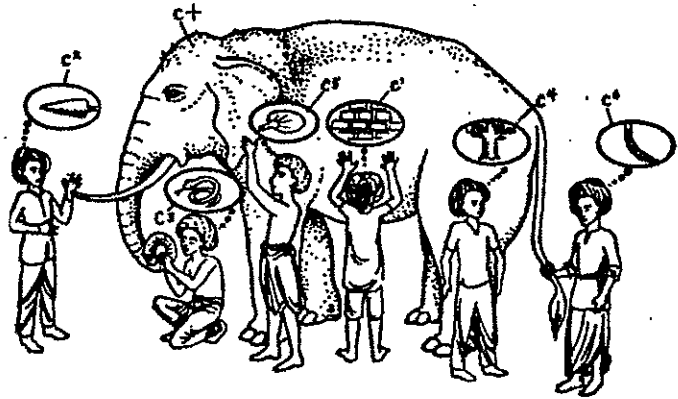
Teacher Key:

After all the observations are listed the group should conclude that it is an elephant.

Conclusions:

Students should begin to understand not only observation and inference, but the importance of collective data. That research done by many scientists lead to better explanations.

Time: 20-25 minutes



REALITY_{c+}
HYPOTHESIS 1_c
HYPOTHESIS 2_c
HYPOTHESIS 3_c
HYPOTHESIS 4_c
HYPOTHESIS 5_c
HYPOTHESIS 6_c

This poem was written by John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887).

This first stanza is left until after students have discovered what type of animal it is:

Teacher reads this stanza first

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the animal
(Though all of them were blind),

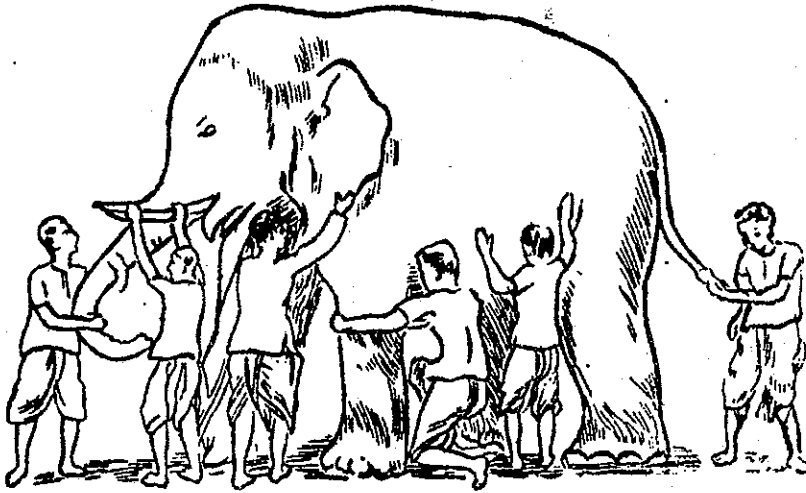
Teacher reads again

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

Story(25)**ELEPHANT AND THE BLIND MEN**

Once upon a time, there lived six blind men in a village. One day the villagers told them, "Hey, there is an elephant in the village today."

They had no idea what an elephant is. They decided, "Even though we would not be able to see it, let us go and feel it anyway." All of them went where the elephant was. Everyone of them touched the elephant.



"Hey, the elephant is a pillar," said the first man who touched his leg.

"Oh, no! it is like a rope," said the second man who touched the tail.

"Oh, no! it is like a thick branch of a tree," said the third man who touched the trunk of the elephant.

"It is like a big hand fan" said the fourth man who touched the ear of the elephant.

"It is like a huge wall," said the fifth man who touched the belly of the elephant.

"It is like a solid pipe," Said the sixth man who touched the tusk of the elephant.

They began to argue about the elephant and everyone of them insisted that he was right. It looked like they were getting agitated. A wise man was passing by and he saw this. He stopped and asked them, "What is the matter?" They said, "We cannot agree to what the elephant is like." Each one of them told what he thought the elephant was like. The wise man calmly explained to them, "All of you are right. The reason every one of you is telling it differently because each one of you touched the different part of the elephant. So, actually the elephant has all those features what you all said."

"Oh!" everyone said. There was no more fight. They felt happy that they were all right.

The moral of the story is that there may be some truth to what someone says. Sometimes we can see that truth and sometimes not because they may have different perspective which we may not agree too. So, rather than arguing like the blind men, we should say, "Maybe you have your reasons." This way we don't get in arguments. In Jainism, it is explained that truth can be stated in seven different ways. So, you can see how broad our religion

is. It teaches us to be tolerant towards others for their viewpoints. This allows us to live in harmony with the people of different thinking. This is known as the Syadvada, Anekantvad, or the theory of Manifold Predictions.

