



Exploring whether a pictorial response could support pupils' understanding of metaphor in Poetry

Harriet Tricker

The focus of my action research as part of the PGCE course was on exploring whether a pictorial response could support pupils' understanding of metaphor in poetry. Motivated by the concerning statistic that "53.5% of pupils" stated they had never been "requested to engage in the subjective analysis of a poem" (Hennessy & McNamara, 2011, p. 213), this research sought to place pupils in the position of meaning-maker in responding to a poem through drawing images. The theoretical basis for this research was the principle of transmediation; translating meaning from language to image 'supports [pupils] in more complex thinking' (Semali, 2002, p. 7). Studies undertaken by Giovanelli (2017) and McCormick (2011) corroborated that pictorial representation of poetry allowed pupils to understand the language used.

Through my own research using a stanza from Joseph Coelho's poem, If all the world were paper, pupils were able to translate meaning from linguistic to visual. Below are some examples taken from the research of pupils taking on the role of 'meaning-maker' and creating connections between the two sign systems through drawing on their own personal cognitive schemas allowing them to better understand the metaphoric language.

This pupil depicted an image of a nuclear bomb and explosion between the flags of USA and North Korea (Figure 1). Using the words of the stanza 'arguments would rustle before they started', this pupil referred to their cognitive schema of a conflict they were aware of and created a concrete example of the abstract metaphoric language.

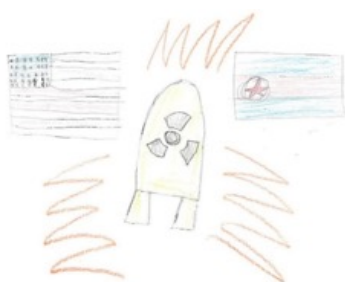


Figure 1.

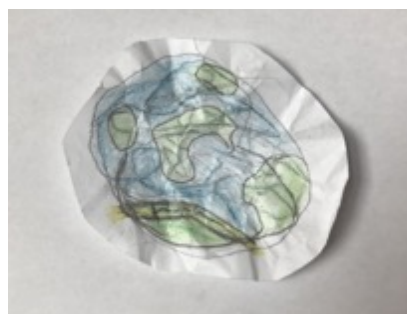


Figure 2.

Alternatively this pupil (Figure 2) lifted the words 'world' and 'sellotape' and drew this literally into their image. They depicted an image of the world, cut out, crumpled out, unfolded and with a piece of sellotape around one part of the world holding it together.

The research suggested that this was a successful pedagogical tool for teaching metaphor in poetry, although there are factors to take into consideration, namely, pupils' initial understanding of what a metaphor is before they are able to engage in the transmediation process.

References

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A comparison of attendance and engagement, before and after the transition to online learning, in a rural UK secondary school.

Ethan Nundy

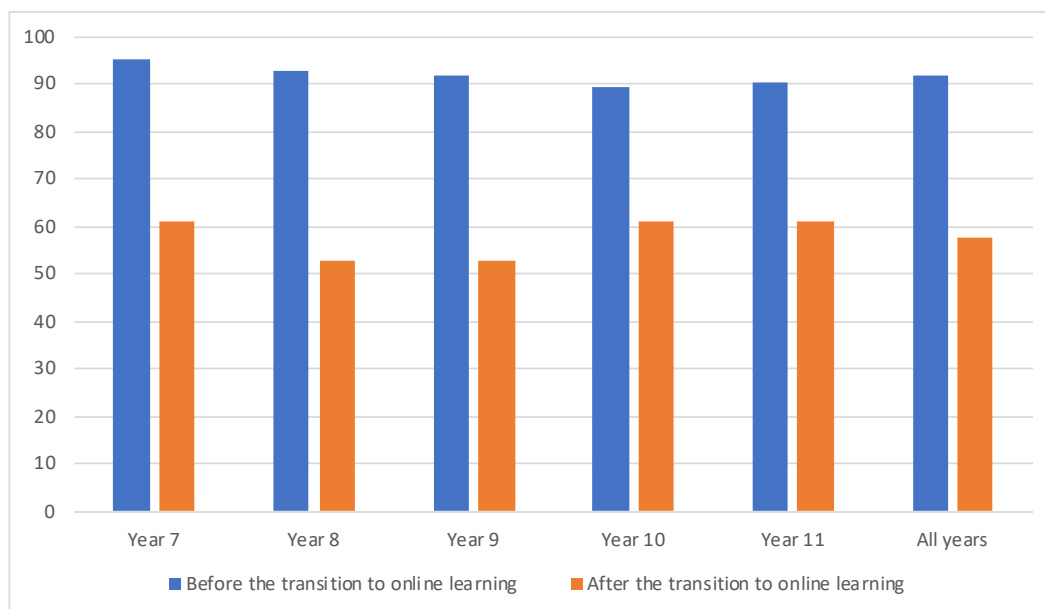
In response to the coronavirus pandemic, UK schools have been forced to transition to online learning during the lockdown period, as a result of national school closures. This has presented many challenges for both teachers and students.

The aim of this study was to compare attendance figures of a rural, UK secondary school, before and after the transition to online learning, to identify any reduction in attendance during this period.

After reviewing the attendance data, reasons for any changes in attendance were evaluated, with strategies suggested to improve both attendance and engagement. Fourteen teachers completed an online survey, discussing their perceived reasons for a decline in attendance and engagement during online

learning, as well as strategies to combat this. The present study found that attendance and perceived student engagement decreased considerably after the transition to online learning. Mean attendance of KS3 and KS4 students decreased from 91.8% before the transition to online learning, to 57.6% after this transition.

A range of factors affecting attendance and engagement were identified, as well as strategies to facilitate attendance and engagement during online learning. Strategies for increasing attendance and engagement were evaluated and compared with findings in the literature. This study highlights the multifaceted nature of attendance and engagement, with a holistic approach required to support all students.



The research conducted provides the foundations for future research to explore the changes in attendance and engagement experienced by schools on a larger scale, with this contemporary issue yet to be explored nationally.

Figure 1: A comparison between mean attendance figures by year group, before and after the transition to online learning (%).

A call to action from research – decolonising the secondary Drama curriculum

Paul Robinson, Co-created with Caitlin Kitney-Foster

This action research project explores the potential barriers and solutions to constructing an inclusive and representative curriculum within Drama by capturing the lived reality of a teacher in a predominantly white secondary school. This study also provides evidence of best pedagogical practice when teaching diverse performance texts by acquiring student opinion on the most effective teaching methods following practical lessons exploring the play *Small Island* (Edmundson and Levy, 2019).

Findings suggest that a mixed methods embodied pedagogy, using both teacher-in-role and more

traditional theatre-centric practices, was found to be the most effective way of exploring play texts. Not only does this form of practice negate accessibility issues stemming from academic ability, but through the distanced engagement of a liminal brave space open discussions (found to be the most transformative event in the *Small Island* lessons) can occur. The sharing of personal and fictional narratives through uninhibited dialogic examination engages decolonised perspectives, safely confronts White hegemony and allows students to re-evaluate their own epistemologies.



In the study school, where English Baccalaureate subjects are significantly prioritised, it was found that the workplace culture heavily focuses on achieving results, manifesting an annual concern for the survival of Drama within the school timetable. The outcome for curriculum content therefore is that tried and tested texts, almost entirely 'pale, male and stale', are being perpetually plucked from the cupboard simply because they achieve high grades within limited lesson time. In Drama, evidence suggests the linchpin for decolonisation is personal action. Drama departments must be a self-motivated vehicle for change. With freedom of curriculum choice from a government directed programme of study, if Drama teachers do not make time to do the research, choose the texts and create the resources then quite simply who will?

References

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The Relationship Between Self-Motivation and Academic Success in Year Ten Level Two BTEC Sport Pupils

Joe Wilkinson

The aim of the study was to identify the common self-motivational patterns of those pupils who achieved or surpassed their predicted grades and compare these patterns against those who failed to achieve their exam expectations. It was hypothesised that those individuals who failed to achieve their predicted grades would show lower scores in the four subcategories of self-motivation, compared to those who either achieved or surpassed their expected results. The four subcategories of self-motivation were identified as personal drive, commitment to goals, initiative and optimism.

Data collection was carried out through four questionnaires, based on the four identified subcategories of self-motivation and was structured using a five-point Likert scale, with responses to statements ranging from 1 = never to 5 = always. Responses from the questionnaires were statistically analysed using a two-tailed t-test to determine the statistical significance between groups who surpassed, achieved or failed to achieve their predicted grades ($P < 0.05$). Due to the small sample size ($n=9$), effect sizes were used to determine potential trends in the data which with a larger sample size should be studied further in the future.

The results from this research agreed with the primary hypothesis that those who showed high self-motivational patterns achieved or surpassed their target grades in the level two BTEC sport unit one exam. Those who demonstrated lower self-motivation patterns failed to achieve their predicted results. However, the study also found that there was no difference in self-motivation patterns in those who achieved their target grades compared to those surpassed their predicted results.

The main finding in this study was that those who scored highly in the commitment-based questionnaire predicted stronger academic performance than those who scored lower. This was with statistical significance ($P < 0.05$) and was a positive correlation across those that failed to achieve, achieved and surpassed their predicted grades. This study therefore demonstrates that teaching level two BTEC sport students would significantly benefit from focussing on increasing each pupil's commitment to the subject.

Future research should focus on validating these findings through research with a larger sample size due to the large size effects found in this study. A more qualitative approach including interviews, lesson observations and focus groups would be appropriate to further support these findings.



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