
HTLA Residential: Coin Drop

Focus – focusing on their leadership responsibility to shape the internal culture and external identity of their school.

‘Tuning In’ awareness and focus exercise

Preparation

Two sets of three different but similar sized coins (1p, 5p, 20p) per each pair in the group (e.g., 16 sets for a group of 16). Place them in piles around the ledge of the windows in the room.

Tuning in activity

Ask the participants to pair up with someone they are less familiar with, find a space within the room and collect one of the piles of coins.

Give a demo: Ask your partner to close their eyes and listen very closely. Drop the 1p coin 10 times (five if time is short) from the same height (6 to 12 inches) and say to your partner before every drop 1p, 1p, 1p, 1p, etc. Then repeat the process with the other two coins. Once your partner has had a chance to ‘tune in’ to the different coins, drop them one at a time randomly and ask them to guess which one you are dropping.

If someone gives an incorrect answer, rather than telling them “No” or “That’s wrong”, tell them what it was “That was a 5p” and drop it again, then do the one they guessed “This is a 1p” and drop it for comparison. Opportunity to re-tune.

After the first person has had around 10 guesses (five if time is short), and preferably is getting it right most of the time, change over and give the second person their turn.

Review options

Use according to time, appropriateness for group and programme content. The aim of this session for the standard programme is to practice ‘tuning in’, explore what it involves, explore the relationship of focus and awareness to tuning in.

Ask for definitions of ‘awareness’ and ‘focus’. Ask who felt they were using mostly awareness, and who felt they were using mostly focus. Explore the connection between the two and how they are both elements of ‘tuning in’.

Ask them how they would score their pair on accuracy from one to five.

- What were the strategies for high scores?
- What were the barriers?
- Think about what you focus on in school.
- What are the distractors?
- Any areas you don't go near/avoid?
- How do **you** focus on what is important in the school, given the cacophony of noise around you?

Analogy of 100m sprinter (e.g., Alan Wells, Edinburgh at Olympic final, 1980 Moscow, gold medal.)

Entering stadium – awareness of noise, colour, crowd etc. Methodical prep for race within arena as awareness turns to focus – ultimately, when knelt down, only starter's gun, two white lines and finishing line – total focus.

In nursery/school – aware of all that is going on but focussing on what is important.