



## **EXCELLENCE IN CITIES ACTION ZONES**

### **SOUTH WEST MIDDLESBROUGH EDUCATION ACTION ZONE**

**Case Study in:** Hemlington Hall Primary School

**Action Plan link:** Priority 2 Teaching and learning

#### **Focus of study - theme and pupils identified**

A session was arranged by the action zones in January 2005 with Barry Hymer on Philosophy for Children (P4C) and Martyn Walker attended this from this school. He is a member of the teaching and learning focus group in the action zones and decided to trial this approach in a Y5 class with a second Y5/6 class as the control group.

The study group has had a 30-40 minute philosophy session included in their weekly timetable for the past two terms. The sessions are based upon the model seen in the INSET session, with slight modification to fit in with the particular needs of the children.

#### **Strategies and Action**

The teacher goes over the process of P4C and then introduces the stimulus based on a text or video clip. The pupils are required to work in pairs to generate some questions which will lead to a good philosophical debate. After several minutes of talk time, each pair then presents a question to the whole class group. Using an omni voting process the class then votes on the suggestions and the question with most votes is the centre of the debate.

As the debate flows, facilitated by the teacher, pupils suggest ideas, question and challenge the ideas being put forward. The facilitator/teacher rounds off the discussion with a worthwhile conclusion.

At the conclusion there is a 'Socrates round', where each child has the option to make a final statement.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The rules of philosophy were quickly established at the outset. These were reiterated at the beginning of the session. The children learnt that the 4C, caring/creative/collaborative/co-operative 'rules' were not merely rhetoric, and adhered to these to ensure the session was controlled and productive.

The children came to realise that philosophy was a way for a different type of behaviour and achievement to come to the fore.

The stimuli for the sessions were varied, and reflected the success that the group experienced during the sessions.

#### **Observed/perceived benefits**

- ✓ The session immediately became a session to look forward to. The range of starting points was welcomed.
- ✓ Initially the discipline required to instill the 4cs was time consuming, and needed much reinforcement. Quickly the group took these requirements on board, and the framework

- of the sessions was in place.
- ✓ The children were initially very interested in the concept of doing something new. This quickly grew to anticipation at what the new stimulus would be each week. At each parents evening the children were asked to list the activities they had particularly enjoyed or learned from. The philosophy sessions have remained in the top three throughout.

### **Outcomes identified and improvements noted**

Children who would normally be reticent in lessons have been proactive in putting ideas forward.

Speaking and listening skills and manners have rocketed in sessions. Children who address each other aggressively in a normal situation, intercede in a polite and compassionate way, "I disagree with you XXXX, I think that...."

The quality of questions formulated by the children has vastly improved in depth and relevance. They now know what makes a good debate question.

This quality allows a cross-curricular use that is easily utilized, giving the children a quality experience to talk/write about. The use of a smoking dummy in 5A Healthy Eating was used as the stimulus. The question created, "Why does the government allow the sale of cigarettes?" To extended writing, persuasive letter writing. This in turn led to the letters being posted to an on-line newspaper.

#### **Comparison to control group.**

At the beginning of the second half of the summer term, the two classes were mixed. The control group is much less willing to contribute in debate type situation. This is across the board, not just in philosophy. The control group does not work as well in collaborative groups, and are less able to wait their turn, or speak courteously to their peers.

### **Future developments**

It is intended to use the school professional development day in October 2005 as a platform to launch Philosophy for Children in the school, supported by a description of noticed benefits from the Y5 trial.

Further developments included the opportunity to monitor and or lead philosophy sessions within the school and to feedback the school wide benefits to action zones' teaching and learning styles group.

**Date: July 2005**

**Signed: Martyn Walker**