

This activity prepares the group of learners to focus on their environment and surroundings. By tuning into their natural surroundings, the learners open themselves up to seeing, hearing, and feeling what is going on around them.

Materials/Setup

- 10-20 objects of your choosing that are identical (clear collection vials, insect viewers, magnifying glasses)
- Hide the objects along the path or around the room, in various locations. Ensure some of the objects are hidden above the learners' sight-lines so that they have to look up as well as down to locate them.

Activity Location

- This activity is designed for the outdoors, specifically along a trail or in an area that is going to be explored.
- Look for an area that has a variety of trees, logs, rocks, and ground cover.
- *Indoor adaptation – set a path through the classroom/library/gym where there are many different levels of hiding places (high and low).*

Introduction

1. Explain to the students that they will be searching for a certain object (show them an example of the object. If you have chosen collection vials, hold one up so they know what to look for).
2. Ask the students to focus on looking for the vials, and to tune in to this activity.
3. Tell the students how many vials have been hidden and set the ground rules. They must search for the vials silently. They are not allowed to point to the vials when they see one. They must do this as a solo activity.

Action

1. Lead the students down the path (or around the room) at a very slow pace, giving them lots of time to locate the objects.
2. Once you have reached the end of the trail, or path in room, ask the students how many objects they spotted.

3. Lead the students back along the same path and point out where all of the objects were located.
4. Have the students help you collect the objects.

Conclusion/Wrap up

It is very rare for the learners to have spotted all of the objects. Most students have trouble focusing so completely on this task. Many of the participants will be surprised at the number of objects hidden, and will comment on how they completely missed the ones hidden up high, or down low, and not at eye level.

The idea behind this activity is to centre the learners' focus. When the learner is outside in a natural setting, it is very easy to look past the small and seemingly insignificant components of the forest/field/yard. This is true for when they are in the classroom. It is often hard to focus on what is happening in that moment because there are many other things causing distractions. By having the students concentrate on looking with intention and focus at an area, it draws their eyes and their brains to really see what is there.

This activity is an excellent way to start a hike in the forest or an exploration of the schoolyard or to set their focus for another activity that you'll need their undivided attention for. Plus, it is fun!