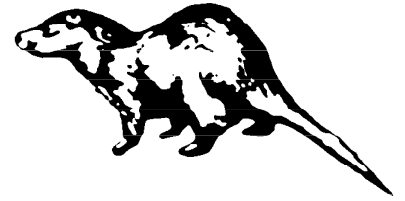


NUFFIELD PRIMARY HISTORY



HOW THE TUDORS CAME TO POWER

BRITAIN AND THE WIDER WORLD IN TUDOR TIMES

TEACHERS' NOTES

Ours is a large voluntary-controlled Church of England primary school based in Bootle, Liverpool. The area in which the school is situated could be described as socially deprived, with a large number of children receiving free school meals.

The lessons described introduced a unit on the Tudors. The children had previously covered history units on Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings (in Year 3) and on children in World War II (earlier this year), but they had no, or little, background information about the Tudors. However, one or two children had heard of the key characters from Tudor history.

The rationale behind this project was to identify ways in which ideas based around literacy concepts could be used during a history lesson. I began by identifying the key literacy concepts I wanted to introduce the children to, then, using the QCA scheme of work as a starting-point, I thought about how I could incorporate these key concepts into the history planning, using the history resources available to me at that time. In literacy, we had been learning how to identify key words and use these when writing notes. We had focused on information books, in particular a book about Tudor homes. So the children had already come across the idea of taking notes, but were still having difficulty in identifying which parts of paragraphs would count as key information.

Into this context, I introduced the idea of pictorial note-taking.

Year group/class

Year 4; 24 children in the class, only 7 of whom are girls. There is a huge range of abilities.

Teaching time

A one-hour lesson, followed later by a writing session of 20 to 45 minutes, depending on the speed and ability of individual children.

Learning objectives

For the children to:

- know how the Tudor dynasty began
- use the pictorial form to take notes.

Key questions

Instead of using words, how else might I take notes?

How might I represent different aspects of the story of the Battle of Bosworth?

Which parts of the story would be difficult to represent in picture form?

How might we overcome this?

Resources

The story of the Battle of Bosworth (many published primary history books and schemes carry the story)

You can also read brief accounts of the battle on these two websites:

<http://www.schoolshistory.org.uk/bosworthfield.htm>

<http://www.r3.org/bosworth/index.html>

The teaching

The lesson was split into three stages. First, I explained and modelled pictorial note-taking, then the children used this method themselves. We finished with a plenary when the children 'read' their pictorial notes to the class. In a later lesson the children used their pictorial notes to write an account of the beginning of the Tudor dynasty.

Episode 1

Focus: Introducing and modelling pictorial note-taking.

I introduced pictorial note-taking by relating the events which had happened to me on the previous day, when my old car had collapsed and I had bought a new one. I explained the story to the children, asking them how I might represent certain aspects of it in picture form.

We discussed some basic ideas, then I drew my story on the whiteboard.

To reinforce how effective this system of note-taking can be, I chose a less able pupil to come to the front of the class and re-tell the story, pointing to each picture and explaining what it meant. He did this with aplomb.

Episode 2

Focus: Representing information pictorially.

I told the children the main points of the Battle of Bosworth, asking them to think about how they might represent each stage of the battle in picture form. I felt I needed to give this brief introduction first, before I retold the story with more detail, otherwise the class would not have had certain pieces of key knowledge, such as the fact that each side had a rose for a symbol.

Then I told the story in more detail. As I spoke, the children took pictorial notes, identifying key pieces of the story to draw.

At various stages, when I saw that individual children were having difficulty in thinking of an appropriate pictorial representation, I chose others to describe to the class what pictures they had chosen to tell that section of the story. This was amazing: there were so many different ways of representing the same information!

The children were quick to point out some limitations of this method of note-taking, such as when trying to show the title of the battle. The only way the children felt this could be done was to write the title in full.

Some problems occurred with particularly artistic children, who wanted to draw masterpieces rather than quick sketches. Two further children experienced difficulties with this method, one of them insisting on written notes with the occasional labelled picture among them.

Episode 3

Focus: Reading picture notes to share versions of the story.

We now came together to share accounts in a plenary. This was a true test of how effective the children's note-making had been.

I chose a mixed sample of seven children to read back their pictorial notes to the class. All were able to interpret their picture notes accurately, showing how they had identified the key points in the text. This clearly met the desired outcome for the lesson.

Follow-up session

Focus: Transforming information from pictorial to written form.

In the follow-up session, I asked the children to look at their pictorial notes again, to re-familiarise themselves with the content.

In pairs, the children then used their notes to re-tell the story of the battle in writing.

The majority of the class used their picture notes effectively. They referred to them as they wrote up the story and could clearly still remember what the pictures represented. It was interesting to hear several children talking themselves through their notes, stage by stage.

Only the two children who had found pictorial note-taking difficult had problems writing their accounts.

All the other children were able successfully to punctuate and paragraph their writing by using the pictures to help them identify when they were making a new point. This was particularly interesting because some of the class found it easier than with 'normal' writing tasks to identify where a new paragraph should start.

A few children produced brilliant pictorial notes, but then rushed their written work. The novelty and enthusiasm obviously only ran to the 'fun' aspect of the lesson.

Learning outcomes

The children:

- acquired detailed knowledge of how the Tudor dynasty began
- learnt to take effective notes in pictorial form
- were able to identify key points in a story
- were able to ‘read’ their pictorial notes in order to produce written accounts
- produced written accounts which were appropriately punctuated and paragraphed.

Reflection/evaluation

The pictorial approach was a great success! It was a most effective way of recording information, without the difficulties usually experienced by some children in getting their ideas onto paper. It also enabled the children to identify key pieces of information more easily than they were able to do during earlier literacy lessons which focused on note-taking.

It also enhanced the children’s learning as, even now, most of the class are able to explain in great detail how the Tudor dynasty began.

The actual note-taking episode took quite a while (30 minutes in total); however, it is not a system the children are accustomed to and I feel confident that their speed and technique will improve with practice.

Nuffield Primary History project

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