CHAPTER 4 IN BRIDGING BETWEEN RESEARCH AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY 3: FOSTERING COLLABORATIVE INTERPRETATION OF POETRY IN ENGLISH

Sara Hennessy with Jackie Bullock

INTRODUCTION

This case study illustrates how we worked with an expert secondary teacher who used interactive whiteboard (IWB) technology to foster construction of collective interpretations of poetry with an “anti-social” theme. As in the previous case study, we report how our collaborative thematic analysis of digital video recordings and other data from a sequence of six lessons yielded detailed, theorised descriptions of the teacher’s own rationale. Beginning with brief introductions to the participants in this case study, we outline the lesson sequence and present the key themes and pedagogical strategies emerging. We exemplify our discussions during the video review process and summarise the intermediate theoretical framework developed.

Further details about the participants and the lessons observed in this case study, plus video clips and other material illustrating the themes emerging and uses of technology, are available in the English multimedia resource freely accessible at http://t-media.educ.cam.ac.uk/

PARTICIPANTS

Jackie Bullock had taught for 10 years at the time of the study, the last 8 of them at Soham Village College, where she was Head of Year and responsible for developing technology within English. Her main area of interest was using technology interactively and she specialised in drama. Jackie had undergone both in-house and external training in IWB and technology use in the classroom, and she had substantial experience in using a range of software together with data projectors and digital cameras in teaching. She had limited experience of IWB use before T-MEDIA filming though. Jackie had conducted research in a number of areas within English and drama, including the impacts of technology use and learning styles on pupil achievement. She had evaluated educational software for a national organisation and also visited Canada to compare the use of technology in English and Canadian schools.

Tina, teacher colleague

Tina Lawton had taught at Soham Village College for 5 years at the time of filming. She was Assistant Head of Year as well as Leading Edge Researcher for English. She was also a mentor for student teachers. Tina was particularly interested in
interactive technology, including IWBs, and she had researched the impact of a variety of learning styles on teaching poetry to pupils aged 11–16. Like Jackie she had received both external and in-house training on IWB use and technology use in the classroom, and had developed expertise in using projectors and IWBs as well as producing resources to assist other Faculty members. After filming she moved to Saffron Walden County High School and subsequently took up a post at Bottisham Village College. Tina continues to develop her interest in researching practice and is still working with IWBs.

Sue, English subject specialist

Sue Brindley was invited to join the team as a Cambridge Faculty subject specialist (Senior Lecturer) in English. She is also an experienced school English teacher and inspector, adviser and officer for the national curriculum and assessment body, and teacher educator currently involved in initial and continuing teacher education. Sue had been using interactive whiteboards in her own teaching for a number of years at the time of the study. She was sent the lesson video files and contributed written commentary on all lessons.

Pupil group

There were 29 pupils aged 14–15 in the class who worked with us: they were a mixed-sex, middle set – Set 5 out of 11 (with 11 designated lowest English ‘ability’). Most were white, native English speakers and the group was described by the teacher as “lively and intelligent”. The class was very familiar with using the IWB in English and other subject lessons.

SETTING

The school was the same one participating in the science case study reported in Chapter 3: a mixed-sex, 11–16 college of 1350 pupils. Soham Village College served a very wide rural area and specialised in both technology and modern foreign languages. Achievement standards were consistently above the national average and levels of educational disadvantage were lower than average. In 2006, the college became one of the first secondary schools in the country to achieve the new ICT (information and communications technology) Mark awarded by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta, now disbanded), to recognise good practice in the use of computers in schools.

LESSON TOPICS AND OBJECTIVES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

The material covered related directly to the poetry component of the English GCSE course and the lessons observed comprised the pupils’ first introduction to the 2-year course in the autumn term. The module – comprising 20 lessons on “Anti-social Poetry” (including teenagers with social/emotional problems, and a drama component) – was developed by the teacher and spanned a period of 6½ weeks (half a term). We observed the first lesson (introduction to the module) purely as a familiarisation session, and then another 8 lessons, video filming 6 of them, as follows. The 8 main lessons observed over a 5½ week period were numbers 2, 3 (audio-recorded but not filmed), 4, 7 (audio-recorded but not filmed), 8–10 and 17; these were renumbered as Lessons 1-8. Thus Lessons ‘2’ and ‘4’ were not filmed, but observation and note-taking provided continuity for the research team in analysing the other 6. Lessons selected for observation mainly contained activities
exploiting technology (except Lesson 7), whereas the others mainly related to GCSE coursework and exam practice tasks, including speaking and listening assessments. All lessons lasted roughly an hour.

The module covered three set poems in turn followed by a longer, more involved activity towards the end of the videoed lesson sequence, namely the pupils’ exploration during Lessons 6 and 7 of themes emerging across the three. This served to build up ‘analytical stamina’ in the words of our subject specialist and was also the prime occasion where the teacher relinquished to pupils her control over the imagery encountered. It included a creative activity in Lesson 7 to produce a collage that brought together the visual imagery that pupils had identified in the poems in a highly imaginative way (taking digital photographs and sourcing other images themselves). This process of creating visual representations of their own interpretations rather than through the written medium was used as a basis for subsequent drafting of a personal comparative (coursework) piece about the three poems (not observed). In the final lesson (8) observed, pupils drafted their own poems.

In the past Jackie had run several of the activities without the SMART Board, but had recently built in “more of a technology focus”. The pupils had done some previous work on poetry, including discussion and research, in Years 7–9 (ages 11–14); the module built upon this experience.

The classroom had free seating in rows at tables, with some mixed-sex arrangement (by choice). However, the classroom was quite cramped so Jackie could not easily move between the tables. As well as participating in whole-class activity, Jackie planned for pupils to work both individually and together on joint tasks such as role play and discussion groups for some of the time.

Jackie’s overall aims and objectives (see more detail in Table 4.1) were:

- for pupils to become more confident at being able to analyse and offer a commentary on poetry with the theme of anti-social behaviour in terms of content, mood, literary techniques;
- to promote reflection on the motivation and behaviour of characters and what we might say about society’s values
- to use different strategies facilitate access to the poems by a wider group of pupils and to appeal to different strengths and weaknesses in the class;
- to use the poems as a springboard for different aspects of the GCSE course: speaking and listening, reading and researching, creative writing, essay writing; to use these approaches as opportunities to increase understanding of the poems
- to use technology to facilitate pupil learning by increasing engagement and motivation, offering more short activities to provide increased pace, variety and fun in IWB-supported lessons.

Table 4.1 about here
Jackie’s Approach

Jackie expected the use of different technologies to facilitate pupil learning in various ways, including helping pupils understand the general themes underlying the poems. In her initial interview she described her intention to exploit the technology so they don’t just see … a poem in isolation, they get a broader understanding that they can bring to it: because poems are image-based, actually transforming those text-based images into concrete images that they take photos of, or find images themselves. So they are starting to realise similes and metaphors by creating them and capturing them, not just saying “this is a simile”, you know, going beyond that.

She also asserted that “when it comes to completing the work they take more pride, quite often, in the work that they produce on the computer (as my first research project showed!)”. She was concerned about managing time, though, ensuring that the activities fit the planned assessments by making sure they have sufficient time on each thing, but not too much time. And that they’re not getting too bogged down with the IT aspects of things, but the actual learning of the poems and the learning of the techniques.

A central focus of Jackie’s approach was to create a supportive classroom environment in which collaboration could successfully take place, and her comments about this resonated strongly with those of our history teacher, Lloyd (see Chapter 2). The IWB was deemed particularly helpful here “in terms of planning, and planning extras just in case the pupils need extra help”. While activity and discussion were strongly directed, Jackie demonstrated enthusiasm for the work and valued pupils’ contributions, especially ‘when the pupils give it no value themselves’:

‘There’s no sense of them getting things wrong in the lesson. Whatever their comment is, it’s always valid. So prompting, reinforcing, encouraging, I guess modelling, the way that I’m responding as well. (Interview)

The teacher thus took the role of enquirer, questioning pupils’ rationale and listening to their ideas, making the most of their collective resources. Her interactive teaching included an element of assessment and monitoring of progress. In particular the wider range of activities that the IWB offered was considered to increase opportunities for formative assessment on a whole-class basis and “on an informal basis through individual discussion”.

Use of Technology Resources

Jackie incorporated use of technology within the module primarily via the IWB. At the time of filming, the English department was entirely kitted out with IWBs and their use was well integrated into the teaching of most teachers. Jackie’s classroom was equipped with a network computer linked to the internet, an interactive SMART Board (fixed to the wall) and a data projector. Desktop PCs were available at the perimeter of the room. She also used an “Interactive Poetry” CD-ROM published by Heinemann (2004) to support study of the chosen poems. Her SMART files included ClipArt and other images downloaded from the internet. Pupils were regularly encouraged to use digital cameras, particularly to create storyboards and to make PowerPoint presentations to show to their peers. In one of the lessons we filmed (Lesson 7), they used the cameras to capture images around the school grounds, and these were then used in preparing collages to visually represent the themes common across the three poems studied. Pupils were also expected to use the internet in this lesson to research the general theme of the poems to “get a broader understanding that they can bring to it” and to find, or create their own images by “transforming those text-based images into concrete images that they take photos of”.

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A systematic categorisation (using the video data) of teaching mode across the six 1-hour lessons we filmed showed that the IWB was used for direct whole-class teaching for 53% of the total lesson time. (14% lesson time was individual/pair work directly referring to the IWB; 25% was no IWB use; 8% was mixed mode activity.)

Jackie purposefully exploited the IWB technology in developing – and modelling construction of – interpretations of poetry. She did so through using its dynamic visual presentation, provisionality and other interactive technical features, for example engaging the class in:

- capitalising on availability of multiple resources, in particular using a range of high quality visual images, but also other media, as in the Lesson 5 episodes described below;
- using textual annotation (including labels, links) extensively to facilitate public sharing, generation and recording of ideas in response to projected stimuli, e.g. annotation of an animated “Flower Power” ClipArt image to record pupils’ ideas (Figure 4.1);
- using graphical annotation (including circling, colour highlighters) as analytic tools, e.g. to draw attention to features describing the persona of the poem: Figure 4.2 illustrates colour-coded highlighting of modern and old-fashioned phrases in the poem “Hitcher” in Lesson 5, and circling of “slang” terms;
- focusing, e.g. exploring the persona in the poem “Stealing” by scrolling through and annotating the displayed text;
- occasional use of drag-and-drop for classification, e.g. assigning types of people as those who might, or might not, support ASBOs, or tactile manipulation by pupils themselves assigning phrases relating to lifestyles of personae to briefcase and rucksack (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.1: ‘Flower Power’ textual annotation (slide 5.1a)

Figure 4.2: Graphical annotation of poem ‘Hitcher’ (slide 5.4a)

Figure 4.3: Drag-and-drop classification activity (slide 6.1b)

In sum, technology resources were used as visible, manipulable, dynamic objects of joint reference (OJR), scaffolds and stimuli for analysis of themes and poetic techniques. IWB technology was particularly helpful in displaying, annotating and manipulating images and texts, as elaborated below.

THEMES IDENTIFIED

Following the pattern of individual video review and comment outlined in Chapter 1, we also held four meetings during the review phase of the study, involving Jackie, her colleague, Tina, and the two university researchers. Jackie’s comments reflected her position as teacher of the class; Tina acted as designated subject practitioner. As the subject specialist, Sue’s comments and questions were aimed at clarifying and challenging Jackie’s approach. Her commentary was particularly
valuable in generating material for suggested alternative approaches to the practices depicted final versions of which integrated into the “Alternatives” screens of the T-MEDIA English CD-ROM. We shared the commentary and alternatives suggested with Jackie (some examples appear below) and posed questions about them during her final interview. This section elaborates the main themes emerging (highlighted throughout the text using italics), also summarised in the diagram in Figure 4.4, illustrating them using a number of critical episodes that we collectively identified. (An interactive version of the diagram with hyperlinks to video clips and other material illustrating the themes appears in the English multimedia resource at [http://t-media.educ.cam.ac.uk/](http://t-media.educ.cam.ac.uk/))

Figure 4.4 – English theme diagram – about here

**The teacher’s use of images and other media to stimulate thinking**

This case study was characterised by Jackie’s creative use and annotation of visual images to provide an object of joint reference, to focus the class and stimulate pupil thinking, hence “to elicit a deeper response” (Tina) and “make them think laterally” (Jackie). In particular, the teacher was encouraging empathy or personalisation – “seeing oneself in the text in order to understand the text beyond oneself” (subject specialist). Jackie described the pictures as provoking pupils to come to a personal understanding of the underlying issues and motivations, using their imaginations, their prior experiences and knowledge:

[The images] generally were used to inspire the students to make their own immediate reaction and response to the themes, the characters, the ideas, the locations … It just gives them a bit of a concrete visual image to latch on to if they couldn't imagine it for themselves, or if they were imagining themselves in that role, and only had one particular interpretation. … So it either gives them the support of what that person might be like or leads them [towards] a different way of thinking. (Interview)

The images were used to increase relevance by socially contextualising the three poems: Some of the others were just to set things in context really, so there was the picture of the crook-lock and the picture of the DJ’s headphones and so on, and they were really to get them to think about … what these poems might be saying about society and how society might be changing. So that picture of the crook-lock with the question, ‘What does this image reveal about our society?” produces some fantastic responses, you know about how we’re all really possessive, we all spend too much money. (Interview)

Jackie expressed the importance of choosing the right image; her care in selecting high quality images was appreciated by most pupils in interview. Many of them came from the Heinemann CD-ROM, which removed the pressure of having to create all of the resources from scratch, but also proved somewhat constraining. Thus Jackie picked out the pictures that she liked, altered the tasks slightly and produced her own versions instead. She included a range of other resources too. This theme is illustrated later on by perusing the activities of Lesson 5. First, we introduce the interrelated themes of public sharing of ideas, the activity context in which the images and other stimulus resources were often used, and interactive whole class teaching, the pedagogical approach typically used by Jackie to mediate their use.


Public sharing of ideas: supporting collaborative interpretation of poetry

A key theme throughout the lesson sequence was the soliciting and public sharing of pupils’ own ideas in order to support the notion of thinking through meaning, and supporting whole-class collaboration in constructing interpretations of poems. Annotation was used to display pupil contributions – “a visual representation of their train of thought as it develops” – and by both teacher and peers in brainstorming (as represented in Figure 4.1) and building on those ideas to develop collective understanding, confidence and self-esteem – whilst permitting individuality. This process of active co-construction included audible praise and relay of selected individual ideas to the whole class, following small group discussions.

Collective annotation on the IWB was considered by Jackie to generate “more constructive comments and more exploratory thought” than work in small groups, followed by more sharing of ideas in the whole-class setting and the “drawing together of those ideas, both physically and metaphorically” (Meeting), as Jackie elaborated:

In the past they’d be on a photocopy that they’d have in front of them so they’d be looking at their own. They might have their own annotations, but then the collective annotation, I think, generated more comments and more constructive comments and more explorative thought than if they were doing their own in small groups and pairs, because they are responding to each other’s ideas.

[In group discussion] the comment’s been made and it’s been heard but it’s then not visually made permanent for it. Because [on the IWB] it is a permanent record, isn’t it? So whether they’ve caught onto an idea as it’s been said or whether they look at it 20 minutes later, it still happens to be on the board. I think it’s quite important because some kids will pick up an idea immediately and others won’t. They’ll cotton on to it at a later stage and I think that’s really important, isn’t it.

This process could yield ideas new to the teacher herself: “If you try to teach something, you’ve got 30 minds in front of you and you haven’t heard the same things before” (Interview). It was the key way in which Jackie exploited the interactive features of the IWB, as it was also used non-interactively to display text and images as stimuli.

Jackie modelled how to annotate poetry with ideas and to engage in “making comment on the complexity of the themes and ideas – the poet’s motivations”; this was “vitally important for critical analysis” (Colleague comments, Lesson 1 grid). She also modelled the extraction of illustrative phrases (e.g. see Episode 5.4 activity depicted in Figure 4.2) and the linking of ideas when comparing poems:

[Annotation] is a good way for them to see the train of thought as it develops, so if a student mentions something that then another student makes a similar comment to, you can then go back and link them together … it’s a visual representation of their train of thought. (Interview)

This process of collaborative interpretation was exemplified in Lesson 6 (see Episode 6.2 below). Recording pupil contributions publicly was considered by Jackie to push pupils to develop ideas and to enable the teacher to facilitate pupil learning where ideas were not forthcoming, by focusing on particular words or images and asking directed questions about them. Our subject specialist noted a tension here between getting pupils to critique and respond imaginatively to poetry and the inevitable pressures imposed by the assessment framework, and Jackie echoed this.

Where Jackie recorded pupils’ ideas on the IWB (e.g. Figure 4.1), Sue suggested that pupils seeing their own handwriting is more powerful. Jackie acknowledged that this could “give them more ownership of their ideas, put them under a bit more pressure to think for themselves rather than collectively as a group … produce more involvement from certain pupils if they
knew that they were going to be doing something”. However she preferred not to invite pupils up to the board usually (though they did come up in Lesson 6) owing to the constraints (lack of time and physical space) reportedly operating here:

When you’ve got people brainstorming ideas, it’s quite quick isn’t it? And if there’s one person writing it down then generally you can get all of it. If you are having to stop each time for someone to make what is quite a long journey from getting up, moving their chair and so on, to the front, writing it, not being sure about how to spell something, the pen not connecting with the board and all those kind of technical hitches that can happen, the flow of concentration from the kids just goes, immediately. I do have them come up sometimes, especially with lower ability students, because they get really motivated by coming up to write something but that lack of concentration from the rest of the class does spoil things sometimes and it makes it more of a behaviour management situation. (Interview).

**Interactive whole-class teaching**

Using an IWB was considered by the teachers to require an *interactive teaching style* and one that impacts [cognitively] on pupils by “stimulating active learning”. It also raises pupil expectations; they come to want experience of sophisticated and entertaining dynamic resources on the whiteboard, and to manipulate them too. The teachers postulated that pupils’ experiences of autonomous use of sophisticated technologies outside school exacerbate this desire.

All of us characterised Jackie’s teaching throughout the lesson sequence as a *mix of funnelling* or authoritative interaction and *dialogic interaction/synthesis* (see definitions of these terms in Chapter 3 or glossary) – whilst exploiting *IWB resources and features* – often evident within a single episode. For example in Lesson 6, pupils were observed to be offering their own ideas in response to some prompts intended to characterise motivation of a persona in the poem. Jackie endorsed these ideas but also led them to “voice what she had in her mind”: “This gives them two sets of ideas and they have two things to work with” (Meeting). For instance:

P: In the end he might have killed someone.
T: What is his reason for being so anti-social?
P: He could be someone important if he had the chance. He’s blaming education.
T agrees: And the government, his parents, everyone, apart from?
P: Himself.

One researcher described this process as “like steering a moving object. You elicit a thought and then work with it” (Meeting). Our analysis thereby recognised the teacher’s marked influence through *prompting* pupils towards target ideas, *assistive questioning, filling in* gaps in their understandings and vocabularies, rephrasing and exposing them to alternative perspectives (reshaping thinking). At the same time, on some occasions she used stimuli on the IWB in the course of soliciting, and drawing on pupils’ own contributions too, and/or *probing* to clarify or develop understanding of themes or definitions. Lesson 5 is used to exemplify this in more depth.

**Lesson 5: The poem “Hitcher.”**

The activities of Lesson 5 portray Jackie’s use of a range of visual images and other media, coupled with an interactive teaching style, to stimulate pupil thinking. Figure 4.1 illustrated how in Lesson 5 (Episode 5.1) Jackie introduced the alternative lifestyle of the hitchhiker persona of the poem “Hitcher” by first displaying the “FlowerPower” animation and annotating the slide with pupils’ prolific ideas about hippy culture. This was a preparatory brainstorming activity,
deliberately building upon pupils’ previous knowledge about hippies “as a way into discussion of the typical hippy or hitcher and exposing the prejudices that people have for other people” (diary). The brainstorm format and some elaboration of pupil ideas by the teacher created a collective representation as the outcome. Tina’s interpretation of this for us through her comments on the grid made tentative use of thematic coding (terms in brackets) in describing the commonly observed mix of dialogic interaction and subtly reshaping pupils’ thinking:

T allows Ps to come up with ideas. A way of T finding out how much they already know. Ps able to engage with the time period through visual representation. Clues in the images to assist. These images link directly to the lesson and act as a way to socially contextualise the poem. Questions allow T to extend thinking and ideas and to discuss preconceived ideas. This also reinforces confidence of Ps as they can see how much they already know. (Dialogic interaction – funnelling and focusing?)

Stimuli used were not always visual. The introduction to the poem additionally used printed anthologies, the projected text, and photographic images, and an audio recording of the poet (Simon Armitage) reading his own poem aloud, coupled with a photograph of him (Episode 5.2). The audio resource proved a powerful stimulus, as Jackie and her colleague explained:

Listening to him I think you get a real sense of the type of person he is, [which] really dominates that particular poem, because you can almost imagine that speaker being the speaker in the poem. He’s got a nice northern accent that makes him sound very down to earth and a typical kind of man that you might meet in a pub … Simon Armitage is probably the first person to say that the interpretation of the poem comes from the listener and every time he reads a poem it’s always different … with different length of pause or move of the head a particular time and so on. So this is just one particular performance if you like. (Jackie, Interview)

The reading of the poem by the poet gives Ps the chance to hear how the poet meant his words to sound. Showing an image of the poet helps Ps to realise that not all poets are old or dead (Tina, Grid commentary).

And to see somebody who looks like their uncle or father, who’s living in this contemporary world and writing poetry now I think is very important for them. (Tina, Meeting)

Both Sue and Jackie pointed out the added value of the IWB technology here in seamlessly integrating the audio and visual resources into the lesson. Sue’s comments about using the poet’s own voice to introduce a poem were both appreciative – reinforcing the points above made by the teachers – and questioning:

I loved the fact that she showed Simon Armitage speaking, that’s fantastic, a lovely resource; it brings home to the students that this is a real person, that they are around still, and when you use something that has the author’s voice, quite often they will read it in as kind of bland a way as they can in order not to inform an interpretation; what sits beneath that is the notion that poetry’s meaning resides with the reader not with the writer. Once the writer has released it that meaning is only one of many. But … I didn’t hear Jackie discuss [with the class] why she was doing it.

Sue also suggested that “it would have been fantastic to see the drafts that he’d written, so you could see this poem doesn’t emerge in any perfect way,” giving pupils some insights into the process of writing a poem. Jackie subsequently agreed, although she was uncertain if Armitage drafts existed (she had used drafts of Shakespeare sonnets in the past as these were widely available).

The audio playback was followed by guided discussion and questioning (dialogic interaction) concerning comprehension of the subject matter – the murder of a hitchhiker – referring to the text of the poem, projected and scrolled so as to focus all
pupils’ attention. Jackie’s own grid commentary described this part of the episode as follows, illustrating her application of our evolving thematic framework.

**Dialogic interaction** encourages Ps to **empathise** with persona and decide for themselves why the hitchhiker was attacked. T pointing out that we are all guilty of prejudging people – Ps placed in same position as persona. T chooses relevant quotation to support P’s idea – **modelling** technique that they will need to develop. T expands upon persona’s attitude to work and lifestyle – **authoritative exposition**.

Jackie’s aim here was to use ideas contained in poetry to create more developed characters. I was trying to get an understanding of lifestyle that the businessman has so when we next look at his feelings about the hitcher they’ve got some firm quotations that they can use in their exams … but also interpret them and say what tone this creates, what it suggests about the lifestyle of the different personas. So trying to be analytical, encourage their independent thinking. (Interview)

She modelled this analytic process through **dialogic synthesis** during a question-and-answer session, and as alluded to in her grid commentary, through linking lines of the poem to pupils’ comments and making references to their earlier responses concerning hippies. Jackie thereby built on pupil contributions to highlight the notion of stereotyping and to guide pupils towards understanding that the poem is authored from the viewpoint of a salesman under pressure. University researcher commentary noted that pupils rose to the occasion by giving thoughtful and elaborate answers. For instance:

Lucy: You could just have an opinion of them, like you could think that all hitchhikers are cheap worthless people who are not worth the time of day … and then anybody who you find hitchhiking, you would have that opinion of, no matter who it is.

Teacher: Okay.

Lucy: So no matter who or where it is, you can always think that his type is scum.

Teacher: Okay, so he holds this view about hitchhikers and they’re all the same. Yes? Based upon, perhaps, a previous experience? Yes? Someone he knew.

Lucy: Sometimes just if you see one hitchhiker, sometimes the appearance could be not particularly attractive …

Teacher: Okay.

Lucy: … and from that you could then think that all hitchhikers are like this one person.

Teacher: Right, so we’re stereotyping? We’re categorising people. We’re pre-judging them based on one little idea, or one person that we saw. Just like you were doing with hippies. When I said “what do you associate with hippies?” and you were coming up with Drugs, Sex, Rock ‘n Roll, protesting, being smelly, lack of personal hygiene, standing up for your rights, all these kinds of things. So this hitchhiker is being tarred with the same kind of brush, being prejudiced against, being prejudiced by this guy.

This account illustrates how the respective commentaries and interaction within the research team and with the subject specialist all contributed to our collective understanding of the teaching and learning in this lesson.
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Jackie next displayed a photograph of a bedraggled hitchhiker being passed by a large truck, in order to stimulate deeper pupil thinking about the persona of the poem and allow pupils to imagine a hitchhiker’s experience (Episode 5.3). She asked the class, “What can you tell about him?” Then, working in small groups, pupils briefly discussed the relation of the image to their earlier discussion while Jackie circulated, using questioning to draw out, elaborate and gently challenge pupils’ (often stereotypical) ideas about hitchhiking and hippies. This is summarised in the following video summary of her discussion with a group of four boys and the associated excerpt of the grid (Figure 4.5).

Video summary.

P describes how he put thumbs up to a hitcher recently. He thinks they should work and pay for their own transport. T: Does poem contain those views too? P: Definitely. T: There are still people with hippy lifestyles. How does hitching fit in with them now? P: They don’t want to hurt the environment so they don’t have own car, but don’t mind going in other people’s. T: Does the hitcher know where he’s going? P: No; he’s got nothing to look forward to. P: He could be a tramp. T: Some people hitch and see where they get to … You say they may go to a place because they’re bored. But if you’re on holiday it may be a nice way of life. P: It depends on the kind of person who picks you up. T: And for the driver? P: The kind of person you pick. T returns to the persona, and his life. P: It’s structured everyday [whereas] hitcher’s life has twists and turns every step of the way … P: Depends on money. T: And luck, but at least you have opportunity to do something different. You may meet someone nice or unusual. Group agree hitcher’s life is not all routine.

Figure 4.5: Excerpt from grid commentary – about here

Related interview excerpts incorporated in the grid included:

T: I tried to get them to think of a more positive lifestyle of a hitchhiker … I was trying to challenge their ideas and develop their ideas, and then in the class trying to do the same thing.

P: It was difficult relating the two, like the hippies and the hitchhikers, together at first. Once you spoke about it, it became more easy.

Jackie went on to annotate the photograph with pupils’ ideas during a plenary discussion of hitcher and hippy lifestyles, and drawing out links with earlier discussions. Figure 4.6 shows how the pupils’ views (including some stereotypical ones) are summarised.

Figure 4.6: Textual annotation of photograph during discussion of poem ‘Hitcher’, about here

This episode again exemplified dialogic interaction. The pair work additionally illustrated how the teacher was handing over responsibility for learning to pupils (elaborated later on), and how they were rehearsing ideas for the class plenary that followed. These themes are further elaborated below and illustrated with additional examples from Lessons 8 and 6 respectively.
Rehearsing ideas

Rehearsal of ideas (orally / on paper, with peers / individually) before voicing them to the whole class was a commonly observed strategy. It was conceived by the team as an important form of priming for subsequent use of the IWB and as a method of confidence building. Tina pointed out that some pupils have difficulty in immediately responding to a question and benefit if they are able to step back briefly, with time to consider and discuss an idea. Engineering this into the teaching avoids any embarrassment, and trying things out on each other enables pupils to formalise their thoughts. Hence, offering occasional opportunities for rehearsal of ideas ensures that everyone has made a decision of some kind and can justify their reasoning. In some cases rehearsal was part of an extended activity aimed at exploring and understanding the behaviour and motivations of characters in depth, as in Lesson 3 when pupils scripted and performed a group role play of an interview or conversation about anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) based on one of the poems. Some activity involving the IWB can be construed as a form of priming; the IWB was sometimes used as a stimulus for talk and for ideas constituting a foundation for subsequent pupil writing or the collage construction. Alternatively, in the Lesson 5 discussions summarised in Figures 4.5 and 4.6, the group work is priming pupils for whole-class work on the IWB. This theme and that of dialogic synthesis are now exemplified in an account of the two critical episodes identified in Lesson 6.

In Episode 6.1 Jackie reviewed work done in the last phase of Lesson 5 when a set of words relating to the lifestyles of the personae studied in the Duffy and Armitage poems was displayed on the IWB. In that lesson pupils had begun making columns of words in their exercise books, using dictionaries and thesauruses to find out meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary (priming). In this lesson, Jackie called on a group of four pupils to come and assign the words to the briefcase or rucksack pictured on the IWB (symbolising the hitchhiker and businessman), using the drag-and-drop facility (Figure 4.7). A class discussion of the meanings followed; some terms were placed centrally after discussion as these were ones whose meanings pupils were uncertain about (Figure 4.8); this activity offered an opportunity for formative assessment. Pupils subsequently recorded meanings in their books and Jackie used this activity to reinforce and illustrate the notion of metaphor. Pupils generated their own examples during the course of a further lengthy dialogic class discussion.

Figures 4.7 & 4.8 here

Jackie’s aim was to consolidate pupils’ understanding of the ideas previously discussed. She described this as an “initially simple task but one which requires pupils to understand the representation of two lives and to extend vocabulary in preparation for exam style questions” (Grid). The activity sparked some discussion about the meaning, context and usage of words such as “romantic” and “hedonistic”, encouraging pupils “to try and work out the sense or meaning that the poet is attempting to achieve” (Tina, Grid).

Subject specialist Sue commented that using the IWB themselves as in this episode helps pupils to be “active makers of meaning”, important in English. Colleague Tina elaborated this in her grid commentary:

Ps are confident to contribute and move words around on the IWB even though they are not completely confident about the answers. This allows the opportunity to revisit language already learnt and for further language extension.
Likewise, researcher commentary pointed out that the technology affords provisionality; the teacher dragged words around on screen to pursue learning points and pupils could make changes to their choices. In our meeting discussion, the teachers appreciated that “the rest of class were keen to correct mistakes but not in a negative way”. They observed that: “Lower down the school some pupils can be a bit unkind about errors” though they felt this “had a lot to do with how the lesson was set up initially; it’s the ethos of each lesson, how the teacher interacts … At this school there’s a culture of pupils being quite happy to share ideas. They are often told how creative it can be and things aren’t usually right or wrong. It gives learners confidence to analyse and evaluate different ideas – and that’s vitally important”. This describes a supportive classroom environment, as mentioned above.

Reflection upon this episode at our meeting led Jackie to suggest that she could have asked pupils to explain their choices as they went up to the board or they could have already justified these in their books or explained them to a partner. Pupils like the speed of this type of exercise as they can all make a choice without having to do further work! However Jackie felt that with her support, and through building on each other’s ideas, pupils had progressed in their understanding of new vocabulary: “The definitions that some of the pupils gave at this point certainly showed an increased understanding – which, as the group shared their ideas, built up to a fuller definition” (Diary).

Episode 6.2 later in the lesson involved unguided pupil identification of themes across the three poems, working individually, followed by class discussion of the similarities between the poems; this was scaffolded by images from the poems being projected on IWB and it was characterised by dialogic synthesis by the teacher as she and the class constructed a shared understanding (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8 Collaboratively identifying themes across poems – about here

These activities acted as priming for the subsequent tasks to draw images to reflect one of the metaphors in the poems (three pupils drew theirs on the IWB) and to “create a collage of words and images that capture the mood and subject of the three poems we have studied” (mostly completed in the following lesson). Jackie considered these activities to have been successful in terms of pupil learning:
I was really pleased with the response to the task of comparing the three poems in terms of persona, mood, context and language and was especially pleased that many of them were then able to identify that metaphor had been used in the other two poems, even though I had not pointed this out at the time. This showed real learning and improved confidence in recognising metaphor and understanding their effect in showing emotions. (Diary)

Recording and revisiting ideas

Significant “added value” – above and beyond other forms of ICT – is provided by the powerful facility offered by an IWB to save and archive work, images and annotations and call these up again in subsequent lessons.
Being able to annotate them immediately, keep the photo on there is a really good way of keeping their ideas there and then referring to them again, so if they’ve forgotten, or if you want to re-emphasise a point then you can go back to it quickly.

For example, in Lesson 3, three annotated slides from the previous lesson (e.g. see Figure 4.9) containing images and/or prompt questions as stimuli, plus recorded suggestions from pupils (relating to a role play based on the poem “Stealing”), were displayed and themes emerging from class discussion were recapped. Images without annotations were also revisited
as a form of *silent scaffolding* in the final lesson (8) observed. Familiar photographs evoking key themes and characters (e.g. see Figure 4.10) were displayed as *aides-mémoires* (we adopted the term originally floated during the science case study analysis and incorporated it into the coding) alongside the suggested techniques for beginning to write a poem, and supplemented with aural prompts. This is elaborated below under ‘Developing intermediate theory.’

**Figures 4.9 & 4.10 here**

The teachers maintained that without the IWB, pupils would have to make more notes, which hinders participation and slows lesson pace. Lessons using the IWB (particularly for brainstorming) “can [instead] move at the speed of the teacher and the responses from the kids”. *Recording ideas and discussion* on the IWB was considered to develop pupils’ learning “by seeing something on the board that triggers off a thought” and to facilitate preparation for assignments and revision. Jackie asserted that *revisiting* allows her to “prioritise what they are going to remember”, “focuses students in the same place” and *makes connections* with their previous discussions and jointly constructed interpretations much more easily than reading their notes, which may be incomplete. (This is *reigniting* learning again: another term originally added during the science case study.) Our subject specialist again felt that pupils seeing their own handwriting is even more effective, but agreed that revisiting annotations was “very helpful [in that] it transports them immediately back to that point” and “contributes to a seamless lesson”. Moreover it fosters “shared ownership of the response to a poem,” as the teacher elaborated:

> It’s really easy to … show them the images and poems again and the things that they said about them, the key words that we've talked about, and it’s all their ideas, it’s not just the resource. It’s not my ideas, it’s, “Oh yeah, I said that” or “I remember us talking about that” … and it isn’t polished. I think my handwriting on there shows that this was done in our lesson, it’s not pre-prepared, it’s real.

**Episode 6.1** likewise illustrated revisiting when the class reviewed a Lesson 5 IWB activity of listing columns of words relating to lifestyles of the hitchhiker and businessman personae; pupils were asked to review this in their books and Jackie also showed a slide used in Lesson 5 (Figure 4.7).

However, recording in pupil books was used sometimes too; Jackie explained that asking the students to record their ideas in their books focused their discussion and meant that I had more time to go around the room to listen to their ideas. (Diary)

**DEVELOPING INTERMEDIATE THEORY**

The themes outlined above exemplify some of the intermediate theory developed in the English case. The *process* of integrating relevant ideas from sociocultural theory into our collaborative analyses and refining them using teachers’ own language is now elaborated further through discussion of our final group of themes, illustrated mainly with examples from Lesson 8.

**Collectively refining codes**

As in the two previous case studies, there was a two-way interaction between university and teacher researchers in proposing elements of the theoretical framework. A key example of the reciprocal process comes from Lesson 8 where the
class were writing their own poems to fit in with the three poems they had studied. Jackie started them off using a series of IWB slides as prompts; these included small versions of images displayed in previous lessons, which she described as “a visual memory jog to remember the discussions”. Revisiting of previous images was supplemented this time with oral and printed prompts to stimulate thinking before poem writing. Some slides presented ideas for techniques pupils could use when writing their own poems, and these were projected in sequence onto the IWB. The prompts exploited use of image, colour, and different fonts, again priming pupils for creativity. Examples included:

“Who/what do you take your anger out on? Describe what you do to it/them.”

“Imagine that you are watching yourself do something from the outside … describe what you see.”

Grids did not always contain four comments per episode, of course, but the excerpt in Figure 4.11 and the marking of this as a “critical episode” by all four reviewers shows that here there was a clear consensus between all of us concerning the effectiveness of Jackie’s structured and supportive approach, with the IWB resources being an integral component. We agreed in the meeting discussion that the process of building up understanding of the poems’ themes involved crafting staged and constantly responsive scaffolding support; this is linked to the previous notion of authoritative and dialogic interaction in combination. The slide shown at this stage contained some suggested starting strategies, such as “Imagine someone has asked you a question about why you behave the way you do … repeat the question or start with the answer”.

Figure 4.11 here

Discussion of this lesson during the review meeting resulted in some additions to the developing coding scheme, in particular the notion of drip feeding ideas and support throughout the lesson – originating from colleague Tina’s comments on the grid a little later into the lesson after the excerpt above:

By slowly building in the different stimuli, the T allows Ps to work with one idea at a time. … this also acts as a further [nondirective] framework for their developing narratives.

Constantly drip feeding examples assists Ps to frame their ideas but use their own words and phrases. (Tina has a nursing background)

This process encompassed modelling the process of interpretation, and deliberately constraining tasks through drip feeding ideas or support throughout a lesson, as Tina elaborated during our meeting discussion:

TL: It’s like drip feeding isn’t it? Constant drip feeding … when Jackie was going round just sort of talking them through it … and you find that pupils who have really focused on what they are doing aren’t listening but those that are still struggling a bit, they can stop and listen and think, “Oh yes, I can see where to go now” and they get on. Sort of constantly giving them a reinforcement … maybe helping them to realise that what they are doing is actually the right thing.

SH: It’s constantly responsive assistance, isn’t it? [TL agrees]

JB: But it’s responsive assistance that is then shared.

TL: And not to any one specific pupil, just sort of to the whole group, and if they want to listen and share, they can, and if they don’t, they don’t need to.

In Chapter 3 we offered examples illustrating how the terms scaffolding and fading (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989) were adopted and reapplied in a new context, namely in science learning supported by technology use. The English teachers were already familiar with the term scaffolding before our study, and the discussion in the meeting of Tina’s comments
developed the notion of drip feeding in terms of Jackie having used the IWB slides to provide a subtle form of visible background support, evocatively termed *silent scaffolding*:

Tina: I think it’s part of *scaffolding*, isn’t it? It’s just much more subtle and it’s a continuous process.
Jackie: Yes, I was going to say it’s whilst they are in the middle of doing something rather than before.
Sara: Making suggestions as well.
Tina: There was something about the SMART Board being unobtrusive, so as a background.
Sara: That’s related to this *drip feeding*.
Jackie: But within the role of [technology].
Tina: Yes, it's sort of like a *silent scaffold*, if you like!
Jackie: With visibility I guess! With visibility for the whole class, a memorable object of joint reference.

[…]
Tina: That’s the nice thing. It’s constantly there so there’s no fuss. You can just look at it. Nobody knows, it doesn’t matter, it’s there, it’s a reference point. And for some that’s very important.
Jackie: And the multimedia aspect of that as well. For example I’d used some of the images that we’d already used. I used different colours for different sections. I used italics I think, for the quotations. So just the fact that it’s [technology] meant that I could do all of that.

This dialogic exchange illustrates how a theoretical concept was co-constructed (mainly) by the teachers, through adaptation and extension of an existing concept to a new context of application, whilst capturing the natural language descriptors. Drip feeding was construed as either oral or visual image-based. Both of the terms coined by Tina were added to the coding scheme. Note that Jackie had already suggested after discussing Lesson 5 that scaffolding could be visual and “e.g. visual images” had been added to the definition. Tina had commented: “If we only think of scaffolding in one way, we may not think of something as scaffolding when it is”. This discussion was the precursor for the further extension of the term after analysing Lesson 8.

The addition of the new terms confirms the importance of research knowledge selected for application to practitioner contexts being “susceptible to practical tweaking” or “filtering, fragmenting or fiddling” (Bevan, 2006); that is, it was selected on the basis of the researchers’ sense of its relevance and facility for local adaptation. This point recognises that (contrary to popular belief among student teachers at least) there is no one-to-one relationship between educational theories and practice such that the former can be applied in their entirety; instead they provide a frame of reference and a language with which to name and critically analyse many of the issues that teachers face daily (Gordon & O’Brien, 2007). Theories can be applied in multiple ways, as shown by the cases of bridging theory and practice reported in this book and in other settings, including within different disciplines (ibid.).

Strategies suggested could be adopted or drawn upon, or not, by pupils; in other words, approaches were placed within reach, providing “differentiated guidance”. There was evidence for pupils using the support available as Jackie had intended, for instance starting off by writing independently, then referring to slides for further ideas. Important here was the notion of privacy. Tina pointed out that there was:

visibility [for individuals] but invisibility for the whole class, a memorable [object of joint reference] … It’s constantly there so there’s no fuss. You can just look at it. Nobody knows, it doesn’t matter … And for some that’s very important. (Meeting)

In interview Jackie highlighted success of the IWB prompts in terms of pupils often starting off independently, then referring to the slides for further inspiration:
There’s no way on a normal whiteboard would all of those things be up there, and on the handout it’s all there at the same time. Whereas with the SMART File it wasn't overpowering at all. I saw them looking up at the board and then getting on with their own writing and then if they’d run out of ideas looking back up at it again … They used it as much as they needed to. Different students within the group relied upon it completely and then others sort of listened to what I was saying, looked at it maybe and then just did their own thing.

There was some corroboration of this from our observations and from a pupil focus group too:

It was quite difficult getting ideas to write your poem, and how to start it and things like that … We’re not really familiar with poetry writing. … She was like explaining things and how to write your own poem using pictures and text on the SMART Board … [These things] were very helpful. Normally some teachers just read things out … and it’s not as visual if you like, you can’t understand it as well.

The silent (and verbal) scaffolding was intended to encourage and legitimate expression of different ideas, along with offering processing time:

Something else that is really important and not necessarily linked to the whiteboard is allowing them time to process information and to give their ideas in lots of different ways. If you scaffold something for them you have to allow them to work within that scaffold and come up with their different interpretations. (Tina, Meeting).

**Fading support**

Scaffolding support is always temporary, of course, and its gradual withdrawal – or *fading* – was encapsulated within the theme of *increasing pupil independence by handing over responsibility* to pupils. This was facilitated by IWB use where resources are transiently displayed. The teacher’s aim here was to provide pupils with the tools to illustrate and support an interpretation; she described the activities as an investment for their future work on poetry and creative writing. Some evidence was there across lessons for increasing pupil independence (from the teacher). Reflecting on the writing of pupils’ own poems in the final lesson videoed, Jackie described how

they’ve worked fantastically, independently … become far more confident in reaching those interpretations themselves, and honing their own style, picking up on things that they like in the poems that they’ve read. … There’s very little, “Oh, mine’s not right” coming from them any more. (Interview)

Independent working was more visible in some cases than others:

There's always scaffolding for them, but they can access it at whatever level they want to … then they can move on from it. … The tasks as well have been differentiated to allow them to either to tell the story of the poem and just go into more detail about them, or to have their own idea completely and just to use the style of the poems [e.g. in writing the story of an original character that has socially unacceptable ideas]. And the ones that I would have expected to stick closer to the poems have done. But they’ve still taken it and used it in their own way. They’ve made it their own. (Interview)

A further example of *handing over responsibility* was seen in Episode 5.3, as described under Lesson 5 above, where pairs of pupils discussed a new projected image and were asked, “How does this image relate to what we’ve just
discussed?” (Figure 4.6). Colleague Tina and both university researchers pointed out in their grid comments that here Jackie was continuing the ongoing process of linking the image to ideas, by handing over responsibility to pupils to do this themselves through discussion. Tina explained in one of the meetings how she looked for critical episodes related to this theme when reviewing the videos alone:

I watched it again and I stopped it and at points I went back again and watched another little bit. I think more because I was trying to think, “is there a shift somewhere here, is there something that to me seems a very critical moment?” At one stage I remember thinking, “yeah that really moves the students from one level to the next level” and that might not necessarily be focused on a particular use of the ICT but for me as a teacher I could see that shift, and that may well be something that moves them on to being much more independent learners. You know that higher critical thinking may be not necessarily in this scenario but when they come to do something similar again they will already have that sort of grounding and be able to move on much quicker.

Note that fading is an example of a term that we did not modify, but applied to various activities observed in several episodes, as above and again shortly after Episode 5.3, where pupils were asked to work in their individual anthologies to “Find words from the poem (‘Hitcher’) that [a] reflect today’s society … and [b] relate to the hippies’ world”, underlining these using a straight line for modern phrases/words (e.g. technology) and squiggly lines for outdated phrases from the 1960s. Jackie drew sample lines on the IWB slide (Figure 4.12). The aim was to “identify words and phrases which reveal emotions about contrasting lives, so how the poems show how people feel about two different lifestyles”. The task generated in-depth pupil and teacher–pupil discussions about society’s fear of strangers. This activity acted as further priming for the following Episode 5.4, where Jackie went through the poem on the IWB, highlighting the phrases identified in two colours and annotating the poem with pupils’ ideas. The aim was basically one of modelling, giving pupils the “opportunity to look at language change and language tone”.

(Figure 4.12 here: slide 5.4a)

In this case it was only Tina who had noted the terms scaffolding and fading in her grid commentary, which stated: “Scaffolding of task to directly engage Ps with the language of the poem. (Fading and focusing used here.)” She was asked to explain this in the subsequent review meeting, where the rest of the team began to understand and concur with her perspective:

TL: I think I felt that Jackie was backing out because she was giving them the opportunity to express what they wanted in their way.
JB: I think it was also me fading, I think it was the other kids in the class fading. As we said a moment ago, they have to make an individual choice and respond to it individually … it’s a very simple task to underline words and put a squiggly line under a word.
TL: I think perhaps that’s what I meant by the scaffolding, it was giving them a framework to work within: “this is what you are going to be doing, this is how you are going to be doing it”, but …
   JB: … and how you might do it in the future as well.
CHAPTER 4 IN BRIDGING BETWEEN RESEARCH AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE

TL: … but allowing them then to do that in their own way. And it’s made me look at the way that we scaffold things very differently because traditionally we would scaffold them perhaps with writing frames, which is definitely not what you are doing here. You are giving them other ways to scaffold their thinking, but also to scaffold the way that they are actually going to interpret what they are thinking about.

[video clip played; teachers talk over it:] TL: That’s where the scaffolding comes from.
JB: Yes, so it’s not just the question, it’s the interpretation.
TL: [The examples are] giving them an idea of … the things that they could be looking for. I think that’s right. Because it’s too open-ended otherwise and also you sometimes need to give them some examples just to get them started, to give them confidence to get started on what they’ve got to do.
JB: So they find a brand name, and then … ‘oh that sounds modern too’, ‘don’t know why but I think it is’.
TL: Because often the language is similar, isn’t it? And if they can identify one word then they will look forward and identify something …
JB: Like spellings and names, yes.
TL: Yes, spelt or misspelt. I think that’s what I meant there.
SH: OK, and the fading?
TL: That was allowing them then to go on and make those interpretations for themselves. So you’ve given them some stimulus but they’ve then got to go on and do the rest of that work for themselves and you are backing off. You’ve given them one idea, or maybe two ideas, but there are lots of other ideas within that that they will hopefully pick up on, once they’ve got started.

Our understanding of what pupils were taking away from these lessons is informed by Rogoff’s (1995) description of how individuals increase their participation in an activity by appropriating the processes of communication and shared decision making themselves. In this case it was the processes of devising and supporting an interpretation, and of making connections across texts, that were modelled. Further mechanisms for increasing pupil independence along with peer collaboration included class discussions in which any views expressed were considered and developed. An additional aim was thus to foster individual responses to the emerging shared understandings and analyses of language (emphasising metaphor and tone) and its impact. Our analyses indicate – and the pupils’ own poems confirm – that responses to the poetry were personal in some places, and influenced in others by the representations jointly developed by teacher and class using the IWB in partnership. The latter were themselves a mixture of collections of individual responses, and iteratively developed, composite interpretations.

Pupil perspectives and learning outcomes

The teachers identified several episodes where pupils demonstrated their learning gains. In Episode 5.4 for instance, pupils pointed out that the poet had dropped the ‘g’ and replaced it with an apostrophe in phrases such as the hitcher ‘followin’ the sun’ and ‘blowin’ in the wind’, a specific poetic device that Jackie herself had not previously picked up on, as she described in interview:

They are really beginning to think for themselves. They are noticing things that I hadn't noticed about language and they are relating it to character and mood... they've got it! If they do that in an exam and they notice apostrophes and they say, 'this suggests the character is relaxed and comes from a different mentality to the driver', and they can
explain that and quote it, they've got fantastic marks for that... It was because [the words] were there on the board and because they were all looking at it, they noticed something. And I was then able to pick up on it.

She continued by highlighting pupils’ increased confidence and analytic skills:

Rather than some glib answer they might have given a few weeks ago they were actually able to say that it does reveal something about the character, whereas when I asked the alliteration question a few weeks ago they were stumped to begin with. They are beginning to have the confidence to take the initiative, saying why something might be written the way it is. Getting down to the minutest detail, the piece of punctuation on the page. So I really think they are beginning to see what we can learn from poems and how poems all have something in common.

So looking at the technical terms that we've been using – the metaphors, the alliteration, the rhyme, the repetition. I think they're beginning to see how one poem might use alliteration but oh yeah, here's another one that's using it; or here's another poem that's using a little bit of rhyme here so why is it doing that?

Tina’s grid commentary for this episode independently corroborated Jackie’s view:

Pupils’ views towards hitcher are changing. Clearly developed ideas about the persona of poem and of the hitcher directly linked to the language of and the structure of certain phrases in the poem... Pupils are now beginning to identify particular words and phrases they would be confident to use if having to write an analysis of certain poetic devices used by the poet to create meaning.

Pupils’ own poetry writing during Lesson 8 illustrated further development, as Jackie described:

I was pleased with the way that they had taken my suggestions on board and had picked up on many of the techniques used by Duffy and Armitage such as suggesting there is a second voice involved in the poem, use of language that reflects the speaker's character, interesting metaphors, effective repetition, selective alliteration and rhyme and an overwhelming sense of anger and jealousy directed at another individual. (Jackie, Diary)

And looking at what they've written, they really have created that feeling of anger or boredom or resentment, or whatever it is. They're really raw, they really are full of emotion. (Interview)

Rob, who thinks he's the worst writer in the world, he's really impressed me over the last few weeks with his story and his poem is great. . . He began by writing, 'Am I a monster?' It's really good. . . He's used the techniques really well and he was proud of it. He passed it to one of his mates to look at it — he must have been proud of it. And seeing that first reaction from him and from some of the others, 'I hate poems, oh, I'm not writing poems', and [now] they've all written them and they are showing them to their mates. (Interview)

Feedback from pupil interviews on what they had learned about the topic was likewise positive, but unfortunately not particularly detailed:
CHAPTER 4 IN BRIDGING BETWEEN RESEARCH AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE

P: We got to learn about the structure of poems and like the things that are contained in poems, like alliteration, rhythm and stuff.
P: And we had to relate them to the other poems, like the Stealing and Education for Leisure, what we've done in other lessons.
P: And we used metaphors.
Moderator: What helped you to learn them?
P: The pictures and the big writing, and how she explained it and all the SMART Boards.

Jackie summarised pupil learning as follows:

They've picked up on poetic techniques; they've become more confident in reaching their own personal interpretations of the poems; they no longer see poetry as being scary and difficult... They've got shared terminology, shared evidence that they can talk about with familiarity. ...And they'll all have a really good piece of original writing coursework: from what I've read so far they're all of the quality I would expect from the group, or better. And that's because of the stimulus material and the way it's been presented to them I think.

Teacher perspective on the collaborative process

We conclude this chapter with a verbatim account by Jackie, describing in her own words for other practitioners and researchers how we negotiated the shared coding scheme and narrative account using mutually accessible language (Triggs & John, 2004). The perceived subsequent impacts of participation upon the teachers and their colleagues are described in Chapter 7.

The terminology … to begin with I actually felt it was a little intimidating. To come from speaking in a classroom situation with colleagues, to then going into the University of Cambridge with some academics, who I respected but was a little in awe of I have to confess, to look at this terminology. To begin with it was a little difficult to get my head around it. But as we started to comment upon the lessons, myself and my colleague found that we were writing to begin with in our own language that we would both understand and felt comfortable with and then we became a lot more aware of how what we were saying was actually the same as what Rosemary and Sara were saying, but the way they said it sounded better and also enabled us, after a while, to understand a little bit more of what we were doing and to try and maybe appreciate what we were doing in a way that we hadn’t necessarily done before. Having taught for 6 or 7 years, it was quite easy for me to become complacent about the things that I did every day, so to see it through a fresh pair of eyes and to be given an academic code or technical term enabled us to, not only appreciate what we were doing, but also to see through what we were doing in a different way. So, for example, funnelling, the idea of taking lots and lots of ideas from a class or from a range of lessons and filtering it through into something that is perhaps purer or more concentrate enabled me to sort of understand the way that my lessons were often going, and all of these ideas were being shaken around and then sort of purified and condensed into something more meaningful or more important.

And now, sort of looking back with that wonderful thing hindsight … the idea of sharing terminology amongst colleagues is fantastic. We did really appreciate the opportunity to discuss these lessons, and although my colleague wasn’t having the same treatment as I was with the videoed lessons, she really enjoyed the opportunity to discuss my lessons, compare them with hers, and it opened up more discussion and collaboration between us.
Jackie’s enthusiasm for the process of developing theory with colleagues extended to her idea of developing a common terminology with pupils too. She felt this might increase awareness of teaching and learning strategies in lessons, appreciation of pupils’ strengths and weaknesses, and a sense of shared experience.

And if collaborative theory is beneficial for us, then surely it is for students too? And although I haven’t perhaps done this as much as I would like to, it could be something that I could then generate amongst the students within my class, giving us a greater awareness of what’s going on in the classroom, both for the students and myself. Perhaps identifying our own terminology that they can coin the phrases, rather than me, giving them a greater appreciation of what’s going on in their lessons and a greater sense of our experience being shared. Surely the most beneficial way of doing this is to say to the students: “I value what you see as being important, so you describe it, you come up with the terms in the way that you can understand it.” So, like I learned from Rosemary and Sara, then maybe I could help them to refine what they are trying to say too.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

This case study adds further weight to the studies presented in Chapters 2 and 3 in terms of illustrating how working together with practitioners to review lesson videos can support intermediate theory building. Our resulting narrative account of the pedagogical strategies observed in English can be summarised as follows.

Jackie’s creative use and annotation of visual images focused pupils and stimulated their personal understanding of the underlying themes, characters and motivations in a triad of poems. Group discussions of hitchhiker images also helped pupils to formulate and rehearse their thoughts before voicing them with greater confidence during plenary discussions, illustrating the commonly observed strategy of priming for subsequent technology-supported whole-class activity. The IWB was also used sometimes as a stimulus for ideas underpinning subsequent pupil writing or collage construction – a reverse form of priming. These strategies underpinned the public sharing and co-construction of interpretations through communicating and developing complex ideas and connections between ideas, modelling analytic and writing processes, and scaffolding using projected images.

The two teachers played equal roles in shaping the development of the coding scheme and identification of global themes. Examples of formulating intermediate theory terms included colleague Tina’s notion of Jackie “drip feeding” ideas and support verbally and visually throughout the lesson, ultimately developed in terms of a subtle form of visible, optional support for pupils’ poem writing, known as “silent scaffolding”. We end this chapter by again using Jackie’s own words since they summarise the process we went through together in a nicely succinct way:

So, in conclusion, this shared analytic account, it really was the process of discussion between academics and teachers, looking at the same lessons from four different perspectives, individually. Then coming together and creating terminology that we all felt comfortable with and the combination of academic research and hands-on teaching enabled us all to share the language, but also to see what was going on, perhaps in a different way.

Both teachers subsequently perceived their involvement in the project as an effective form of professional development and their perceptions are elaborated in Chapter 7.
NOTES

1 General Certificate of Secondary Education: standardised examination taken in a number of subject areas at age 16. English Language, mathematics and at least one science subject are normally compulsory, and English Literature is usually taught to all students too, even if they opt out of the examination.

REFERENCES


Figure 4.1: ‘Flower Power’ textual annotation

Figure 4.2: Graphical annotation of poem ‘Hitcher’

Figure 4.3: Drag-and-drop classification activity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson aims</th>
<th>Lesson content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lesson content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enable pupils to reach an understanding of the characteristics of the persona in the poem</td>
<td>T reads out poem “Stealing” by Carol Ann Duffy. Class discuss character’s motivation for theft as teacher annotates poem on IWB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To extend pupils’ vocabulary when talking about this poem and poetry generally</td>
<td>Question-&amp;-answer (Q&amp;A) about two projected images and what they convey. Pupils discuss with neighbours, then report back ideas, Teacher annotates on IWB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify and appreciate the effect of language and alliteration</td>
<td>CD-ROM: Pupils define words presented. Pupils work in groups with thesauruses to match terms summarising the persona with lines of poem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher goes through pupils’ responses, moving phrases under each line of poem on IWB. Teacher introduces alliteration, marks words displayed beginning with ‘m’ suggested by pupils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homework for next lesson is to consider what kinds of sounds the poem has and why it has so much alliteration? Clue given.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lesson 2 (not videoed)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Lesson content</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To appreciate the alliteration used in the poem</td>
<td>Continuation of discussion about alliteration in poem “Stealing” and character’s motivation, supported by statements on IWB. Pupils copy statements in order of perceived importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop a more personal understanding of the persona of the poem, his/her background and potential reasons for their particular crimes</td>
<td>Teacher goes through (annotated) poem text on IWB, highlighting words indicating alliteration in response to pupil suggestions and discussing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task set to create a role play, create interview based on poem. Teacher elaborates task and Pupils briefly discuss why people steal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pupils begin task, mainly working with neighbours; they discuss, prepare, write down conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homework is to finish the scripts. Teacher introduces next lesson on another poem by same author and theme of looking at the kind of person society is creating.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lesson 3</strong></th>
<th><strong>Lesson content</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To identify similarities between poems</td>
<td>Class review of last lesson’s task asking pupils to produce and present a role play of dialogue between character in poem and other; one group of 3 boys perform from their script. Teacher discusses with class what these poems tell us about society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to use poems to reach an understanding of their presentation of society</td>
<td>Teacher introduces “ASBOs” (Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) and discusses with class. Pupils assign different kinds of people to Yes/No categories of support for ASBOs in their books while teacher circulates and offers assistance. Teacher manipulates characters on IWB as pupils feed back ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explore a topic through the eyes of a given persona</td>
<td>Teacher had outlined GCSE Speaking &amp; Listening coursework task to be carried out in assigned groups of 5, but fire alarm precluded this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To select and prioritise information for individual purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4 (not videoed)</td>
<td>Brief teacher introduction, then groups had 20 mins to rehearse role plays concerning ASBOs, building on yesterday’s preparatory work. Each of 4 groups performed their role play for the class for 4–8 mins. Pupils used / read from notes and took initiative to varying degrees during role plays. Teacher intervened in each group’s discussion after a short time to prompt pupils and include all. Teacher assessed pupils during performances, recording marks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To encourage pupils to adopt views of others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explore issues collectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To argue a point of view making use of evidence and example</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Lesson 5 | Class discuss images representing hippies and their lifestyle. 3rd poem of sequence (“Hitcher” by Simon Armitage) is introduced using anthologies and read out by author on CD-ROM. Guided discussion and Q&A about topic of poem – murder of a hitchhiker – using photographic images as stimuli. Poem annotated by teacher on IWB with pupils’ ideas. Pupils work individually to find words from the poem that reflect (a) today’s society and (b) relate to the hippies’ world of the 60s. Teacher goes through this with class, highlighting phrases for (a) & (b) in 2 colours & annotating poem with pupils’ ideas. She discusses use of slang spellings to convey casual attitude. Pupils decide and record in books which words are associated with which of two further photographic images (briefcase/rucksack); teacher circulates. |
| To generate mental connections between the 3 poems, to understand how the poems develop a sense of identity in terms of a persona’s character |  |
| To identify how images can enhance our understanding of society |  |
| To identify words and phrases which reveal emotions about contrasting lives |  |
| To use ideas contained in poetry to create more developed characters |  |

| Lesson 6 | Teacher reviews yesterday’s work on 3rd poem, using sorting task related to images of briefcase and rucksack (pupils use IWB), annotates slide with key words. Introduction to notion of metaphor in poetry, illustrations. Pupils explore similarities between the 3 poems [persona, mood/tone, what they reveal about society, use of language] through class discussion. This is followed by individual note-making. Pupils draw images to reflect metaphors in the poems, 3 pupils draw theirs on IWB. Whole class “hide and reveal” activity distinguishes literal meaning from interpretation Teacher sets collage task (for next lesson) and pupils begin to prepare for it by drawing images related to poem themes. |
| To identify metaphor in poetry |  |
| To interpret the literal and intended meanings of metaphor |  |
| To transfer written metaphor into visual images |  |
| To create a visual representation of the similarities between the three poems |  |

| Lesson 7 | Teacher reiterates collage task to whole class, illustrating and asking them to record at least 15–20 images and words they will use to create collage in next lesson. Pupils start work. Teacher solicits ideas from pupils and records them on IWB. |
| To consolidate all of the ideas discussed over the last few weeks via preparing collages to visually represent the similar images conveyed by the 3 |  |
### Lesson 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poems studied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- For pupils to demonstrate an understanding and personal interpretation of the poems – using their imagination to capture the mood of the poems and the emotions of the personae as well as illustrating metaphors and actions contained within them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To record this in a creative, kinaesthetic way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- (“The collage task also aims to develop pupils’ ability to select important quotations and to attach these to the images that they create in their minds”).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Lesson 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features and techniques of Duffy and Armitage’s poetry and to use these to write own poem to feature alongside those studied, in terms of style and theme.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- To have confidence in writing in a form that may be uncomfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To look critically at own writing and to edit and redraft to make poems more interesting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pupils continue working; some work in their books, 5 pairs use internet to find images, and 2 pairs use digital cameras to photograph images around the school grounds. Teachers reviews images collected, with pairs. Teacher questions pupils about their collage ideas. Homework is to write a commentary explaining what poems show about characters and mood. Collages created during next lesson and photographed by teacher. Pupils went on to write exam-style essays.

Teacher introduces and elaborates task using IWB: writing a poem to fit in with the ones studied.. Q&A and annotation of pupil responses on slide re tone, rhythm, sentence length, speaker, imagery/description. Pupils write poems in silence; teacher stimulates pupils’ ideas by projecting possible techniques, questions and suggestions at periodic intervals. Teacher circulates, prompting and helping.. For last 10 mins, 10 pupils word process their poems at PCs while the rest write them out by hand.

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*Figure 4.4 – English theme diagram*
Figure 4.5: Excerpt from grid commentary for small group discussion with teacher in Lesson 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>Researcher 1</th>
<th>Researcher 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T encourages Ps to express own views … Encourages Ps to see hitchers in an alternative way – from hitcher and driver’s point of view. Vital for Ps to explore range of responses and interpretations for exam.</td>
<td>T uses the views expressed by Ps but continues to draw out a deeper understanding using assistive questioning.</td>
<td>T talks through ideas with Ps (dialogic interaction), helping them to elaborate them and to make links with prior discussion of themes and hence understanding of society today.</td>
<td>Dialogic interaction; assistive questioning (probing, prompting); T praises P contributions and builds on these; but also puts forward alternative views to broaden P thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.6: Textual annotation of photograph during discussion of poem ‘Hitcher’

Figures 4.7 & 4.8 here (slides 6.1a & b)
Figure 4.8 Collaboratively identifying themes across poems

![Collaboratively identifying themes across poems](image)

Figures 4.9: Revisiting earlier themes

![Revisiting earlier themes](image)

Figure 4.10: Silent scaffolding

![Silent scaffolding](image)
Figure 4.11. Sample commentary grid: silent scaffolding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Video Summary</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>Researcher 1</th>
<th>Researcher 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:12.11–</td>
<td>T projects a possible technique and a question (with examples from poems). T:</td>
<td>T anticipates difficulty starting poem. Speaks in 1st person as if they are the persona –</td>
<td>This slide provides further ideas and T constantly challenges Ps to think by giving examples for</td>
<td>T continues to structure activity for Ps, using (scaffolding) personalising mechanisms (thinking</td>
<td>Scaffolding continues. T guides Ps towards starting point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0:13.59</td>
<td>Here are some suggestions to start you off. Pick up your pens and in your</td>
<td>transferring thinking in this way to class. T prompting Ps to write specific type of poem. Very</td>
<td>them to work with. This helps those who will be struggling without singling them out. All Ps</td>
<td>themselves into role) and illustration to give them a handle on the writing task; also allows</td>
<td>Fading; handing over responsibility. Ps to focus only on launch at this stage. Having</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mind think, “I know who I’m writing from the point of view of. I’m not me any</td>
<td>real examples given orally with support provided visually.</td>
<td>seem engaged. T circulates constantly giving ideas and feedback.</td>
<td>option of using own way of starting off (giving responsibility for exploration where they can take</td>
<td>provided an earlier overview of the task, T structures / paces / activity sensitively so as to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>more”. T continues making suggestions for the persona and reasoning behind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>it: differentiation?)</td>
<td>render it manageable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>their thoughts/actions. Maybe they are trying to prove something to the world</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>… have been let down”. Ps should think about where persona is and what has</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>happened in his life. T talks through slide and examples to illustrate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>techniques.</td>
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</table>

T= teacher  P= pupil

**Diary:** It was important to establish a comfortable and relaxed environment for the writing process to begin so I didn’t want to “intrude” into the lesson too much but still wanted to scaffold the writing process for those pupils who would undoubtedly need help. The SMART Files I produced contained sufficient structure for the majority of the class to start writing immediately – the examples of how the poems studied had begun, were presented visually and orally as I know that some pupils would pick up on what I was saying rather than looking at the board. The SMART Files were not intrusive as they were always there in the background.

**Interview:** Really what I did was just look back at those three poems and picked out the ways that some of them started or the ways that they were developed, the types of mood. … and the way that they've resolved their discussion of a topic. So … those slides were … prompting them: you know imagine you’re the speaker, you're really irritated, what is it that’s irritated you? […] I used it as a scaffold, as a structure for them so they could use as much or as little of it as they wanted to. … it was really just about giving them ideas. … “we’ve done this already, remember? You commented upon the effects of the alliteration and the metaphors, now’s the time to have a go at just using them”.
Figure 4.12: Underlining modern and hippy era phrases