

Cross-curricular Approaches to Teaching and Learning

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edited by

Chris Rowley and Hilary Cooper



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Foreword

Recent and ongoing developments in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) Futures programme suggest that we are entering an exciting period in which opportunities to place subjects alongside processes, values, social justice and broader areas of learning make this book timely in exploring existing work that is taking place in schools now.

All the contributors to this book are committed to the development of a more integrated and coherent primary curriculum which makes links between different subjects. They recognize the achievements of the National Curriculum in identifying the concepts and core questions which lie at the heart of each subject and of progression in the skills associated with those questions. They wish to explore ways of taking the curriculum beyond simply linking subjects under a theme, although there are many ways in which this can be done. They are also exploring ways of creating a curriculum which has values education at the heart, not just of classroom organization, relationships and ethos, but also within the core of each subject. For reasons which are explained in Chapter 1, planning for each case study starts with a humanities subject, history or geography – or both – linked to other subjects.

In each example we focus on types of enquiry in which values are embedded in the enquiry itself and not seen as an ‘add on’. Values development is part of the teaching of both history and geography, it is a central part of the subjects which cannot be ignored and offers great opportunities to enrich the curriculum.

The case studies, covering Reception to Year 6, are a way of not just explaining and justifying this approach but of sharing with readers, reflecting upon and evaluating what happened when it was put into practice. Most took place over a short period of time in which teachers and teacher trainers worked together to plan and implement them in real classrooms.

It is hoped that these case studies will serve as a stimulation – even an inspiration – for modifying in the context of other school environments. It may be that after the initial integrated unit the contributing subjects develop separately and traditionally within the values theme, and that, at certain points during the longer unit, opportunities are found for further integrated work. This would seem to be a manageable, flexible and developmental model.

What we think is most innovative is that the subjects in each case study are truly integrated, not running alongside each other, and this

integration is deepened by the overarching theme which permeates the unit of work, which is an aspect of values education.

Finally, we hope that we have taken both a reflective and exploratory approach. We have experienced a great deal of prescription and the notion that 'someone else, out there, knows best'. It is time to return to applying and evaluating our considerable professional expertise. Recognizing that there are always different and perhaps better ways of doing things and thinking about them deeply, and in relation to our very different professional contexts and understanding that we may all do things differently but equally well, is what attracts well-informed, creative, committed and enthusiastic colleagues to our very important and sometimes undervalued profession. Read on!

Contributor biographies

Jennifer (Jen) Ager is a primary school teacher in High Hesket, Cumbria. She graduated from St Martin's College in 2002 with a physical education (PE) specialism, and has since taught in Plymouth and Cumbria, as well as squeezing in a three-year career break travelling the globe. Jennifer has a keen interest in thematic approaches to the curriculum and uses as many opportunities as she can to link topic work through cross-curricular approaches in her class teaching.

Jan Ashbridge is Subject Leader and Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Education at the University of Cumbria. She has been a Foundation Stage teacher for 12 years and also a senior advisory teacher for the Foundation Stage within Cumbria Local Education Authority (LEA). Jan has been involved in planning and delivering training to students, and early years educators across the north-west of England in all aspects of young children's learning and the skills adults need to support this.

Chris Barlow lectures in primary geography and history at the University of Cumbria. With 18 successful years in primary education, Chris has been a deputy headteacher and has worked as an advisory teacher for Lancashire LEA. Chris is an experienced subject leader, with an interest in the global dimension, creativity and the development of effective cross-curricular approaches to learning.

Andrea Brook is a senior lecturer in Art and Design at the University of Cumbria with particular interest in book arts and art history and she strongly believes that art can stimulate children in all aspects of their schooling. She has taught in primary schools in the UK, Greece and Austria, where she co-ordinated art in the International School of Vienna.

Dr Hilary Cooper graduated in history and taught for many years in London primary schools. Her doctoral research was on young children's thinking in history, undertaken as a practising class teacher. She was a lecturer in education at Goldsmith's College, London University, before becoming Head of Professional Studies in the Education Department of Lancaster University, and subsequently, Professor of History and Pedagogy at the University of Cumbria. She has published widely on the teaching and learning of history.

Donna Hurford, while working as a primary school teacher, Donna sought opportunities to introduce development education into the curriculum. Her school experience and responsibilities for information and communications technology (ICT) co-ordination enabled her to attain a lecturer post in initial teacher education (ITE). Her current teaching role in higher education, at the University of Cumbria, straddles ICT education and education studies, while her core interest remains with what is now called global citizenship. Part of her role is to support colleagues in the education faculty with the introduction and application of global citizenship themes and principles through a broad range of ITE courses. She has recently returned from a Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) post in the Maldives where she worked as an adviser for the country's Professional Development Unit, a wonderful professional and personal experience which gave her the opportunity to work in partnership with Maldivian colleagues and to experience living in a very different country.

Jo Josephidou has been an early years teacher since 1988. During her career she has worked in both primary and nursery schools across Foundation Stage (FS) and Key Stage I (KS1). Her main areas of interest are early literacy, primary geography, and personal, social and emotional development in young children. She has led on creative curricula in her current role.

Lisa MacGregor has been a primary school teacher for 14 years. She has had experience of teaching children from Nursery to Year 6 in a range of schools. At present she teaches part time in a primary school in Newcastle upon Tyne and lectures part time at the University of Cumbria.

Hugh Moore is a senior lecturer in primary history and early history at the University of Cumbria. He is a trained teacher and museum curator and in a former life ran the museum's education service in Lancaster and in Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

Graham Reeves is Director of Fieldwork Education Services and has been with fieldwork education for 10 years. Graham was formerly head teacher of a large primary school in the UK and has been an inspector for the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), a member of the Special Education Needs Tribunal, visiting lecturer at the universities of Greenwich, London and East London and an acting regional officer for the National Union of Teachers. Graham now works with international schools in many countries. He was responsible for the early development of the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and has provided IPC training to schools in many locations throughout the world.

Chris Rowley is a senior lecturer in environmental and geographical education at the University of Cumbria. He was a member of the committee of the Society to Advance Philosophical Enquiry in Education (SAPERE) from 1997 to 2003. An interest in children's understanding of the environment led him to work with teachers around Morecambe Bay between 2003 and 2004 to co-produce the book *Thinking on The Edge* (Lewis and Rowley, Living Earth, 2004). In 2006 Chris was co-editor of *Geography 3–11* (Fulton).

Martin Skelton is one of the founders of Fieldwork Education. He designed and was Founding Director of the International Primary Curriculum and continues to be closely involved in its development including the recent direction of its Assessment for Learning Programme. Martin also designed the Looking for Learning protocol which is being used by an increasing number of schools in the UK and elsewhere. He is Director of Learning for the WCLS Group of Schools in the USA and Qatar and is currently leading the writing of the social studies curriculum for a country in the Middle East. Martin has worked with thousands of teachers, administrators and schools around the world, and for the past seven years he has been immersed in brain research and its implications for classroom practice.

Sue Temple graduated from Sunderland Polytechnic and specialized in special educational needs with an M.Ed from Newcastle University. She taught in primary schools in the North East for 17 years, teaching from Nursery to Year 6, including special needs responsibilities and acting head of a nursery school. She is currently course leader for primary history at the Carlisle Campus of the University of Cumbria.

Rob Wheatley taught in inner London for 20 years, first at North Westminster Community school and then at Langdon Park School in Tower Hamlets. His subject was Geography but he taught in a humanities faculty throughout his career. He was Head of Humanities at Langdon Park for 12 years. He has written contributions to books on geography and ICT and was the author of a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) geography textbook. Since 1997 he has worked in teacher training, first at the Urban Learning Foundation and, since 1999, at St Martin's College London base in Tower Hamlets, now part of the University of Cumbria. He teaches ICT and geography and is currently undertaking research in newly qualified teachers' experiences of teaching geography.

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Challenging my preconceived ideas: an alternative to Florence Nightingale for a history-focused cross-curricular theme with RE

Sue Temple, with Lisa MacGregor

Chapter introduction

The whole cultural make-up of Britain is changing, with a significant potential impact on the children currently in schools today. We felt it was important to explore ways to reflect this in the curriculum and help prepare these children for that tomorrow. Many schools in the north-west of England have few children who have multicultural backgrounds. Pupils who live in areas where the majority population is white need to understand that the Britain they see around them is not representative of the whole country. We attempted to broaden the children's understanding and knowledge of different cultures and religions by choosing a project which still fitted under the 'umbrella' of the history curriculum but would help the children understand something of what it means to be a member of a religion they were not familiar with. In addition, we wanted to link to the core subjects of literacy and numeracy. The National Curriculum requires that Key Stage 1 children should study the life of a person who is significant in some way. Florence Nightingale is the usual choice but we wanted to consider alternatives from other cultural and religious backgrounds in order to broaden the range of heroes

(Continued)

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and heroines that the children learn about. Many of the famous people children investigate in primary school are male, white and middle class. Noor Inayat Khan did not fall into any of these categories and seemed a good choice. Her life story includes human predicaments, conflicts and difficult decisions made, and therefore would allow the children to begin to understand what is meant by historical interpretations. It is important to avoid presenting a person as totally good, perhaps almost saintly. Children need to understand that we respect real people with human failings who nevertheless lived their lives in an admirable way (Claire, 1996). Jane Mottram, headteacher of Great Corby School, Cumbria, welcomed and supported us in working with staff and pupils of the school.



Choosing the theme and planning

Noor Inayat Khan was brought to our attention in a BBC *Timewatch* documentary which we felt illustrated the potential for a study of her life with primary aged children. Several staff commented that as none of the children had ever heard of her they were all able to start from the same baseline. One teacher commented, 'Everything they found out was new, breaking new ground'. However, this also had disadvantages in finding appropriate resources and information. Another teacher explained 'someone more obvious or well known would have made the research easier'. This shows how important it is to start the planning process in plenty of time to allow for this. Our choice was influenced by a desire to tackle this topic from a cross-curricular viewpoint, exploring the advantages and disadvantages of working alongside religious education (RE), literacy and numeracy. As a Sufi Muslim, Noor met our wish to introduce the children to someone from a different culture and religion as well as to a period in history often covered by the history curriculum. Noor also gave us the potential to include members of the local community, remembering their experiences during the Second World War, helping to involve the whole community, so this was not just a school project that was left at the classroom door. Her experiences as a spy during the Second World War gave scope for including 'spy training' during the week.

Noor Inayat Khan was chosen for a number of reasons. She was: mixed race – American and Indian; a Sufi Muslim; she lived within living memory; and she had an interesting and influential life. In addition, she was

Noor Inayat Khan was born in the Kremlin in 1914. Her great grandfather was a sultan and therefore she was a minor member of the Indian royal family. Noor's father was a Sufi pacifist so she was brought up with these values. Her mother was an American who converted to the Muslim religion. Noor was brought up in France and fled to England when the Nazis invaded Paris. Noor was an accomplished musician, studied child psychology at the Sorbonne and published children's stories. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) in 1940 and trained as a wireless operator. It was noticed that she had perfect French and so she was invited to train as a spy. In many ways this was against her Sufi principles but she felt strongly against the Nazi regime, so she wanted to support the Allies. Noor was sent to Paris with a life expectancy of six weeks. She was the first woman wireless operator to work in Paris. Noor was able to send vital information back to the British government in London. For many weeks she was their only source of information. She managed to evade capture for almost four months, even refusing to be evacuated because she knew how vital her work was. The Gestapo eventually caught her when she was betrayed by a member of the Resistance. Although she did try to escape on several occasions she later died in Dachau Concentration Camp. Noor was one of only three women who were awarded the George Cross for their services during the Second World War.

Figure 6.1 Background information about Noor Inayat Khan

a princess and a spy (potentially appealing to boys and girls in different ways). Finally, there were clear links with a period of history which is covered in the National Curriculum.

The context and preparation

This project was based in a small rural school in Cumbria with 47 pupils currently on its roll. Although our project focused mainly on the Key Stage 1 class, this project was adopted as a whole-school theme for the week. The Year 1 and 2 children were taught together in the mornings. The Reception children, who were taught with the Nursery children in the mornings, joined them in the afternoons. For this week the teachers discussed the different activities and included the Reception children in those tasks felt to be appropriate for them. The school was keen to try out the idea of a week of activities based around one theme but linked through a variety of curriculum subjects. The project could have been tackled over a much longer period of time and could have been developed in more detail and included further subjects. However, we were keen to avoid tenuous links between subjects and as we focused on planning for just a week, this made us consider and prioritize those activities which were really important to develop the children's skills and understanding. None of the staff was experienced in working in this way, although one or two staff had taught in the 1980s when 'topic' themes were common. In some ways this was an

advantage as we were keen to learn from those experiences and find a fresher, more accountable approach, avoiding the tenuous links which were more common then. The whole-school involvement helped to support some of the activities. For example on one day the school kitchen organized a dinner under rationing conditions. As all the staff were included in the planning and drawing up of the timetable for the week, they were able to support each other and generate new ideas through thinking through the project together. A Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) student on her final block placement was also working in the Key Stage 1 class during this time frame and she felt it had been a tremendously worthwhile experience.

Once we had agreed on Noor Inayat Khan and all the staff involved had researched as much information as they could about her, we were then in a position to start the planning process. Initially we compiled a list of possible activities which would help the children to understand Noor and the decisions she made in her life. We wanted to ensure each activity was valuable in its own right as well as contributing to the overall theme. We then decided which subject areas had the most potential in the classroom and for the intended age group. As it had been agreed that this project would only run for a week we had to prioritize, but other suggested activities are available on the website. We decided to focus mainly on history, religious education, numeracy and literacy with some work linked to other subjects. (WM 6.1 Great Corby Key Stage 1 History Planning Noor Inayat Khan Project June 2008.)

History was the main subject of this project as we agreed that 'History is an umbrella discipline; it involves all aspects of the life of a society – its art, music, science, technology, religion. It lies at the core of humanities and involves children's emotional and social as well as cognitive development' (Cooper, 2000: 34). However, religious education was an important partner as the children would not understand the significance of some of the decisions Noor made without a knowledge and understanding of her beliefs and values.

This was a clear example of where cross-curricular planning and approaches work at their best. The children needed both historical and religious concepts, knowledge and understanding in order to benefit fully from a study of this little-known woman. We also agreed strongly with Barnes that 'the curriculum should be packed with opportunities for each child to find his or her strengths and activities which provide genuine challenge and multiple prospects for individual achievement' (Barnes, 2007: 6). By working in a variety of ways and in different environments we hoped to be able to introduce the pupils to more unusual activities which would stretch the more able but also provide the children with special needs a suitable level of challenge too. Our planning therefore followed these principles:

- Subjects included should arise from the topic.
- Lead with one subject, with cross-curricular activities arising from the central focus.
- Focus and drive the topic with key questions.
- Address the nature and the objectives of each subject included.
- Every topic will provide a context for literacy learning.

The head teacher was keen that the week also included some kind of ‘wow’ activity which would help to make the project more memorable. Due to the strong links between the university and Tullie House Museum, Carlisle, we were able to organize a sleepover for the children at the museum which would further broaden the range of activities and experiences that we were able to provide. This further strengthened the idea of involving a wide range of adults and audiences. The children were able to explore a range of Second World War artefacts and make identity cards and gas-mask boxes which they were required to carry everywhere. The air raid siren was set off several times over the evening to encourage the children to empathize with those who experienced this during the war. Following their discussions with older members of the community about air raids this made those experiences, which had been talked about, much more real and gave the evening impact, especially when we had evacuated to the bike shed outside and there was then an enormous roll of thunder! It may well be that the enduring memory of the week is related to this experience and not those back in the classroom. This is an important lesson for us in that we should be striving to include learning outside the classroom (DfES, 2006) at every opportunity to broaden the children’s experiences and understanding of the world around them.

Links to key policy documents

Through this project we aimed to fulfil these aims taken from a variety of wider perspectives in addition to the National Curriculum itself. The QCA’s *Big Picture* (2008) for example identifies that:

The curriculum aims to enable all young people to become

- Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- Confident individuals who are able to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

We considered new documentation, for example the *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* (DfES, 2004) agenda and the *Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto* (DfES, 2006) as well as statutory expectations, in planning this project. We attempted to include a

wide range of people, resources, different environments and events within this themed week, to match the needs and abilities of the children.

Challenging preconceptions

Children hold many preconceived ideas and stereotypes which are often not explored or addressed during their school life – sometimes staff may not even be aware of them. As the project developed we became aware that some children had different levels of understanding in some areas and we were able to address these issues. For example, several children thought that the religion of Islam had been followed in the past but that no one was a Muslim now. More obvious stereotypes were what princesses were capable of and that spies were men. Conversely, one or two children had very developed ideas which were not stereotypical at all. We deliberately explored these more general ideas in our first activity by asking the children to draw and annotate pictures of a princess and a spy. There were some interesting results – some very predictable – the spies were variously described as ‘sinister’, ‘cool’, ‘sneaky’, ‘undercover’, ‘spooky’ and ‘disguisable’. More unusually they were also described as ‘French’, ‘ugly’, ‘small’, ‘wear black clothing’ and only one child had drawn the spy as a woman.

Child A also described her spy as ‘half-sided’. When I asked her to elaborate on this she explained that ‘you only get to know one side of a spy and you never know the other half’. Quite sophisticated reasoning for a 7-year-old! The images of both the spies and the princesses were obviously heavily influenced by the television programmes, stories and films the children had been exposed to. The princesses were portrayed as ‘pretty’, ‘posh’, ‘happy’, ‘kind’, ‘special’ and ‘beautiful’, but also ‘distressed’, ‘proud’, ‘smart’ and ‘she is big because she ate too much’!

Developing the history component

(See WM 6.1.)

Knowledge skills and understanding (KSU) 1: Chronological understanding

The children were given a variety of photographs of Noor throughout her life. They were asked to order these chronologically. They worked in small groups and had to discuss and justify their decisions. An

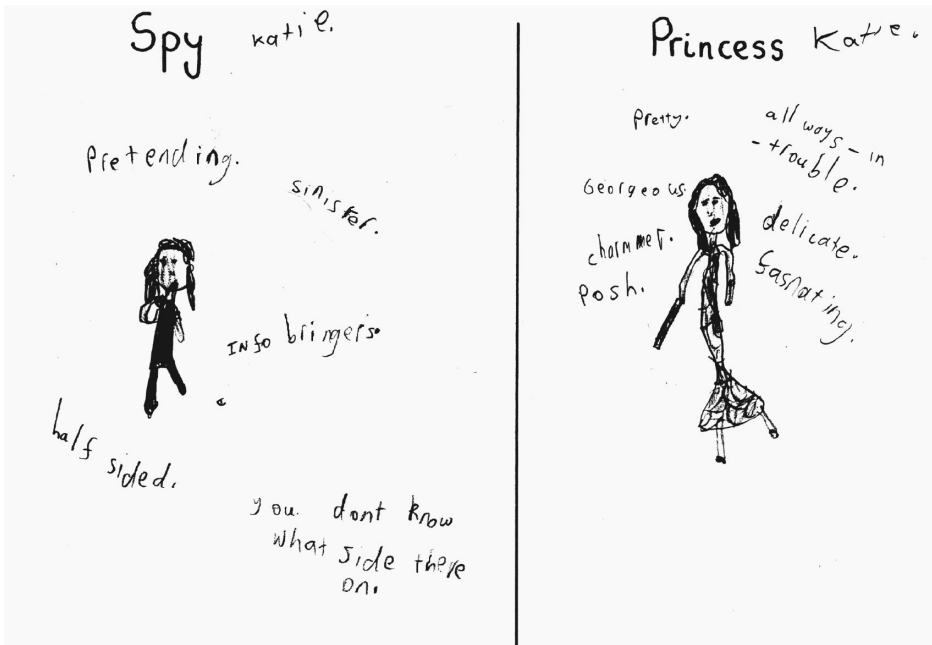


Figure 6.2 Child's work: princess/spy

extension of this activity was undertaken by the Key Stage 2 children, which entailed producing their own time-lines of her life based on further research (also fulfils KSU 5).

KSU 2: Knowledge and understanding

All the activities helped to support this strand.

KSU 3: Historical interpretation

The children were introduced to Noor through a suitcase activity. The suitcase contained a sari, small paintbrushes, sheet music, a lipstick and necklace, a notebook and pen, a family photograph, an identity card and a magnifying glass.

The children were encouraged to consider each item and decide if the clues it provided gave them facts about the owner of the suitcase, or if they could make educated guesses about her. For example, the lipstick and necklace indicated that the owner was probably female and the ID card gave information about her, including her name, date of birth and height.

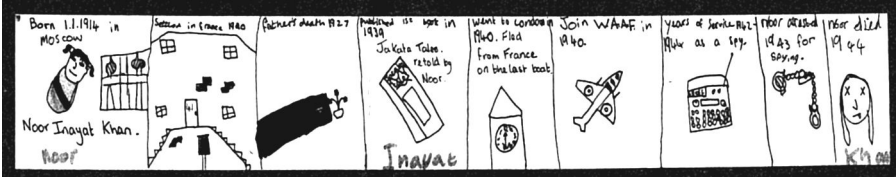


Figure 6.3 Time-line work



Three children working on timelines

After looking at phrases taken from the reports written about Noor during her training, they used them to write a reference for Noor, deciding for themselves which phrases they would include, as the phrases were both negative and positive.

The older members of the community were invited to talk about their memories of life during the Second World War. Prior to the oral history session the children prepared relevant questions to ask their visitors.

The children took part in a role-play activity where they assumed the roles of Noor, Buckmaster (Head of Special Operations Executive) and Vera Baker (Noor's immediate boss). Noor and Vera had to persuade Buckmaster that Noor was ready to be sent to Paris.



Child working on reports

KSU 4: Historical enquiry

The children used computers to access a variety of suitable websites to answer a set of given questions (available on the website WL 6.1–6.6). As an extension some children found extra dates related to Noor's life to add to their time-line.

The museum visit

Organizing a sleepover in the museum

This was one aspect of the week which worked extremely well – a testament to the staff at Tullie House who put in so much effort. There are many considerations as museums are usually under the control of the city or local council, so there may be slightly different regulations to abide by than those schools are used to. For example:

- The museum staff had to be confident that everyone had an up-to-date CRB check.
- Boys and girls had to sleep in separate areas of the museum – with implications for staffing.

- Separate toilet and washing facilities for each group may be necessary.
- An extra member of staff had to sleep in the room with all the alarms.
- Tullie House has a restaurant but arrangements for staff to work in the evening and early morning to make breakfasts had to be made.
- Arrangements for lighting, heating and any audio in the galleries had to be considered.
- Sleeping arrangements had to be arranged taking into account fire exits, and a fire drill had to be undertaken as part of the introductory talk.
- The local fire brigade and police should be informed if this is not a regular occurrence.
- Transport arrangements to and from the museum – parents brought the children to the museum on the Thursday evening and a bus returned them to school the next morning – staff therefore had to arrange lifts to the museum with their cars left at the school ready for the next day!
- Think carefully about which day to have the sleepover – you will not get much sleep so we would advise a Thursday evening so you only have to teach for one day before you can have a lie-in!

We were lucky that so many staff from the museum and school, and university students, were all prepared to give up their time for this, but there will be a minimum number of staff required for supervision. We all slept in sleeping bags but some of the children also had blow-up mattresses or yoga mats to make it a little more comfy. Some museums may not be big enough, or may not be prepared to allow you to sleep there. In this case, why not consider arranging the sleepover in the school itself?

As part of the museum visit, the children were involved in an artefacts activity. This was led by a museum education officer who was dressed in clothes from the time. The room had tables which were covered with a range of artefacts from this period in history. Volunteers were used to represent members of a family. As each child was chosen, information was given regarding their character. They were dressed in appropriate clothing and had to find artefacts that each character would have used. For example, Mr Bell caught rabbits to supplement the family's diet so the child was asked to find a suitable artefact that might have been used (a rabbit net). It caused great amusement that the toilet paper was just torn up newspaper!

KSU 5: Organization and communication

At the end of the week a whole-class assembly was held for the parents. The children decided themselves which information to present and in what order. The assembly included:

- the James Bond theme music played by three pupils on their guitars
- coded messages for the parents to decode for a prize
- rewritten stories from the Jakata Tales (children's stories written by Noor)



Child in period clothing

- examples of prayer mats and mendhi patterns
- time-lines and basic information about Noor's life
- songs from the time, for example, Run Rabbit Run.

Developing the religious education component

Learning about religion

The National Curriculum non-statutory guidance:

1 Pupils should be taught to:

(c) identify the importance, for some people, of belonging to a religion and recognize the difference this makes to their lives

(d) explore how religious beliefs and ideas can be expressed through the arts and communicate their responses (from non-statutory national framework).

Activities to develop understanding of Islam

The following desirable learning outcomes were chosen:

- To know some of the basic facts about Islam.
- To understand what being a Muslim involves.
- To know and understand some of the symbols used in Islamic art.

The pupils were introduced to Noor's religion through a variety of activities. The children examined prayer beads and made prayer mats. The pattern and pictures point to the top of the mat as this will be facing Mecca. In Islamic art no animals or people can be represented. Muslims use plants, flowers and geometrical shapes. The patterns are usually symmetrical and use bright colours, for example red and gold. The Arabic alphabet and calligraphy using words to make patterns were also popular.

They learnt about the Qur'ān (Koran) and how precious it is to Muslims. This book is kept wrapped up and placed on the highest shelf in the room with nothing placed on top. Muslims must follow a special ritual of washing before reading this book. They also discussed that Muslims learn to read the Qur'ān which is written in another language (Arabic).

Further activities included talking to a teacher (Lisa MacGregor) who has experience of teaching Muslim children. The children were introduced to the different clothes that these children often wear out of school. As part of their school uniform these children have adapted versions, for example, wearing hijab (fitted headscarf) and khameez (long tunic) but in the school colours. The sari had been introduced during one of the history sessions. Many children were interested in the amount of time Muslim children spend at their mosques every day; this makes a significant difference to their lives. English is spoken as a second language for many of the Muslim children at Lisa's school. The children were encouraged to empathize with these children who have to learn through English, even though it is not their first language, and what this might feel like.

Learning from religion

The National Curriculum Non-statutory guidance:

2. Pupils should be taught to:

(e) recognize that religious teachings and ideas make a difference to individuals, families and the local community.

Lisa was able to explain how the fasting is accommodated in her school during the month of Ramadan. At the end of Ramadan the children celebrate Īd-ul-Fitr (*Eid*) which is a family time when everyone wears new clothes, exchanges cards and gifts, visits family and friends' houses and has a three-day feast of special foods. Women use henna to decorate their hands with elaborate patterns at this time and other special occasions. The children drew round their hands and designed their own mendhi patterns.

The children really grappled with the concept of fasting as this was something very new to most of them. Some children of their age actually attempt the fasting and the children tried hard to empathize with this idea.

The Great Corby children also struggled to come to terms with the fact that some Muslim children go to their mosque for two hours every night, leaving little time for the kinds of activities they normally did in the evenings.

The children were asked to think about how the sense of community is in some ways very similar to what they experience in their own small village. We tried to help the children understand that this religion helped Noor become strong and disciplined, which is why she could do what she did during the war.

Sufi, a branch of Islam

There are three main branches of Islam, one of which is Sufism. These Muslims use music, drumming and dance in their worship. Sufis are pacifists, this means they do not believe in violence and must always tell the truth. Muslims believe religion affects everything they do in their lives, so how they live their lives is very important to ensure they become close to God in paradise when they die. Sufis believe they can become close to God while alive. The term Sufi comes from the word *suf*, meaning wool. This is because Sufis wore clothes made of undyed wool as a way of demonstrating they had given up worldly goods and pleasures.

Once the children had grasped the basics of Islam they were then introduced to the idea that Noor was a Sufi pacifist Muslim. This was explained so the children could appreciate that there are different groups within Islam in the same way as Catholics, Methodists and Protestants are all Christians. This information had to be kept to quite a simple level but we wanted to ensure the children fully understood how Noor had been brought up to reject all forms of violence. These aspects were introduced through circle time discussions, with artefacts to engage and encourage questioning and discussion.

Developing the literacy component

Speaking and listening

Desirable learning outcomes:

To be able to listen and ask questions.

To be able to sustain listening and concentration while guests are speaking.

The whole week gave lots of opportunities for speaking and listening as so many extra adults were available for the children to talk to about and

during the activities in the week. These ranged from university lecturers, visiting teachers, trainee teachers and older members of the local community, staff at the museum and family and friends. As previously mentioned, older members of the community were invited in to remember their Second World War childhoods. Some of these people were rather hard of hearing so the children had to take this into account when asking their questions. The children were also encouraged to try and stay on the topic and take into account previous questions and answers during discussions. In some instances the reminiscences varied considerably; this helped the children to appreciate different experiences of the war.

The children took part in a role-play activity in small groups and a whole-school assembly (see history activities, WM 6.2 web material) which developed their language skills further.

Reading

Desirable learning outcomes:

- To be able to extract information from a variety of texts.
- To be able to use the organizational features of websites to find information.

In order to find out about Noor and her life, the children accessed a range of appropriate websites. They had to navigate their way through these sites to find relevant information, which was used to inform their writing. The children also had to read some simple primary sources. These were carefully chosen to ensure appropriate reading levels.

Writing

Desirable learning outcomes:

- To be able to write full sentences with correct punctuation.
- To understand that writing differs depending on purpose and audience.
- To be able to order events and include detail.

A variety of written tasks was undertaken by the children. These included writing letters and diary entries in role as Noor, writing a reference for Noor as well as making notes from the websites to aid their writing. A time-line of Noor's life was also devised. For the whole-school assembly the children wrote individual invitations to their family and friends giving relevant information.

Developing numeracy

Desirable learning outcomes:

- To be able to use number to solve problems.
- To be able to use mental strategies to solve problems.
- To know basic number facts up to ten.
- To be able to use and write coordinates.

These activities were approached with the premise that this was the kind of training spies would have received. Spies need to be able to follow instructions, solve codes and read clues. The children were encouraged to undertake the activities in 'role' as spies with the teacher acting as the head of MI5. On a carousel of activities, making use of the extra available adults, the pupils were given two maps with differing scales and they had to find the coordinates of particular significant landmarks in the village and in the playground. They then had to follow a set of instructions around the playground finding letter clues to unscramble in order to identify a word (superspy!). Obviously this activity had strong links with geography as well as numeracy. A further task was to follow instructions to programme the Beebots (a programmable electronic toy). On another day the children had to work out basic number facts, differentiated to their ability, in order to work out a code name for themselves. They were all given a code-breaker and they then had to work out their own set of clues. The children had been allocated names, depending on their own particular interests and hobbies.

They then had to work as a group to work out further clues, find the double agent and break the clue of where the treasure was hidden. It was interesting that the children did not view either of these lessons as numeracy as one child asked on the third morning, 'Are we not doing any numeracy this week?' The children thoroughly enjoyed these activities and some were obviously not aware just how much they were practising their numeracy skills.

Values

We wanted the children to begin to appreciate why Noor made some of the decisions she did, which were influenced by her beliefs.

Much of this information was introduced to the children gradually over the week. We did not go into details about her death in the concentration camp as we felt this was unnecessary with children of this age. Many of the children were able to grasp why she had left her weapon

'Though she firmly believed that Britain should give Indians their freedom, Noor was convinced that Indian leaders should not press for independence when Britain had its hands full fighting the war. She felt that if the Indians backed Britain and won many gallantry medals it would create a sense of confidence in them, and the British would readily grant independence to India after the war' (Basu, 2006: 45).

Noor left Paris and fled to England where she decided to support the allies against the Nazis as she felt they were the greater threat to personal liberty and she believed that by making her own small contribution this would help to work towards the greater aim of Indian independence. She joined the WAAF in order to do this in a non-violent way, as she was a pacifist (non-violent). Originally she trained as a wireless operator. This was very different from the life she was used to but Noor was determined to adapt to it. Following her training she worked transmitting and receiving messages. Although this was allowing her to work in a non-violent job helping the cause, she still had to make many compromises in her day-to-day life as she was not openly living as a Sufi Muslim. Noor hid all personal details about her previous life from her new colleagues, even to the point of adopting a more British name (Nora Baker) and appearing to follow the Church of England faith. Once Noor was identified as a possible Special Operations Executive (SOE) officer, or spy, the expectation that she might have to use violent actions became more apparent. She was trained to use firearms, though her superiors commented she appeared to be frightened of these weapons. Although she went through the training she actually left her gun behind when she was sent to Paris.

Figure 6.4 Further information about Noor Inayat Khan

behind and explain and give explanations for this. One child explained 'because of her being a Muslim she wasn't allowed to kill people' and another clarified 'she wouldn't want to take it in case she used it in a bad situation because she wouldn't be able to forgive herself'. It is clear from comments like this the children were able to begin to give explanations for Noor's motives.

In order to fully understand Noor and her values, the children needed to learn about Noor's life and her beliefs together, not as two different aspects of the curriculum, but as two strands of one woman's life. Although this project was limited to a week we felt the children had begun to understand why Noor had made the decision to become a spy. By this point they had learned a great deal about her life and religion, and we wanted to see to what extent they were beginning to grasp the values she held dear. At the sleepover we were able to talk to the children informally about their feelings about the activities and Noor herself and gauge their understanding of the dilemmas she faced. We were impressed by the discussions the children could hold, making their points and backing these up with quite sophisticated reasoning.

It is often through the content that it is easiest to combine subjects but we do need to be careful to ensure that the integrity of the subject itself is not lost. The children needed to learn not only about Noor and her life, but also to develop some of the skills of being a historian; asking relevant questions, enquiry, deducting, classifying, interpreting, comparing, organizing and communicating what they have discovered – all

important historical skills. The choice of Noor Inayat Khan as the focus of the project seemed to work extremely well. As the staff were intrigued by Noor, their enthusiasm was communicated to the children who became equally interested in this woman's unusual life. There had been some concerns expressed that perhaps we were expecting too much of the younger children, but this proved to be unfounded and in fact the children exceeded our expectations. This is another important lesson – do not underestimate the abilities of your children, and of younger pupils in particular.

Conclusions

The overwhelming feeling of all those involved in this project was that, although it was a great deal of work, it was ultimately extremely successful. Comments included:

- 'Lots of work but worth it.'
- 'You won't fit it all in but go with the flow.'
- 'It was fun for teachers and pupils.'
- 'The children (and us!) learnt a lot.'
- 'Do it – it's worthwhile – it's a lot of work but good teamwork helps with this.'

Overall the staff felt the week worked very well for the children too. The teachers commented 'the children learnt a lot', 'enjoyed the interaction with other adults', and 'they had learnt loads by the end of the week, they didn't see it as lessons; seemed as though the pressure was off and so they learnt and remembered much more'. Evidently it was felt the children had gained a great deal from this way of working. Barnes (2007: 9) commented that children learn best 'in cross curricular and authentic contexts' and it was a hope that this context would prove to be authentic for everyone involved. This was particularly relevant in the literacy and numeracy activities, as they gave the children a concrete context in which to practise their skills. The teachers felt this was particularly important as so often these subjects are taught in isolation without this context. With the push to improve standards, we must not forget that children need to develop and practise their skills in a variety of situations in order to internalize these abilities.

The staff felt that with some help and support they would be able and more than willing to attempt this kind of project again. Teachers commented that they would need 'the support of an appropriate professional' and 'links with the students, Tullie House etc., which are essential', while another felt 'a pack to guide you' would be useful. I think

the staff are underestimating their own knowledge and capabilities here. I can see that help in identifying suitable themes or projects would be useful but I am sure the vast majority of teachers, especially working as a team within their own schools, could organize a project just as successful as this one proved to be.

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Also used 'Liberte: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan' written by Year 6 children, Chorlton Church of England Primary School, Manchester, available from Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre, Ground Floor, Devonshire House, University Precinct Centre, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

Weblinks (see also the website of this book)

The websites we found were aimed mainly at adults so have to be used with care:

- WL6.1 www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/inayat_khan_noor.shtml
- WL6.2 www.historylearningsite.co.uk/noor_inayat_khan.htm
- WL6.3 www.writespirit.net/authors/noor_inayat_khan
- WL6.4 www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/SOEnoor.htm
- WL6.5 www.bbc.co.uk/history/programmes/timewatch/gallery_spy_06.shtml
- WL6.6 www.the-south-asian.com/Sept2001/Noor%20Inayat%20Khan1.htm

7

Comparing life today with someone's in the past: history, geography, literacy, mathematics, science, art, design and technology

Jen Ager

Chapter introduction

This chapter needs to be read in conjunction with the Teachers TV programme that accompanies it (WL 7.1) and associated analysis video and resources on the same site. Here Jen Ager describes the challenges and the rewards of planning and teaching an intensive week looking at the values of Tudor explorers and leads on to the key themes identified in the Teachers TV analysis video: identifying the values specific to the time; historical thinking; questioning; progression and finally shared enquiry. The history-focused project draws on a number of other areas of the curriculum.



Tudor exploration and settlement

Rationale for a cross-curricular approach

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) stresses that schools have freedom to teach in a cross-curricular way:

Within the curriculum, teachers and schools have the freedom to decide how to arrange learning in school today – there is no requirement for subjects to be taught discretely – they can be grouped or taught through subjects – if strong enough links are created between subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills can be used across the whole curriculum. (DfES, 2003: 17)

It was apparent, when I started planning this topic, that it could provide a fantastic opportunity for cross-curricular planning and, on closer inspection, through considering values and attitudes of people in the past, many aspects of personal, social and health education permeated the topic; for example, developing empathy for others, tolerance, fairness and justice, challenging stereotypes. The values underpinning each objective are highlighted in the medium-term plan (WM 7.1). 'Interdisciplinary/cross-curricular teaching involves a conscious effort to apply knowledge, principles, and/or values to more than one academic discipline simultaneously. The disciplines may be related through a central theme, issue, problem, process, topic or experience' (Jacobs, 1989: 54).

The planning process

When I first began to consider my plans for investigating the question, 'Why did the Tudors explore outside Europe?', I asked myself what exactly I wanted the children to achieve from the unit. I did some research and scribbled my ideas under headings. By involving other subjects in this enquiry, children at different levels of maturity and ability and with different learning styles could engage with it through a variety of different practical and enjoyable activities.

I jotted down my headings and notes:

- Why?
 - Explorers: competition with Spain/national pride – money, (piracy), plunder, trade, new trade routes.
 - Settlers: over-population, new ways of life, own religious practices and beliefs.
- How?
 - Life on board ship, galleons, working children, diet, new navigation equipment.
- Impact on our lives today.
 - Changes in geographical understanding – earth not flat, world maps, charts for sailors, scientific discoveries – navigational aids, trade – London trading companies, beginnings of globalization, new diseases, new foods.

As a result I found a plethora of questions building up in my mind. How was I to teach all this in a block of seven history lessons? What were the cross-curricular opportunities under each heading? What were the opportunities to build in values education? How could I tackle some of the more complicated issues in such a short period of time? What conceptual understanding did I want the children to reach?

As a result of the wealth of subject matter available it was decided to teach this unit in a targeted focus week. One advantage of this was that

the children would find it easier to concentrate their thinking. It is interesting to contrast this with the long-term theme used in Chapter 8 where a different type of theme benefited from the opportunity to return to ideas as they developed. Here, however, it was clear that a strong focus would benefit from the intensive model.

Nevertheless, as a result of the nature of my class, I decided to keep numeracy sessions mainly separate and in the mornings, enabling the keen mathematicians in the group to maintain the impetus of the current work in numeracy.

Activities planned in different subjects, which have a values dimension, and are central to the enquiry

The planning process involved particular challenges because of the decision to integrate a values dimension. I needed to devise activities which would enable children to consider the points of view, behaviour and motivations of people in the past, and to express their own opinions about them. I was aware of the controversial and often emotional aspects of history, particularly when studying what we would now see as unfair treatment of others, and that this may also be the case where there are disparities between what is taught in school history, family/community histories and other histories (WL 7.2). We have to be careful about discussing religious differences, treatment of indigenous peoples, population growth, emigration, and so on.

Figure 7.1 shows how I planned to combine different subjects within the enquiry, 'Why did the Tudors explore outside Europe?' WM 7.1 shows the medium-term plan for these activities. WM 7.2 is the timetable of the cross-curricular theme over one week.

History

I had decided that the content of the enquiry would be why and how the Tudors undertook journeys of exploration and their impact on our world today. These big questions would be explored as open-ended questions through discussion, in relation to different practical activities.

I made a mental note to remember that discussion, in history, is concerned with questions of time and change, causes and effects, or with discussing what artefacts are, how they may have been made and used by people in the past, and, most importantly, that sometimes there is no right answer – although opinions must be supported with reasons. The activities I decided upon are listed below.

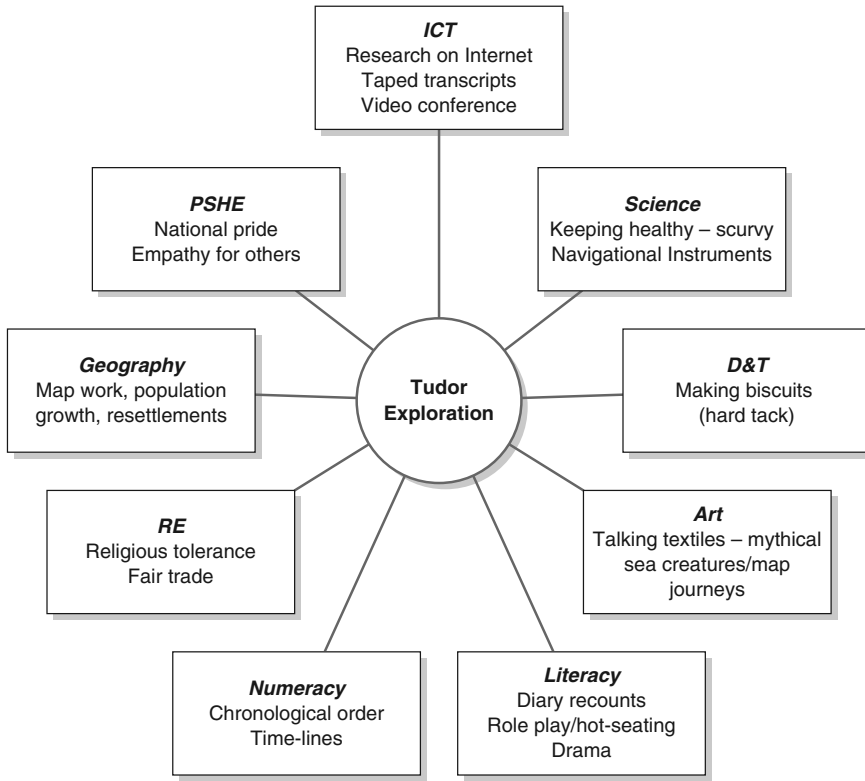


Figure 7.1 A model of how the theme could be taught simultaneously in other subject areas

History activities

- 1 Theatre workshop. Before the week of the project, the children embarked on an intensive day working with the Lynx Theatre Workshop (Lynx Theatre in Education Project) to produce a ‘Play in a Day’ on the subject of Tudor explorers, which would be performed to the rest of the school. The aim was to nurture their imagination and creative thinking. It was to be a shared experience which enabled everyone to access some of the more complex history content I planned to cover.
- 2 Concept maps. The first activity of the week was to make concept maps showing what the children already knew about Tudor explorers, using symbols, words and pictures. Everyone felt able to attempt this, following the play-making session.
- 3 Time-lines and maps. Large time-lines and maps, showing different journeys of exploration and of settlement in Roanoke, were made for the classroom walls, using secondary sources, reference books and the Internet. These could be used for future reference.

(Weblink 7.3.)



Sketching and planning a journey

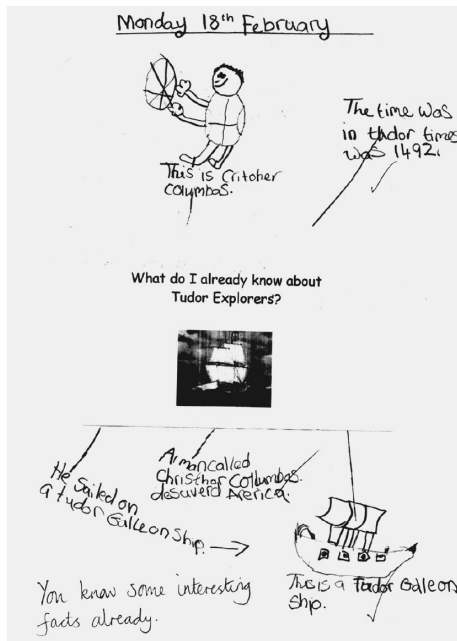


Figure 7.2 An example of a concept map

History and information and communication technology

I wanted to make learning as interactive and enjoyable as possible but, in rural Cumbria, we did not have immediate access to any museums on seafaring and were not within easy reach of a coastline to stimulate or excite children. After further Internet research I found that I could book an interactive lesson on Tudor explorers with an expert at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. This worked extremely well. At 10.00, dead on cue, we were connected with the museum. Throughout, the children were able to talk to the museum educator, ask questions and see exhibits. It was truly interactive and connected us with an expert in a world famous museum who could help us with our enquiries. I thoroughly recommend it.

The film crew

While teaching this week we had Teachers TV filming for two days in order to make two programmes based on exploring Tudor values. This added another dimension to the week and the class learnt a lot of media and film techniques, alongside performing in front of an audience.

Activities involving history, literacy and empathy

A huge amount of speaking and listening skills were involved as many lessons were discussion based and involved small groups

History, explorers, literacy and understanding others

- 1 Poetry. In one session the children lined up outside the classroom door in silence after break, in order to walk through a 'magic arch' made by two children in the doorway. This enabled them to enter a totally blacked-out room except for a candle on each table. There was a hush of expectation as I moved around the tables with my candle, reading (*The Golden Hind*, Rona Dixon, February 2006; WL 7.4). This describes the life of a cabin boy on a sailing ship, the weather, the dark and cramped conditions, fear and loneliness. Any immediate follow-up was unnecessary and would have ruined the powerful effect.
- 2 Hot-seating. Attempts to bring the whole experience to life included using hot-seating and role-play situations to make historical figures 'come alive' in the children's eyes. (On the video there is a wonderful clip of the children generating questions to put to Sir Francis Drake.) The children first generated and wrote down their questions, when Sir Francis (identified by the pewter jug he carried as a stimulus and prop) emerged. 'He' was able to give valid answers to their questions using knowledge from previous lessons.

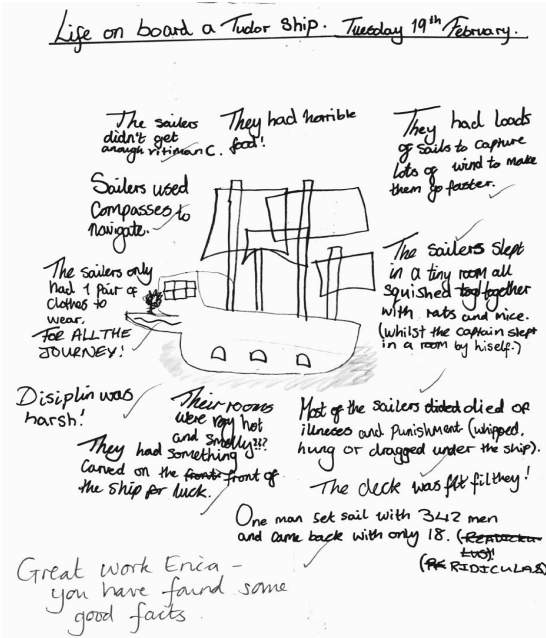


Figure 7.3 Life on board a Tudor ship

Later children wrote more questions for ‘an ordinary sailor’ who was able to give them a very different picture of life on board, much of it drawn from the poem the children had heard and from a discussion of weevils, rats, scurvy and ‘hard tack’.

History, literacy and settlers, and understanding others

A visit to the wild shores of Virginia: emotional literacy, tolerance, indigenous peoples and fairness.

After finding out about explorers we considered Tudor people who chose to emigrate and settle in Roanoke in America, which was renamed Virginia. (As Rosa said, ‘The people who lived there might have been a little bit cross because they’d given it their own name and they come along and rename it’.)

Children discussed why they might have decided to come here and questions of religious tolerance, the initial generosity of the Native Americans, the possible reasons why their feelings changed, including exploitation by the settlers, and the mysterious reasons for the settlers’ disappearance.

But to engage children’s imagination, before I embarked on these quite complex discussions, we first made our way, on a very cold, rainy and windy afternoon, down the farm path opposite the school until all we could see were hills, grass and trees, with no sign of habitation. The

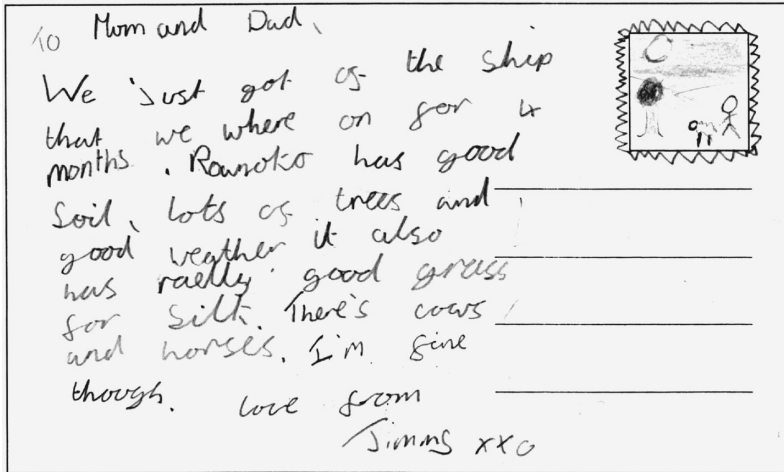


Figure 7.4 A message from Roanaoke

children were told that they had just landed in America. They discussed what they would need to do to provide themselves with shelter, warmth and food in the immediate and longer term, using only the resources they could see or knew could be found here.

Back in the warm classroom they worked in groups to sequence activities on cards in order to prioritize what they must do to survive. This gave rise to some interesting differences of opinion; for example would it be a good idea to start trying to convert the indigenous people, and if not, why not?

I persuaded my reluctant husband to record a first-hand account of what life was like in Roanoke written by one of the settlers (WL 7.5). Children used atlases to follow the journey. Then they discussed knowledge they had about life on board ship from the poetry, the vast distances and time involved, and awareness of how they and other people might be feeling. Children were asked to imagine that they were part of this party of settlers and write their own message home, describing their feelings and experiences and how life had changed since they had left England. Figure 7.4 shows one of their messages.

History, art and design

Drawing artefacts

These were borrowed from Tullie House Museum, Carlisle (for example, leather plate, pewter jug, boatswain's whistle, astrolabe). Children then wrote descriptive captions saying what they thought they were, how

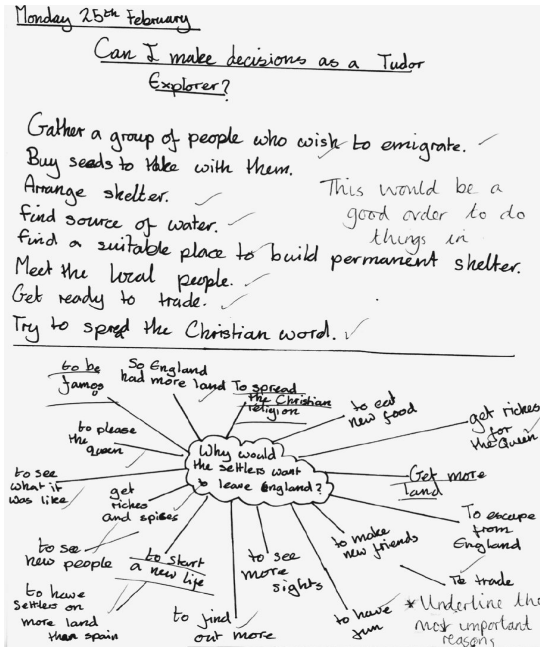


Figure 7.5 A pupil tries to understand why anyone would emigrate in Tudor times

they were made and who may have used them. These were used later in a hot-seating activity.

I used the QCA document *Talking Textiles* (QCA, 2000) to plan another art activity. In response to accounts and poems from sailors, symbols used in maps in the Tudor period and from their own imagination, children sketched mythical sea creatures. They used these sketches to design and make their own mythical sea creature. The individual pieces were then joined together as an account of Tudor sailors' response to and feelings about the sea.

History, science, design and technology and understanding others

Hard tack

I consulted the National Curriculum objective 5a, 'Keeping healthy', and decided that making 'hard tack' would be an interesting way to get children of all abilities to think about diet, food conservation and health, and to understand a little better the hardships of Tudor explorers. They made it, in small groups, and ate it the following day with water and salted meat.



Using flour, salt and water to make hard tack – a seafarer’s standard fare

Teacher: What is hard tack made of?

Pupil: Water, salt and flour.

Teacher: Is it tasty? Think, when all the fresh food ran out this could have been one of the few things they would have on board to eat.

Pupil: It must have been horrible. It would have rats on and weevils. They’d get scurvy. That’s what the lady at the Maritime Museum was talking about.

Teacher: What’s scurvy?

Pupil: It’s when your gums bleed, your teeth fall out and you haven’t eaten enough vitamins.

History and geography

Children studied maps, globes and measurement of distance and time, discussed population growth in Tudor times and today and its implications, where to create a new settlement and how this might be done using available resources, and the effects of weather. However there were no discrete geography lessons.

Mathematics

Again there were no discrete lessons in mathematics but there was much use of time-lines at the beginning of the topic and measurement

of time and distance using ratio and scale. My main aim was not to expect the children to remember precise dates but to have some understanding of where the Tudors stand in relation to other periods they have learned about, how long ago this was and the times and distances involved in the voyages.

What others said about the project

Martha in class 5: 'I like doing different things mixed up with the Tudors, like Tudors mixed in with literacy. It's cool because you do history in all different types of things. You learn loads.'

Two viewers of the television programmes: 'Fantastic work by this teacher! Really useful learning experiences and an inspiration to my own teaching of this subject through the curriculum areas' and 'We are just starting to introduce cross-curricular topic work in our school next academic year. Great idea to take a whole week to really immerse the children in the topic. I loved the way the children were taught historical thinking and to ask open questions. I'm sure this class will remember that week well into their adulthood. Great stuff.'

Such comments made the trauma of being televised for a week worthwhile!

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