WHAT DOG? - ON CERTAINTY

Adapted from Steve Hoggin's Bikes and Certainty (https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/enquiries/view/bikes-and-certainty) session.

The idea behind this lesson plan is to encourage doubt of one's commitments, to question at what point knowledge is attained, and what that knowledge is of.

Props:

✔ Philosophy Elephant

✔ Whiteboard, whiteboard marker

✔ and pre-prepared postcards for the after-thought.

Starter:

Introduce Philosophy Elephant. And introduce the stimulus by showing the first image to the children. Ask them, 'what do you think our session is going to be about today?', 'what is this a picture of?'

Step by stap (see the attached pictures) draw the picture the white board, or a piece of paper that everyone can see. At each step pause to ask the children questions.

Task Questions:

✔ What is it?

✔ Why do you believe it is….?

✔ Do you know that it is….?

✔ Who thinks something else?

Repeat as before. Is it a… (something previously suggested)? Who thinks it is….? Is it definitely a….? Is it definitely not a….?

Continue the same pattern. And continue you to add bits to the picture, slowly revealing it to the class.

Task Questions:

✔ At what point does it become a dog?

✔ Can it be a dog without any ears?

✔ If it looks like a dog does it mean that it is a dog?

✔ Can it be two different things?

POSSIBLE EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Draw a shape on the whiteboard and then ask who can make it into something by adding to the picture. E.g. Ask the children, 'who can finish the picture?'

End the session by giving each child a postcard with the same mark on it and ask them to complete the picture. This postcard can then go into the journal.