Background

The children attend a large Junior School on the outskirts of Shrewsbury. The class is a mixed ability group of year 6 pupils with a wide ability range. The history topic throughout the year has been ‘The Tudors’.

In the Winter term, Elaine [the deputy head who had been on the course the previous year] using her ideas and skills obtained on this course started history by examining Henry VIII, so the children had many research skills and historical enquiry and interpretation skills in place. After discussing these ideas with Elaine I then heard about this course which fascinated me, so many different, imaginative ways to teach history, fantastic, just what myself and the children needed.

I concentrated on the Spring term in which we were going to look at another significant individual and event (The reign of Elizabeth I and the Armada). This then leading up to the every day life of men, women and children of different sections of society. We had already started to examine the ‘life of Elizabeth I by looking at primary sources of written text about her to assess what type of monarch she was.

The class was split up in to five ability groups in which they took on various responsibilities within their group to enable them to work co-operatively, [This is a fascinating approach to group work, designating generic roles to individuals in a group. It links in neatly to the Neville Bennett publication that argues strongly that to get pupils to work as groups as opposed to in groups we must give them clearly defined separate, mutually reinforcing roles and specific individual tasks. They then pool their expertise to resolve the problem then force them to co-operate JN]

• Material handler
• Recorder
• Reporter
• Observer
• Time monitor
• Noise monitor

The class have been used to working in this fashion since the beginning of year 6.

Aims and Objectives

• To work in ability co-operative groups in which children can share ideas and present their findings to the rest of the class.
• To use portraits, pictures and primary sources of written texts as evidence for historical enquiry.
• To identify and describe reasons for, and results of, historical events, situations and changes.
• To ask and answer questions and to select and record information relevant to the focus of the enquiry.
• To understand that spoken language and words used may change over a period of time.
To communicate their knowledge and understanding of history in a variety of ways: Newspaper article, poetry, letter and diary extracts.

Learning Outcomes

- Enjoyment in history lessons.
- Confidence in interpreting and using evidence from portraits, pictures and primary sources of written text, gaining a positive attitude towards research also in handling more complex text and decoding meaning.
- Knowledge about significant events (Armada, Queen Elizabeth I and The speech at Tilbury) and characters (Queen Elizabeth I, Phillip II, Sir Francis Drake, Lord Howard and Medina Sidonia).
- Empathy with seamen, how they lived and worked.

Resources

- The Armada portrait of Queen Elizabeth I.
- The Armada build up information sheet.
- The Armada simulation game. (This is downloadable from the Nuffield Foundation web site)
- Account of the storms of Autumn 1588 written by a survivor from the wreck of Gran Grifon on Fair Isle.
- Picture of Elizabeth I and the public procession to Tilbury in Essex to encourage her troops.
- Speech given by Elizabeth to her troops at Tilbury.

Year Group

I Class: Year 6 Class, twenty six children of mixed gender and ability.

Teaching time

Six lessons, each lasting approximately one hour

Teaching Activities for the Scheme of Work – the six lessons

1) Looking for clues from Elizabeth's Armada portrait, introduction leading to work on the Armada. Children asking and answering question. Presentation to class.

2) The Armada build up. Finding out reasons and discussing new vocabulary, use of dictionary to determine meanings. Presentation to class.

3) The Armada simulation (used for course) resulting in writing a newspaper report from the Spanish or English point of view.

4) Thoughts and feeling, 'Life on a Galleon', handling of more complex text structure, particularly decoding meaning. Empathy skills, what it was like for sailors I soldiers aboard. Choice: Poetry, letter or diary extract.
5) The speech at Tilbury. Using a picture of this event, children to determine what they think is happening, who the most important person is, why they are there, thoughts of people and sounds heard creating an atmosphere.
Presentation to class.

6) Oral discussion about Queen Elizabeth's speech at Tilbury. Discussion on whether we thought Elizabeth's speech was dishonest, why leaders often give stirring speeches and what the hungry sailors might have thought about her speech.

Lesson 1 Looking for clues (Elizabeth's Armada portrait) one hour.

Key Questions

1) What does the portrait tell us?
2) What can we infer?
3) What does it not tell us?

The children had already sorted out their roles within their cooperative groups and were ready to work co-operatively. Each group had a colour copy, A3 size of the portrait.

Discussion about how a portrait can give us clues about a person and events that happened at that particular time. Brain stormed words associated with picture and some questions we would have like to have asked the artist about the portrait. We discussed how the face, body language, dress, props and setting and the wishes of the client and the artists role all give us clues.

We discussed the three key questions. The children straight away realised that it was a portrait of Queen Elizabeth, and that she had something to do with the Spanish Armada which led on nicely to do more research about what happened with the Spanish Armada.

Children completed sheet in co-operative groups. At the end of the session each group shared and discussed finding. Opportunity for children to listen to each other and discuss in an appropriate manner.

Lesson 2: The Armada, the build up, one hour.

Key Questions

1) What led to the battle between the English (Elizabeth I) and the Spanish (Phillip II)?
2) Which of the reasons do you think was the main one

Working in Co-operative groups.

Read through together 'The Armada the build up' sheet, highlighting any words didn't understand the meaning of (looked up in dictionaries). Highlighted map of Europe, determining which countries followed which religion. Discussed with children the results of this and answered question: Who was Phillip II?

At the end of this session each group explained their reasoning behind choosing their main reason which led up to the battle.
Opportunity for children to listen to each other and discuss the reasons in an appropriate manner.

Lessons 3 The Spanish Armada simulation (obtained from the course) two, one hour sessions.

Key Question

1) What factors influenced the admirals of the English and Spanish fleets during the Spanish Armada campaign?

Taught exactly from Jon Nichol's lesson plan. After discussing the outcomes the children then used their writing frames to write a Spanish or English newspaper article depending on which side they were on.

Lesson 4: Thoughts and feelings 'Life on a Galleon' one hour.

Key Question

1) How would a person aboard a ship during the Spanish Armada have felt about his experiences at sea?

We read through the account from the survivor of the wreck. Determining meanings of more difficult vocabulary and what he was trying to write. In co-operative groups children discussed what this man would have thought and how he felt. Discussed as a class and bullet pointed on easel. Introduced empathy. I then gave the children a choice in which they could write a poem, letter or diary extract of this mans thoughts and experiences aboard the ship and how he survived.

Lesson 5: Speech at Tilbury picture, one hour.

Key Questions

1) What do you think is happening in the picture?
2) Who do you think the most important person is?
3) Why are they there?
4) What thoughts would be going through her mind?
5) What sounds could be heard?

The children worked in co-operative groups, each group had a copy of 'Public Procession to Tilbury' picture. To get the children to study the picture closely we had a game of eye spy (ten minutes). One child said 'E' and then another child guessed 'Elizabeth' this went on, for example the child who had guessed Elizabeth then said C, another pupil then said Crescen 'C' = Crescent
'F' = Fleet and so on.

So already the children had obtained information about what was happening in the picture. Then in their co-operative groups they then went onto answer the key questions. At the end of the session the children discussed what they had written and why.

Lesson 6 The Speech at Tilbury, oral session, twenty minutes
Key Questions

1) Do you think Elizabeth was honest?
2) Why do leaders give speeches in times of trouble?
3) What might the hungry sailors have thought about her speech?

We read through the speech together and discussed the meaning of various words and sentences. The first question I asked the children was: What do you think about the speech?

We bullet pointed their comments on the easel. We then went on to discuss the key questions.

A very interesting lesson which brought us around full circle to the first portrait we saw of Elizabeth I and The Armada. There were many mixed reviews about Elizabeth I.

Reflection

I was pleased with most aspects of the lessons, particularly about the questions the pupils raised and the discussions held. The children particularly enjoyed examining the two primary source pictures which stimulated some superb work.

My next project is to write a simulation game of my own based on Henry VIII and the dissolution of the monasteries which is what we study in the Summer term.