



GIFTED AND TALENTED STRAND

Using “MINIMUS” with Gifted and Talented Children

“Minimus” was introduced as a 12-week pilot project in one of the Great Yarmouth Excellence Cluster’s First Schools. It was taught by myself, as the Gifted and Talented Strand Co-ordinator, to a group of 11 Year 3 children from the school’s Gifted and Talented Register.

Aims of the project

- To provide an unusual, challenging and stimulating activity for more able children.
- To enable these children to work together in a small group at a faster pace than might normally be possible.
- To foster an enjoyment of academic learning and independent research.
- To provide an insight into the structure of English and to lay a foundation for the study of MFL.

The success of the project depended on:

- The support of the school. The Headteacher was enthusiastic, appropriate facilities were provided and the children were released from another lesson.
- The support of parents. There was an introductory talk before the course began; children were actively encouraged to take home worksheets and to discuss them with parents. The children did a presentation at a final assembly for parents.
- The “Minimus” course. Books, worksheets, tape all well-presented and attractive. Supplementary materials (e.g. flash cards and card games) were also easily produced.
- The participation of other adults. Each session was attended by the school’s own Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator and one of the school’s Governors. The whole group sat in a circle and the adults learnt alongside the children on an equal basis with them.
- Use of Latin names. All the children and the 3 adults (plus a few visitors who came in to observe) all chose and used Latin first names with each other.
- Experience of MFL teaching. Although my own Latin did not extend beyond “O” level a long time ago, I did spend many years teaching MFL and felt that this experience was very useful, particularly in stretching the children to examine the structure of language and to make connections between languages.

Next steps

From September, Latin will continue in the Cluster and be extended to 3 schools:

- The Year 3 children already involved will be offered the opportunity to continue Latin in their Middle School as a Year 4 after-school club
- The original school will start a new course for Year 3 pupils, run by the G&T Co-ordinator
- Another First School will start a Year 3 course.

Conclusion

Using “Minimus” has excited and inspired this group of able children. It has increased their self-confidence and maturity. I have been amazed at their ability (and desire) to grasp concepts of grammar such as gender of nouns and adjectival agreements. It has been a brilliant enrichment course for young Gifted and Talented children.

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