

29 The story of the seven blind mice

Topics: **critical thinking,**
media literacy

Recommended age group: 10+

Participants count: up to 30 participants

Activity duration: 30 minutes

Methods of education: brainstorming, discussion, reflection

Aims of the activity:

- to observe various perspectives on certain matters,
- to assess the information needed to create the whole image,
- to perceive the complexity and interconnectedness of information,
- to respect the time aspect of information processing.

Equipment:

- a record of *The seven blind mice* tale (or a print of the story text),
- an opaque pouch and one special object that we place inside
- an A4-sized paper and a pen/pencil for each participant.

Keywords: critical thinking, obtaining information, information assessment, the whole picture

Activity process:

1. We prepare the bag containing the special object in advance. The bag is supposed to be from such a material that the object placed inside isn't visible or distinguishable. The lecturer picks the object, the most suitable object is the one with an unrecognizable shape immediately after touching it.

We randomly select a few participants (according to the size of the group) and ask them to reach into the pouch, grab the object, but not to pull it out of the pocket at the same time. We encourage them to try to name the subject. It is very important that the participants only touch the object for a brief moment. When they say what they think the object they touched was, we do not proceed with the discussion, nor do we compare the individual answers of the participants in any way.

2. After a short introductory activity, we explain to the participants that they are about to hear a story about seven blind mice who - like the participants in the in-

Topics



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introductory activity - have stumbled upon Something strange. Their next task will be to work together with the mice to find out what it is. To help them think better, they need to use paper to draw or record their discoveries. Distribute an A4-sized paper to everyone to divide into six equal parts using a pencil/pen. After each day, as the mice go exploring, their task will be to draw what each of the mice discovers.

3. Play/read the story of the seven blind mice to the participants. After each day, we stop the recording and let the participants draw what each mouse discovers for as long as they need. They don't have to draw/describe the findings in detail, sketches are enough. If they can't draw the objects very quickly, there is an option to only take a note of each discovery and to describe/draw it later.

4. During the story about the last mouse, invite participants to consider what this mouse did differently and what the participants in the introductory activity could also have done differently. When they have named the fact that the mouse has examined the 'Something' from all sides, going through each part in detail, we continue the story where the seventh mouse summarises what she had come across. At this point, participants can share their pictures and noted observations together. Let them discuss the question: what did the mice find at the pond? After the discussion, let the participants come up with the right answer using their sketches and notes. Only then do we play/read the conclusion of the story.

Final analysis:

We discuss the following issues together:

- *What is the moral of the story for the mice?*
- *What is the lesson for our lives?*
- *In what situations should we try to find out all the perspectives of the issue?*
- *How can you apply it in practice? In everyday life?*
- *Have you ever lacked information that led you to make a wrong decision?*
- *How would you deal with such a situation in the future? What else would you check? Where?*

Moral of the story: *It is important to look at issues or topics from different perspectives, to try to understand them from different angles, and sometimes to spend more time on it than just to run up to it, „grab“ it and immediately make judgments, to assess and rate what's going on.*

Source:

ČAJKA, A., BIOLEK, J., a kol. *Komu patrí zem, Metodická príručka globálneho vzdelávania pre učiteľov*. Bratislava: Centrum environmentálnej a etickej výchovy Živica, 2019, ISBN 978-80-972962-5-4

CEEV ŽIVICA, *Sedem slepých myšiek*. Youtube.com [online]. [cit. 2020-12-10]. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yze3AMJ2DSc>>

ANNEX

The Seven blind mice by Ed Young (inspired by an ancient Indian fable)

One day, the seven blind mice were surprised to find a strange Something by their pond. „What is it?“ They cried and they all ran home.

On Monday, Red Mouse went first to find out. „It's a pillar,“ he said. No one believed him.

On Tuesday, Green mouse set out. He was the second to go. „It's a snake,“ he said.

„No,“ said Yellow mouse on Wednesday. „It's a spear!“ She was the third in turn.

The fourth was Purple mouse. He went on Thursday. „It's a great cliff,“ he said.

Orange mouse went on Friday, the fifth to go. „It's a fan,“ he cried, „I felt it move!“

The sixth to go was Blue mouse. She went on Saturday and said: „It's nothing but a rope.“ But the others didn't agree.

They began to argue. „A snake!“ „A rope!“ „A fan!“ „A cliff!“

Until Sunday, when Black mouse went to the pond as the seventh.

When she came upon the Something, she ran up one side, and she ran down the other. She ran across the top and from end to end. „Ah,“ said Black mouse, „now I see. The Something is

...as sturdy as a pillar,

...supple as a snake,

...wide as a cliff,

...sharp as a spear,

...breezy as a fan,

...stringy as a rope,

but altogether the Something is... an elephant!“

And when the other mice ran up one side and down the other, across the Something from end to end, they agreed. Now they saw, too.