

Money Problems

Today in school, I spent ages getting a boy to count up in 5cent coins. No problem, or so I thought. However, when, shortly afterwards, I showed him two 5cent coins and asked him how much I had, he replied, 2cents. I am stuck.

One problem I encountered recently and which I can't fathom is in the counting of money. She recognises a 2cent coin and can give it when playing shop etc but when given an unknown amount of money e.g. (5cents 2cents 1cent 1cent) and asked how much she has, she always says 5 and one six and one seven and one eight. She just sees it as one coin and nothing I have tried works including tapping the 2cent coin twice or putting 2 dots on it

Try getting the child to make up 5c in as many different ways as possible, first using one cent coins, then introducing the 2c coin. $1 * 2c$, $3 * 1c$ etc. This will need to be taught, and takes a lot more time that you would think. I have used this approach with children with moderate learning difficulties. Use concrete materials first, plastic coins, or the real thing

When teaching senior infants about 5c being actually = 5single cent coins we used have a bank and banker who used "exchange" the 2c,5c and 10c coins for single cent coins. It used to help the children visualise that the 5c and 5 cent coins were of equal value

How about getting him to really look at the coins to see the differences? Art and craft? Coin rubbings. Actually make the coins. Make coin people: drawings and construction? Make a picture using coins: you draw a template, he has to place the correct coins on your template. Play matching / snap / pairs games with coins? This lot should get him to see the differences in the coins? Really looking at the differences in this way might get him to look out for the differences in coins when using money for Maths. Maybe steer clear of the abstract for now, until he has grasped the concrete.

This child has a problem with one coin symbolising others. If so, it seems unlikely that he could have long term success in a pencil and paper approach which involves a further level of abstraction. I would try something like this:

- 1) Fold an A4 sheet in two then open it again. Draw 4 circles on the left, an "=" symbol in the middle (on the crease) and one circle on the right.

- 2) Place one of your coins in each of the four circles. Have a saucer full of single cent coins nearby and ask the child to place the right number of single cents in each circle to match the coin that's already there - five for

the 5c, two for the 2c etc. Be prepared to spend time and even overteach this step even if it means leaving addition until another lesson.

3) When step 2) is secure you can move into addition by bringing in a further step in which the child moves the original 4 coins to the circle on the right leaving the single cent coins where they are. He then counts all the single cent coins to get the "answer" to the sum.

4) Of course, these steps are much too clumsy to solve the child's problem in the long term so they must be assisted to move from the concrete to the abstract. A first step towards this could be for him to draw little dots instead of placing 1c. coins- like the approach you have already tried. Then replace the coins with their names etc.