

Control Activity

Time: Approx 5mins

This activity takes place at the beginning of the lesson and sets the tone by gaining the pupils' interest and attention. It settles them ready for a quick start to the lesson and is most suited for the beginning of a lesson on control.

Learning Objectives:

- ☺ Pupils are introduced to the idea that when a computer is programmed to carry out a particular task, sets of instructions are input line by line.
- ☺ Pupils then compare this to the way humans often read a set of instructions, make sense of them and then execute the task compensating for errors.

I gave the class the following set of instructions whilst they were queuing up outside the classroom. When they tried to ask me questions about the list I wouldn't speak to them I would just point to the instructions.

Line Number	Instruction
10	Do not speak
20	Take your bag off your shoulder
30	Take your coat off
40	Go into the classroom
50	Put your head on the desk and pretend to sleep

I included a deliberate mistake in the list but the pupils read the complete set of instructions and made sense of them by reordering them.

Once I had woken them for their sleep we had a short discussion about the activity. I asked questions which included the following:

What have you just done?

Did the instructions make sense?

Was there anything wrong with the list of instructions?

If you were a robot/computer how would the instructions have been carried out?

Would a robot have any problems with the instructions?

Conclusion

It was decided that:

1. The pupils were able to make sense of the list of instructions because they were intelligent human beings.
2. A robot would have got into a muddle because it would have read the instructions a line at a time and the list was not in the correct order.