

ZMATH 2009b.00396

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A richer understanding of algebra.

Math. Teach. Inc. Micromath 2008, No. 209, 40-41 (2008).

Summary: Algebra is one of those hard-to-teach topics where pupils seem to struggle to see it as more than a set of rules to learn, but this author recently used the software "Grid Algebra" from ATM, which engaged her Year 7 pupils in exploring algebraic concepts for themselves. "Grid Algebra" allows pupils to experience number, pre-algebra, and algebra from the foundations in KS2 through to more developed algebraic concepts and ideas, in a visual and kinaesthetic way, based on movements around a grid of multiplication tables. The software comes complete with a whole host of preprogrammed grids, lesson plans and interactive tasks, as well as handouts to allow pupils to carry on work away from the computer. There is also scope for teachers and pupils alike to explore the grid themselves and create new and exciting ways to use the software. Overall the author found that although "Grid Algebra" is not a "pick up and go" piece of software, it does provide an excellent kinaesthetic and visual approach to algebra, enriching students' overall understanding. It needs a good introduction to pupils and careful planning and this needs to be combined carefully with opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their understanding away from the software. (Contains 2 figures.) (ERIC)

Classification: H23 U53

Keywords: computer software; elementary algebra; computer assisted instruction; teaching methods; grade 7