Disarticulated Skeletons

Possible Scenario

1. Have students form group of three or four.

2. Provide each group with a bag of animal skeletons (e.g., cat, rabbit, and mink).
   Some groups will get the same animal skeletons so that their inferences from the same skeletons can be compared each other later.

3. Ask students to put the bones together in a way that makes sense using their prior knowledge about skeletons that they have learned through the owl pellet activity.

4. After giving enough time, ask students “Would you tell us what you think animal is and why you think so?” “Where do you think your animal used to live?”

5. Students’ explanations would be based on their prior knowledge about the size of the skeleton and characteristics of its head, arms, and legs.

6. Get students to present their inferences about what animal is and where it lives and the reasons for their inferences.

7. Discuss the role of prior knowledge in making inferences, asking students “Why do you have the same or different ideas about the same skeletons?”

8. Make it explicit to students that scientists use their prior knowledge to do investigations and different prior knowledge can lead to different inferences from the same data.