

Character pastiche and connection in Key Stage 4 English study of *Macbeth*

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Abstract

Within the context of falling A-Level English Literature uptake nationally, this practitioner research in an all-boys grammar school in England explores student connection to *Macbeth* and to Lady Macbeth in GCSE English Literature. Viewing connection as a source of motivation, this research focuses primarily on subject-specific forms of connection: reader-text connection, through the lens of reader-response theory, and reader-character connection in the form of narrative empathy.

26 Year 10 boys participated in an intervention in which they wrote pastiche monologues from Lady Macbeth's perspective and took part in a class discussion of the work. Interviews were conducted with eight Year 10 volunteers, and a questionnaire was completed by the whole Year 10 group and by another Year 11 group taught by the same teacher. Results before the intervention highlight a lack of connection somewhat to the play as a whole but more to Lady Macbeth as a character, particularly in the form of negative characterisation and shallow theory of mind. Some negative characterisations relied on gender stereotypes, a result of particular concern in an all-boys context. After the intervention, students' characterisation of Lady Macbeth shifted strikingly overall, with students expressing more nuanced views of her motivation and interiority, as well as more enjoyment of her character. Perhaps of most practical significance for teaching, students' approach to exam work was also notably affected: after the intervention, the interviewed students articulated more developed arguments and demonstrated more confidence and nuance in interpreting lines of text from the play.

Overall, while this practitioner research was conducted at a very small scale, these results highlight that reader-response theory and narrative empathy in particular may provide useful frameworks for promoting student connection and interpretive confidence towards even notoriously "unrelatable" texts.

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1. Context

I teach at an all-boys grammar school in England where, by one metric, my GCSE English students usually do very well: over 80% of the cohort typically earns a grade 7 or higher in recent years, a testament to their hard work and a result that makes me proud. However, despite this quantitative success, the qualitative success of the GCSE English Literature and Language course is much more doubtful. My students do not like English very much.

Out of a cohort of over 600 students, over 200 each year opt to study A-Level Maths or Further Maths. In my five years at the school, the number of students choosing A-Level English Literature has never exceeded 15. This problem is not specific to my school or to an all-boys environment, though national data does suggest that gender is a factor: since 2010, national annual A-Level English uptake has fallen by about 30,000, with the drop more pronounced for boys (Ofsted, 2022).

A number of subject specialists attribute this decline to the new GCSE exams introduced in 2014 (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021) as part of the "knowledge curriculum" championed by former Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove (Eaglestone, 2021; Gibb, 2021). The way subject English is tested on these exams has been criticised for warping students' relationship with reading and literature (Atherton, 2024; Eaglestone, 2021; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021), separating what they learn in a GCSE course from the "real English" (Bleiman, 2020a, p. 30) that they might still encounter at A-Level or in universities. Coming from an American

context to teach in the UK, I have certainly felt that GCSE English required the most adjustment for me; I find the near-exclusive focus on close formalist analysis strange and limiting as an approach to literature.

Last year, for the first project of my Masters in Learning and Teaching, I therefore set out to test my own bias by investigating what my students really thought of GCSE English. Feeling myself that GCSE English was constraining, I chose to focus my investigation on autonomy. I surveyed almost half of the student body in Key Stages 3 and 4 and interviewed a smaller group of Year 11 volunteers who were interested in A-Level English.

My results suggested that autonomy was only partially at the heart of the problem. In many aspects of autonomy relating to control, the highly structured exam writing actually made many of our students feel more competent and in control. The problem lay in aspects of autonomy related to self-actualisation: students reported that they did not value their work in English, and that it had no relevance to them or to their lives. They also had a sense that their literature analysis was disingenuous and unconnected to the reality of the texts. Two students in my interviews used vomit metaphors to describe their own (in their view) worthless, pre-programmed exam writing; both went on, later that year, to score perfect 9s on both the Literature and Language exams.

My remit in wanting to improve students' view of English therefore shifted focus: rather than autonomy broadly, I wanted to promote a sense of personal and genuine connection to our Literature texts. Of the texts I teach, the clearest

disconnection students report is to *Macbeth*; trying to make Shakespeare "relatable" is a concern I share with secondary English teachers nationally (Elliott & Olive, 2021, p. 111). Within my department, we also have a problem with *Macbeth* specifically: our students perennially take a dramatically negative view of Lady Macbeth, to the point that many of them blame Macbeth's downfall entirely on her. We often attribute this, perhaps too easily, to the all-boys environment of our school. I wanted to see if I could shift students' reading of a character who, to my own subjective eye, sits at the emotional heart of the play.

In this practitioner research, I therefore set out to foster connection not just to the text from which students seem to feel most disconnected, but to the character they most vocally reject.

2. Literature Review

In order to design an intervention to improve my students' sense of connection to *Macbeth* and to Lady Macbeth in particular, I focused my reading around the following questions:

1. How is connection between students and their learning conceptualised in English education research?
2. How is disconnection conceptualised?
3. How can connection be created or improved?

2.1 - Connection and motivation

I begin my review by examining connection in the context of motivation research in education, as ultimately the problem I hope to solve is one of student motivation.

One theory of motivation commonly applied to education research is Self Determination Theory, or SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2017), which includes connection in the form of "relatedness." SDT holds that people are motivated when three psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are met. Within this framework, relationships motivation theory (RMT) holds that relatedness is a drive that motivates everyone towards "connecting with and caring for others" (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 294).

SDT also conceives of a scale of extrinsic to intrinsic autonomous motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017), suggesting that satisfying the underlying three psychological needs can help to "internalise" motivation and move it up the scale to become more personal and intrinsic (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). In other words, a sense of relatedness or connection has been found, among other factors, to promote intrinsic motivation (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Wang et al., 2019).

Within SDT, relatedness is almost entirely conceived of as connection between people (Ryan & Deci, 2017), rather than connection between a person and something else. Usually this is in the form of ongoing relationships, though Walton et al. (2012) argue that SDT's concept of relatedness can be extended to include not just existing relationships, but "mere belonging," or a sense of very

small or even potential social connection (p. 514). Although SDT has been widely empirically tested (Ryan & Deci, 2017), relatedness has been studied much less as an individual construct (Wang et al., 2019) and the RMT was not proposed at all until 2017. Since then, some SDT research has even extended relatedness to include not just social connections (person-person) but person-content connections, such as “nature relatedness” in outdoor education research (Barrable & Lakin, 2020).

Another conception of connection often leveraged in education research is expectancy-value theory, whose concept of “utility value” is often taken to mean that connecting learning to students’ personal lives will help them to see value in it (Hulleman et al., 2017). While utility value research is generally oriented towards value in the form of future goals (Vansteenkiste et al., 2018), such as a student valuing biology lessons because they hope to become a doctor, Hulleman et al. (2017) separate this typical approach to utility value from the broader concept of “relevance” (p. 388) – the idea that prompting students to recognise even smaller personal connections to a topic can promote motivation. Vansteenkiste et al. (2018) also suggest that this view of utility value aligns with SDT’s concept of internalising motivation through “self-relevance” (p. 37): that more autonomous and more intrinsic motivation is promoted by fostering students’ sense of the personal relevance of a topic, a premise that has been tested across a number of empirical studies (Vansteenkiste et al., 2018).

There is a basis, therefore, for viewing connection as promoting motivation, both person-person connection in the form of relatedness, and person-content connection in the form of self-relevance; there is even grounds, in recent nature relatedness research, for viewing person-content connection as simply another form of relatedness.

As much as these theories of motivation offer conceptions of connection, they also offer conceptions of disconnection. A lack of genuine connection between people undermines motivation; Ryan and Deci (2017) assert in particular that "relating to another human being as an object or a means to an end […] does not foster a sense of relatedness in either party" (p. 293-294). A lack of genuine connection between a person and a topic also undermines motivation, as work on the topic is perceived as less autonomous and more externally imposed (Vansteenkiste et al., 2018). Finally, one theory of disconnection popularised during remote learning in the recent pandemic is the concept of transactional distance, which suggests that students who feel more of a psychological and social distance "between student and content" (Paul et al., 2022, p. 82), such as learning from a teacher who does not personally know them or learning material that is not personalised for them, are likely to feel less motivated.

Having established that person-person connection and person-content connection can both be sources of motivation, I then found that English education research conceives of highly subject-specific forms of these connections.

2.2 - Person-person connection: dialogic learning and "knowledge" in English

2.2.1 – Learning as a relationship

English subject teaching, in its focus on interpreting texts, often subscribes to what Atherton (2024) describes as a disciplinary epistemology: knowledge of any particular literary work is dialogically co-created between students, text, and teacher (Atherton, 2024; Yandell, 2020). This constructivist view of English learning is fundamentally social, what Elliott (2021) refers to as "a conversation within and between students, texts and teachers" (p. 12). A student draws on their own personal experience and feelings, on a teacher's framing or guidance, and on the text itself in order to form an interpretation; and a teacher draws on their own response, on students' views, and on the text itself in order to guide class discussion, which further shapes and alters interpretations. In this way, English teaching often frames literary study as taking place within and through a relationship.

This disciplinary view has roots in two influential sources of theory. The first is the work of Lev Vygotsky in child and adolescent psychology. Vygotsky presents learning as occurring through an interaction of a learner with others in in their context, a process mediated by language (Bryer et al., 2024; Vygotsky, 1986). A second influential source for the dialogic conception of learning in English (McCallum, 2012) is Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which examines the power structures in education and argues for an emancipatory pedagogy in which students are empowered co-creators in a "problem-posing" approach to

education which “regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition” (Freire, 1970, p. 83). A dialogic view of English learning as a mutual relationship therefore arises from two intertwined goals: in drawing on Vygotsky, a goal of more cognitively effective learning; and in drawing on Freire, a goal of teaching for social justice and student empowerment.

2.2.2 The “knowledge curriculum” and a deficit model of learning

The current curriculum in English schools stems, likewise, from underlying goals of effective learning and student empowerment, but it subscribes to a different understanding of knowledge. This “knowledge-rich” curriculum is associated with conservative government reforms to UK education and with the new GCSE exams put into place in 2014 under education secretary Michael Gove (Gibb, 2021). In its focus on knowledge, it draws on the work of E. D. Hirsch on “cultural capital” (Gove, 2013), and on the work of Michael Young on “powerful knowledge” (Gibb, 2021), both of which promote teaching subject-specific knowledge in schools—the kind of knowledge students cannot acquire at home—to empower students and promote social mobility (Gibb, 2021; Gove, 2013; Young, 2009).

This approach to knowledge does not frame learning as co-created, but instead favours a “deficit” view of learning (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021, p. 18), in which students lack knowledge and must gain it from an expert. This view of knowledge as something to transmit from a teacher to a student often aligns with

"direct instruction" methods (Atherton, 2024, p. 9), a didactic model in which a teacher is viewed as "a sage on the stage" rather than a "guide by the side" (Gove, 2013).

This model of knowledge, and the curriculum that stems from it, has received wide criticisms from English subject specialists. A view of knowledge as something to be acquired contradicts the Vygotskian view of socially-constructed knowledge (Bryer et al., 2024; Roberts, 2020), thereby running counter to the "epistemological tradition" of subject English (Atherton, 2024, p. 9). Eaglestone (2021) argues that a non-dialogic approach to teaching literature "betrays both the discipline and the point of literature" (p. 16).

The underlying criticism is that knowledge that can be passed from an expert to a novice rules out any genuine interpretation of a literary text, and therefore is not authentic literary study (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). To receive an interpretation of a text from an expert is "merely memorisation of one dimension" (Elliott, 2021, p. 14), a reductive quantification that is easy to measure in assessments but not the same as actually interpreting a text (Eaglestone, 2021). Atherton (2024) argues that English is a subject where the very concept of an "expert" is impossible because what we aim to teach is personal and subjective: "a student cannot be a novice in how a text makes them feel or what it makes them think" (p. 9). This refusal to cast students as passive novices does not mean that teachers of English literature are expected to abdicate all authority or to give students no guidance—a false dichotomy sometimes leveraged against a dialogic

view of learning (Atherton, 2024; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021)—but merely that English is a subject where students must participate in mutual "co-creation" (McCallum, 2012, p. 26) of knowledge in order to genuinely engage in literary study (Eaglestone, 2021; Elliott, 2021).

Because dialogic and co-constructed learning is viewed as a relationship, I wish to suggest that it can be viewed as a form of connection, and therefore even approached through the lens of relatedness. A satisfying, motivating relationship is one that fosters autonomy from both participants (Ryan & Deci, 2017). It follows that a motivating form of dialogic learning is one in which students are making genuinely personal contributions. On the other hand, a more expert-led and knowledge-oriented approach to English learning might be viewed as a kind of disconnection, a relationship that has broken down to allow autonomy from only one side.

These two approaches to English teaching are not mutually exclusive in day-to-day practice (Atherton 2024), and in fact most teachers combine elements of both (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021), suggesting that different aspects of a given course or lesson might promote more or less of this kind of connection.

2.3 – Reader-text connection

If the "creative sociability" of literary interpretation (Yandell, 2020) can be viewed as a subject-specialised form of person-person connection, English

pedagogy research also offers a subject-specific conception of person-content connection: the relationship between reader and text.

2.3.1 – Self-relevance in reading

In English teaching, there is frequently a focus on connecting texts to students' personal lives. Yandell (2020) frames literary texts as an opportunity for "recognition" (p. 11), for students to find something personal and familiar in reading or responding to text. Efforts to help students connect texts to their own lives are a particular concern in Shakespeare teaching: in their national survey of Shakespeare teaching in 2017-2018, Elliott and Olive (2021) found that making texts "relatable/relevant (to modern life)" (p. 111) was a common factor in teachers' decisions of which plays to teach, and the same survey found that teachers commonly focused teaching strategies on "making Shakespeare relevant" (Elliott & Olive, 2023, p. 8). This effort to connect students to texts aligns with the concept of self-relevance that I have discussed as a factor in motivation more generally.

English pedagogy research also presents two theories more unique to literature of how a text can be made personal to a student: reader-response theory and Text World Theory.

2.3.2 – Reader-response theory

The common assertion that reading is a subjective experience is one that often takes reader-response theory as assumed (Harkin, 2005). Reader response theory originated in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to earlier schools of literary criticism which either centred the author's context and intentions, or else centred only the text and its internal workings; reader response theory instead frames reading as an interaction between author, text, and reader (Harkin, 2005; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). One particularly influential example is Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory (Atherton, 2024) which argues that reading is a transaction between a reader and a text: the text prompts and shapes the experience of reading that the reader has; in drawing on personal subjectivity—context, experience, and emotions—to understand the text, the reader also shapes the reading experience, which is thus unique to each reader and co-created between reader and text (Rosenblatt, 1994).

Rosenblatt discusses this theory in terms that compare reading to a relationship or a connection. For example, she describes how, in reading, we "seek some close contact with a mind uttering its sense of life" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 26), and she asserts that the subjective experience of reading "happens during a coming-together, a compenetration, of a reader and a text" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 29). Discussions of reader-response theory in education often use similar language of personal connection, as when Atherton (2024) explains that when we read texts, "we bring to them a little of who we are" (p. 4).

However, Rosenblatt's theory also suggests that not all reading functions in this ideal, connected way. Rosenblatt distinguishes different stances that a reader can take to a text. An "efferent" stance (from the Latin "to carry away") is when a reader is focused on finding information to take away from a text, such as when one reads an instruction manual (Rosenblatt, 1994). By contrast, an "aesthetic" stance focuses the reader inward on the personal experience of the text, rather than outward on another goal; an aesthetic reading is where the text is experienced emotionally and vividly, and it is often associated with reading fiction, where a narrative might be "experienced" in the mind's eye (Rosenblatt, 1994; Atherton, 2024). The same reader might read the same text either efferently or aesthetically at different times, and efferent and aesthetic stances are framed as a continuum rather than a binary distinction (Rosenblatt, 1994; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021).

If reader-response presents reading as a form of connection, therefore, the efferent-aesthetic continuum offers a way of evaluating connection: an aesthetic reading is more personal and therefore represents a closer connection between reader and text, while an efferent reading is "impersonal" (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 24) and therefore less connected.

2.3.3 – Text World Theory

Text World Theory (Gavins, 2007; Werth, 1999) is a cognitive discourse grammar which, much like reader-response theory, presents reading as an

interaction between reader and text (Gavins, 2007; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). Text World Theory distinguishes between the discourse-world, the physical world occupied by the reader, and text-worlds, or the "mental representations" (Gavins, 2007, p. 2) generated imaginatively in the reader's mind by the act of reading a text. Text World Theory focuses closely on the effect of individual language elements on the text-world—for example, the ability of an action verb to alter the text-world—and it thereby emphasises the key importance of language in mediating the relationship between reader and text (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). Text World Theory also centres the personal subjectivity of reading (Cushing, 2018; Gavins, 2007): in reading the word "dagger," for example, readers draw on unique sets of personal associations and experience such that no two readers imagine an identical "dagger" in their own text-world. Recent research in English subject pedagogy promotes Text World Theory as a helpful framework for fostering both close attention to language and authentic personal response in English teaching (Cushing, 2018; Giovanelli & Mason, 2015).

In emphasising the co-creation and personal nature of reading, Text World Theory offers another conception of connection between reader and text.

2.4 – Reader-text disconnection

2.4.1 – Authentic vs. manufactured reading

In their research applying cognitive poetics to English classroom teaching, Mason and Giovanelli (2021) distinguish between "authentic" and

"manufactured" reading. Aligning their work both to reader-response theory and Text World Theory, they argue that authentic reading requires two phases: first, an experiential and personal encounter with the text in which a reader will "build rich mental representations of the world of the text" (p. 8), and then second, a more conscious interpretation or analysis of what has been experienced. The first stage aligns with Rosenblatt's conception of aesthetic reading, while the second stage can allow a more efferent approach to the text (Atherton, 2024; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021).

Manufactured reading occurs when the first step is left out and a reader engages in interpretation and analysis without actually having a personal encounter with the text—"manufacturing is the practice of learning about a text, rather than engaging with it" (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021, p. 8).

2.4.2 – "Experts" and manufactured reading

Manufactured reading is at its most extreme when students receive an interpretation from another source; Giovanelli and Mason (2015) give the example of students who were informed by a teacher that a given character was a "villain" before reading and therefore could not form an understanding of the character that was not villainous. This kind of "pre-figuring" (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015, p. 46), in which a teacher supplies a focus before students begin reading, can often be a side-effect of individual lesson topics.

However, the “knowledge curriculum” as a whole has been criticised by many subject specialists on the basis that a transmission model of knowledge, in which an expert gives knowledge to novices, inherently promotes manufactured reading. Cushing (2018) criticises English teaching that focuses on “teacher-led explanations” (p. 8) of literary texts, or “authoritative interpretations” (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021). As Elliott (2021) highlights, learning an expert’s interpretation is not analysis, it is “merely memorisation” (p. 14).

Beyond being less skilful than authentic reading, this expert-led manufactured reading is also demotivating. In his study interviewing A-Level English students, Nightingale (2018) found that when “meaning” was given by a teacher, it could be received as an “imposition” (p. 154) that stifled a student’s own response. This aligns with an SDT view of relatedness in motivation, which holds that an external locus of causality—being controlled by someone else—in a relationship decreases motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In this way, expert-led manufactured reading can be viewed down as a breakdown in relatedness—a disconnection.

2.4.3 – Formalist analysis and manufactured reading

More subtly, manufactured reading can also occur without receiving someone else’s interpretation wholesale: it occurs when students jump to analysis as a first step before any experiential reading.

For example, in Act 2 Scene 2 of *Macbeth* (Shakespeare, 2023), Lady Macbeth cries out, “Hark! Peace! It was the owl that shriek’d.” A student reading this scene authentically would follow both steps of transactional reading as outlined by Giovanelli and Mason (2015). First, the student would be envisioning the text moment-by-moment and, noticing that Lady Macbeth shouts before identifying the shriek as an owl, might feel that she was startled. Then, looking to support this interpretation more analytically, the student might note the quick exclamations as evidence of her nervous state. A different student, eager to get right to analysis, might read the same lines and, without envisioning what is happening in the text, notice that the lines contain exclamations. Drawing on past examples of analysing exclamations elsewhere, this student might supply the interpretation that the presence of exclamations shows that Lady Macbeth is angry and authoritative in these lines. This second student’s analysis is not directly received from someone else, but—in drawing on external reference points and not engaging in any direct experience of the text—it is nevertheless manufactured.

Atherton (2024) anchors this kind of manufactured reading to a purely efferent reading stance, arguing that genuine literary analysis must be built by beginning “through the aesthetic, not through the efferent” (p.7). Mason and Giovanelli (2021) similarly suggest that, in focusing students on technical elements rather than on their own experiences, tasks that promote efferent reading are more likely to result in manufactured reading.

Mason and Giovanelli (2021) also argue that the current UK exam system creates exactly this problem by prompting students to skip the experiential phase of authentic reading and move straight into the interpretive phase: “assessment systems […] place a strong emphasis solely on the latter - the 'reading' that forms the end product - not the engagement with the text and the stages of authentic 'interpretation' that came before it" (p. 8).

This claim is borne out in descriptions of literary analysis by official bodies in the UK. Ofsted’s (2022) research review for subject English offers this description of the “components” of analytical writing: “Pupils need to be able to embed evidence, use appropriate subject terminology, apply precise vocabulary and evaluate interpretations, including their own interpretations” (p. 38). OCR, the exam board that creates the exams my students take, asks students to “analyse how the writer uses language, form and structure to create effects and impact” and to “analyse and evaluate how language, form and structure inform and impact on their reading of texts” (OCR, 2022, p. 7). Neither of these descriptions of analysis excludes the possibility of personally, aesthetically experiencing the text; in fact, OCR separately mentions that in “critical reading,” students should “engage personally with texts” (p. 6). However, this personal response is never explicitly tied into descriptions of analysis, leading Richards-Kamal (2008) to argue that GCSE English marking criteria present “a clear, unacknowledged, contradiction between a 'personal' and 'critical' response" (p. 58). Ofsted’s only mention of “meaningful personal responses to narratives” in

their subject-wide research review occurs in a discussion of teachers reading books aloud to pupils in Key Stage 2 (Ofsted, 2022, p. 37).

The aspect of analysis that the current GCSE exams do emphasise clearly is a focus on "language, form and structure" (OCR, 2022, p. 7), resulting in a highly technical and formalist version of literary analysis: "it is the identification of language techniques (such as use of imagery), grammatical choices (such as declarative sentences), structural features (such as discourse markers), and the explanation of their effects on the reader that form the bones of analysis" (Roberts, 2020, p. 133).

This formalist focus has been criticised by some subject specialists: Mason and Giovanelli (2021) condemn exams' "fetishisation of metalanguage" (p. 99), and Eaglestone (2021) argues that the knowledge curriculum often causes texts to be fragmented into "atomised subunits" (p. 25) and measurable terminology at the expense of genuine reading. At its worst, Eaglestone (2021) suggests, this highly technical analysis promotes the idea that literary analysis is made up of "right-or-wrong calculations" (p. 17), a conception fundamentally at odds with subjective, personal interpretation.

An excessive focus on techniques and formalist analysis, in causing students to skip over their own authentic experience of the text, therefore aligns with manufactured reading. By making reading less personal, this approach to analysis can also be viewed as a form of disconnection between reader and text.

2.4.5 – Depth in mental worlds

Cognitive linguistics approaches to reading offer another way of conceiving of varying levels of connection: degrees of depth of the “world” of a text.

In an ideal version of reading, Text World Theory suggests that reading is immersive: “the feeling of being so immersed in a text world-world as almost to lose sense of who and where we are” (Gavins, 2007, p. 10). However, Gavins (2007) also distinguishes between “simple and short-lived text-worlds” and “complex structures” (p. 7), suggesting that some reading prompts more or less detail in the text-world that a reader imagines.

Mason and Giovanelli (2021) explain another, somewhat similar idea in cognitive linguistics: “transportation," a metaphorical conception of a “reader as a traveller” into the “other world” of a text (p. 58). The degree to which this transportation occurs can vary: "greater transportation or 'transportability' involves readers displaying higher levels of emotional engagement, closer connections with the characters, and a greater potential for the story to have a powerful impact on the reader" (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021, p. 58).

Giovanelli and Mason (2015) also discuss the use of a third cognitive linguistics theory, narrative schemas, in teaching literature. Narrative schemas are the version of a text stored in a reader’s memory; they can expand, or “accrete”, as new information is added, and they can also “decay” (p. 45). In other words, the version of a text that readers refer to mentally can be more or less detailed at different times and for different readers.

Even beyond cognitive linguistics, Fiorella and Mayer (2015) discuss cognitive research on “learning by imagining,” in which several studies asked children to form mental images while reading; it was found that some children struggled to form mental images of what they were reading without training in how to do so, while others did so even when they were not asked to.

What all of these conceptions have in common is the understanding that when readers form a mental version of a text, that mental version is not always formed to the same degree; there can be deeper or shallower mental conceptions of texts. This represents another way in which a reader might be more or less connected to a text.

2.5 – Reader-character connection

2.5.1 – Social justice in the curriculum

In the UK in recent years, there has been debate over which texts are taught in English in schools (Atherton, 2024). The “knowledge-rich” curriculum, in its alignment with E.D. Hirsch’s concept of “cultural capital” (Gibb, 2021), places an emphasis on classic texts as a form of cultural heritage (Gove, 2013). Elliott (2021) argues that, rather than empowering students, a curriculum based only in classic texts is one that is embedded in and perpetuates existing power structures. Students who do not recognise experiences like theirs in taught texts can feel “shut out,” while self-relevance can make them feel “welcomed” (Atherton, 2024, p.5).

Equally, curriculum can affect how students view others. Reading can mean "encountering the experiences of others" (Atherton, 2024, p. 6), creating an opportunity for "cross-cultural connections" (Johnson et al., 2018, p. 571); this argument has been leveraged in efforts to diversify school reading in recent decades, particularly in America (McNair & Edwards, 2021). The argument that reading can help to build empathy is, in fact, often cited as a reason for studying literature in schools at all (Burke et al., 2016). However, whether reading actually does build empathy has been extensively disputed and, within the past two decades, increasingly studied (Burke et al., 2016; Keen, 2022).

2.5.2 – Narrative empathy

"Empathy" somewhat resists definition as a construct because it has been defined differently across a range of fields from literary theory to cognitive science, with definitions often mixed and conflated (Fernandez-Quintanilla & Stradling, 2023; Keen, 2022). In their review of empirical studies of empathy in reading, Burke et al. (2016) refer to empathy as "one of the most frequent, and at the same time most ill-defined, concepts in current philosophical and psychological research" (p. 8).

One influential conception is Keen's 2006 theory of narrative empathy (Keen, 2022), which suggests that the empathy that readers feel for characters is separable from real-world empathy for other people (Fernandez-Quintanilla & Stradling, 2023; Keen, 2022). Keen's narrative empathy is a compound construct,

comprising a range of elements including readers taking a character's perspective, understanding a character's thoughts and feelings, sharing a character's emotions, and feeling sympathetic concern for a character (Keen, 2022). Each of these individual elements stems from its own existing research tradition, across fields from literary theory to cognitive science (Burke et al., 2016; Fernandez-Quintanilla & Stradling, 2023; Keen, 2022), and Keen (2022) stresses that experiencing some parts of narrative empathy does not necessarily lead to experiencing all parts.

Keen's theory of narrative empathy draws on Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reader response, proposing narrative empathy as a potential part of the affective experience co-created by reader and text when aesthetically reading a narrative (Keen, 2022; Keen, 2023). Fernandez-Quintanilla and Stradling (2023) further suggest that Text World Theory and a cognitive linguistics conception of transportation, or immersion in texts, can be a helpful framework for pinpointing how narrative empathy is constructed: "through varying levels of projection into the narrative, readers form relationships with entities at the text-world level in order for emotional response […] to occur" (p. 114). However, while Keen's theory has been drawn on in the context of reader response studies (Burke et al., 2016), only theoretical connections have been made between empathy and Text World Theory (Fernandez-Quintanilla & Stradling, 2023).

Keen's conception of narrative empathy has also not generally been applied in education research (Burke et al., 2016; Keen, 2022), though a small number of international publications in recent years have done so, such as

Lauritzen's (2019) work with Scandinavian high-school students and Sutton's (2021) study in American undergraduate teaching. Despite this narrow direct precedent, the wide application of reader response theories more generally in research in English schools (Atherton, 2024; Bryer et al., 2024) offers many reference points for applying narrative empathy to teaching. I will therefore take narrative empathy as another way of conceiving of connection, specifically between reader and character.

2.6 – Reader-character disconnection

Because narrative empathy is such a compound construct and because applications of it often blur definitions (Burke et al., 2016; Fernandez-Quintanilla & Stradling, 2023; Keen, 2022), I will not attempt to measure or examine narrative empathy as a complex whole. Focusing instead on some of the elements within narrative empathy (Burke et al., 2016; Keen, 2022) offers a more precise way to conceptualise whether a reader is experiencing more or less of a given aspect of empathy, particularly as Keen draws on constructs that are grounded in their own distinct research traditions (Burke et al., 2016).

2.6.1 - Theory of mind

In their review of empirical research on empathy in reading, Burke et al. (2016) trace one influential conception of empathy as epistemology: one aspect of empathy is the ability to cognitively understand someone else's state of mind, a

concept sometimes referred to in philosophy as “theory of mind” (Burke et al., 2016, p. 10). In the context of reading, as there is no real person to be understood, this is even more of an imaginative construct on the part of the reader: “readers’ attribution of mental processes to imaginary people” (Caracciolo, 2014, p. 33). In their review of five cognitive experiments testing the effect of reading on theory of mind, Kidd and Castano (2013) offer a clear definition of a purely cognitive theory of mind: “the inference and representation of others’ beliefs and intentions” (p. 377).

2.6.2 - Affective theory of mind

Kidd and Castano (2013) distinguish a purely cognitive theory of mind from affective theory of mind, “the ability to detect and understand others’ emotions” (p. 377). The absence of either or both theories of mind—in other words, an inability to imagine someone else’s emotions or mental state—was found to be associated with relationship problems, and low empathy in the broader sense of social altruism (Kidd & Castano, 2013). Burke et al. (2016) suggest that affective theory of mind can often be less conscious than cognitive theory of mind, and it is often connected with theories of mental simulation: the idea that when reading, a reader creates an imagined social experience which can involve their own emotions in the experience of a character (Caracciolo, 2014; Mar & Oatley, 2008).

2.6.3 – Perspective-taking

Caracciolo (2014) conceives of empathy in reading as necessarily aligning not just with a mental simulation of a character's experience, but with a first-person mental simulation: imagining experiences from the character's perspective, or mentally putting oneself in their shoes. Burke et al. (2016) refer to this as "perspective taking" (p. 9), an aspect of empathy which describes how interior or self-aligned a reader's conception of a character's mind is.

2.6.4 - Empathic concern

Lastly, many constructions of empathy include the idea, stated or implied, that empathy involves not just understanding someone's feelings, and not even just feeling someone's feelings (sometimes called "emotional contagion" (Burke et al., 2016, p. 9), but feeling kindness or concern for someone's feelings. This is sometimes referred to as "sympathy" (Burke et al., 2016, p. 9; Keen, 2023), or as "affective empathy" (Burke et al., 2016, p. 16). However, these terms risk imprecision, as "sympathy" can be used to mean feeling concern for someone regardless of understanding their emotions (Burke et al., 2016, p. 9), and "affective empathy" overlaps with affective theory of mind (Burke et al., 2016). Therefore, I will use the term "empathic concern" (Keen, 2022, p. 20) to describe the aspect of empathy that involves feeling concern about or due to a character's emotions.

These components within narrative empathy therefore offer several clear metrics for examining how connected a reader is to a character: how much the reader can understand the character's state of mind; how much the reader can understand the character's feelings; how interior a perspective the reader takes in imagining a character's state of mind; and how much concern a reader feels for a character's emotional experiences.

2.7 – Building reader-text connection

2.7.1 – Re-creative writing

While creative writing features in GCSE English Language teaching and exams, creative writing is often kept separate from literary analysis and critical writing (Bleiman, 2020b); in the context of teaching Shakespeare specifically, Elliott and Olive (2023) found in their 2017-2018 national survey that creative writing for critical purposes, such as "recreative writing" and "writing in character" (p. 6), were somewhat common methods in Shakespeare teaching, but they were not used by the majority of teachers surveyed, and their use decreased with older year groups.

McCallum (2012) offers a conception of "re-creativity" (p. 54) as transformative creativity which draws on an existing source in order to create a new work; in literature teaching, this can take the form of creative writing that transforms or adds to a literary text.

2.7.2 – Re-creative writing and connection

In English subject pedagogy, writing—much like reading—is often connected to the epistemic tradition of Lev Vygotsky's theories (Bryer et al., 2024; McCallum, 2012). Vygotsky suggests a dialogic connection between thought and language: thought is expressed in the form of language, but expressing language in turn shapes thought (McCallum, 2012; Vygotsky, 1986). In terms of writing, this means that writing does not just express ideas, it helps to form ideas (Bryer et al., 2024; Vygotsky, 1986), a process of meaning-making in which writers—or students—must consider their language to formulate and reformulate ideas as they go.

Re-creative writing, or writing based on an existing text, extends the dialogic process of reader-response by giving much more power to a student to personalise their interpretation: the student re-makes the original text through the lens of their personal subjectivity in what McCallum (2012) refers to as a "writer-response" approach (p. 57). Reader-response theory suggests that a connection exists between reader and text; a writer-response approach, in theory, forces that connection to be close and personal: "when a text is re-written it is absorbed into the experience of the reader" (McCallum, 2012, p. 62).

2.7.3 – The critical nature of re-creative writing

There is sometimes objection to creative writing in an academic context in the UK on the grounds that it is not sufficiently critical or intellectually

demanding; Green (2009) quotes an Oxford alumnus who argues that his university teaching a mere “craft” like writing “debase[s] the credibility of all other degrees" (p. 188).

However, creative writing as a method to support critical analysis has a precedent that extends as far back as the 1980s in UK universities (Knights & Thurgar-Dawson, 2007). In more recent publications, many English subject specialists argue that re-creative writing in particular can be uniquely critical in the close attention that it places on the language, structure, and form of the original text (Bleiman, 2020a; Green, 2009; McCallum, 2012). In a practical example, Richards-Kamal (2008) discusses her students’ writing of an imagined scene to add to *Great Expectations*, and the sensitive responses to the course text that resulted.

2.8 – Building reader-character connection

2.8.1 – Context for role-play methods

Drama methods, sometimes called “active methods” when they involve physical expression (Elliott & Olive, 2023, p. 1) have historically been linked with teaching Shakespeare, perhaps unsurprisingly, for essentially as long as Shakespeare has been taught and English has been a school subject (Bryer et al., 2024). While their use often decreases in older year groups such as GCSE and A-Level teaching, students have been found to respond to Shakespeare more positively if they had learned with at least some active methods (Elliott & Olive,

2023). “Role-play,” or acting in the role of a character, is often associated with active drama methods, but role-play can also be extend to writing in-role; examples of written role-play as a teaching method for English extend as far back as 1940 (Bryer et al., 2024).

2.8.2 – Role-play and dialogic learning

Role-play as a method ties into two of the conceptions of connection that I have discussed: dialogic learning, and reader-response.

Bryer et al. (2024) highlight that role-play can align productively with Vygotsky’s conception of the “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD), which suggests that a child’s potential learning or development with collaboration or support from others—such as a teacher or peers—is extended to a level beyond what the child could reach on their own (Bryer et al., 2024; Vygotsky, 1978). In an expert-led, transmission model of learning, this has often been taken to mean a teacher supplying a student with “scaffolding” (Daniels & Downes, 2014, p. 101); some English subject specialists argue that this is a mischaracterisation of the ZPD which fails to include the necessarily social and dialogic nature of the support (Bryer et al., 2024; Daniels & Downes, 2014). In his writings on play in child development, Vygotsky suggests that imaginative play can foster exactly this kind of support: by imaginatively creating experiences, children draw on and extend their contextual reference points for those experiences (Bryer et al., 2024; Vygotsky, 2016). Furthermore, Bryer et al. (2024) argue that classroom drama

methods—such as role-play—promote this "particular form of collaborative ZPD" (p. 39). Role-play methods, in other words, put students into a productive dialogue with their reference points: by having to imagine and perform their own rendition of a character or text, students necessarily form a personal connection with that character or text.

Much like McCallum's (2012) conception of re-creativity, role-play methods can serve to empower and centre students' subjectivity in their dialogue with a text, "sharing authority with the authors of the texts they are studying" (Bryer et al., 2024, p. 67). Some research on the use of role-play methods in schools has examined how this kind of dialogic "co-creation" (Wright, 2015, p. 139) promotes student empowerment. Examples include Wright's (2015) discussion of three performance project interventions with students in Australia, and Daniels and Downes' (2014) discussion of how drama methods allowed a group of economically underprivileged students to reconfigure classroom identities outside of the rigid "power structures" (p. 109) in which they are often confined.

2.8.3 – Role-play and empathy

While not generally tied to formal research of empathy, role-play methods are sometimes informally recognised as promoting empathy by allowing a student to "inhabit the mind of a character imaginatively" (Atherton, 2024, p. 59), a description which evokes both theory of mind and perspective-taking. Sometimes role-play is also aligned with empathy in the sense of altruism and pro-social

behaviour, as when Bryer et al. (2024) assert that "when working with texts that do not reflect aspects of readers' identities or experience, taking on roles can become an inclusive endeavour" (p. 67).

Examples of formal research interventions tying role-play pedagogy to empathy are sparse in the UK. However, there is some recent international precedent: Wells et al. (2021) undertook a year-long intervention with four New Zealand primary school teachers, examining the connections of drama methods to empathy. They found that active drama methods promoted both cognitive and affective empathy in students (Wells et al., 2021).

2.8.4 – Objections to connecting with characters

In their 2017-2018 national survey of Shakespeare teaching, Elliott and Olive (2023) found that teachers often have concerns about using some drama methods. Two objections relevant to role-play are that promoting student-character connection might prompt students to “treat characters as […] real people” (Elliott & Olive, 2023, p. 2) and have trouble analysing them as constructed works, and the even more practical concern that devoting lesson time to fun activities would take needed time away from building exam skills (Elliott & Olive, 2023).

Bryer et al. (2024) argue that both concerns are unwarranted, in that role-play prompts a critical consideration of the text through “self-spectatorship”: in order to write or perform as a character, students engage in ongoing evaluations

of the character, their own performance, and their opinion of both, creating a "productive interplay between their affective and critical responses" (p. 44). Nevertheless, any intervention examining role-play in GCSE teaching would need to be cognisant of excessive or naïve connection between student and character—the "real people" problem—as a potential pitfall.

2.9 – Summarising connection

In this review, I have found that English pedagogy research conceives of connection in the following ways:

1. Social connection or relatedness, in the social space of classrooms and in the social nature of dialogic learning.
2. Reader-text connection, through authentic aesthetic reading and the creation of rich, immersive text-worlds. This connection can be undermined by exclusively efferent reading overly focused on techniques, manufactured interpretation, and lack of immersion.
3. Reader-character connection, through identity-based recognition and through narrative empathy as characterised by aspects such as theory of mind, perspective-taking, and empathic concern. Reader-character connection can be undermined by a lack of recognition or of narrative empathy.

Finally, within the wide tradition of English teaching strategies tied to reader-response and to character (Bryer et al., 2024; McCallum, 2012), I have highlighted recreative writing and role-play as particularly relevant to connection.

3. Methods

In order to explore whether I could prompt my students to feel more connection to *Macbeth* and to Lady Macbeth in particular, I designed my action research around the following questions:

1. To what extent do students already feel a connection to the text or the character?
2. Does the intervention affect perceived connection to the text or the character?
3. Does the intervention affect how students subsequently approach exam-style work focused on the same character?

3.1 – Methodological context

Atherton (2024) argues that a dialogically constructed conception of knowledge forms part of the tradition of English as a subject; my intervention, taking place as part of English Literature classroom teaching, is inherently constructivist, relying on students' subjective encounters with the text and with our lessons. My research therefore takes a similarly constructivist and primarily qualitative approach, following in the tradition of qualitative research exploring

reader-response theory (Cox & Many, 1992; Giovanelli & Mason, 2021; Park, 2012) and Text World Theory (Cushing, 2018; Giovanelli, 2017) in the English classroom. While data collection prioritised this qualitative focus on student voice, my analysis and discussion include an element of mixed methods in the form of quantified and systematic coding; these simple quantitative elements aim to add transparency and clarity (Gorard & Taylor, 2004) in service of the project's ultimately qualitative goals. As practitioner research, this intervention is also necessarily embedded in my own professional practice (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 442), with the practicality and subjectivity which that entails.

3.2 – Intervention design

The participants in the research intervention were 26 Year 10 boys, a class regularly taught by me for GCSE English.

The central component of the intervention was a pastiche writing task. I hoped to build reader-text connection through re-creative writing (McCallum, 2012), and to build reader-character connection through role-play. I chose to call this combination a "pastiche" rather than a "written role-play" in order to forefront its focus on style: I asked students to imitate not just what Lady Macbeth might say, but how she might say it (Appendix 1). My hope was that this focus on Shakespeare's language could help to account for the common worry that creative work might take time at the expense of exam skills (Elliott & Olive, 2023).

For the task itself, students were asked to write a monologue for Lady Macbeth to deliver during Act 4, imagining what she might be doing or thinking during the act that she spends off-stage. The full task can be found in Appendix 1.

This central task was delivered as part of a 3-lesson sequence that comprised the intervention as a whole.

3.2.1 – Lesson 1

In the first lesson, the class watched two contrasting performances of Lady Macbeth's final appearance in Act 3, just before the students would imagine her off-stage. The class discussed the differences between the two performances—one steely Lady Macbeth trying to hold herself together, and one Lady Macbeth overcome with despair—to establish the wide range of possible interpretations.

In wanting students to connect more personally with Lady Macbeth, I felt it was important to emphasise their autonomy in the task by fore-fronting that there is no authoritative, "right-or-wrong" (Eaglestone, 2021, p. 26) interpretation of the character. I hoped in this way to promote more authentic and less manufactured responses (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021) by lessening any pressure to be "correct."

The decision to show students performed interpretations also drew inspiration from cognitive studies in reading and imagination, aligned with narrative empathy (Keen, 2023; Burke et al., 2016), which first trained readers in how to make mental images of texts before asking them to do so in an intervention (Fiorella & Mayer, 2015; Johnson et al., 2013). I offered the students

examples of interpretation so that they were clear on what an interpretation looked like before imagining their own.

3.2.2 – Lesson 2:

In the second lesson, the students wrote the pastiches themselves. I gave students the task (Appendix 1) and a reference handout of all of Lady Macbeth's existing monologues. The task also asked them to explain the choices they had made in their pastiche, a decision drawing inspiration from Giovanelli's (2017) discussion of a Text World Theory intervention in which a teacher asked students to visually depict a poem's text-world and then to reflect on their choices.

These pastiches and reflections were collected—labelled with students' anonymised pseudonyms—and form part of the research data, once again drawing on reference points from Text World Theory (Giovanelli, 2017) and empathy (Wells et al., 2021) interventions which analysed students' creative output.

3.2.3 – Lesson 3:

In the final lesson, students were divided into groups of four, and each group was given a packet of five anonymised pastiches. I had chosen five that represented a wide range of characterisation, while being well-written enough not to prompt rude reactions. Each group was asked to rank the "most convincing" monologues, and then each group had to share and defend their ranking in a class discussion. My colleague observed the discussion and recorded field notes.

This third lesson was intended partially to bring students' writing into a more actively social environment, what Yandell (2020) refers to as the "creative sociability" of English. I hoped in this way to promote relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017), both in terms of connecting with the rest of the class and in terms of feeling a more personal ownership of their favoured interpretations.

3.3 – Data collection and analysis

Data collection took place in the following stages:

Before the intervention:	During the intervention:	After the intervention:
• Questionnaire 1 • First interviews	• Pastiches • Discussion field notes	• Questionnaire 2 • Second interviews

Interview recordings and student pastiches were transcribed. I then thematically analysed all of the data through a mixture of inductive and deductive coding (Kawulich, 2016). The code book can be found in Appendix 8 and charts of coding instances in Appendix 7; the coding will be explored in depth in my discussion.

3.3.1 – Questionnaires

The first questionnaire was given to the 26 Year 10 students participating in the intervention, as well as to 25 of my Year 11 students—excluding two who

opted not to participate—as a point of comparison. The second questionnaire was then completed by the same Year 10 students, except for one who was absent.

The two questionnaires repeated an identical first three questions about students' views of the play and Lady Macbeth, to allow direct comparison, and the second questionnaire added a question about the intervention. The full questionnaires and responses can be found in Appendices 2 and 3.

The questions were deliberately kept simple. Cohen et al. (2018) highlight the need for questionnaires to be "uncomplicated" (p. 493) and to ask about one topic at a time. Similarly for the sake of simplicity and clarity, the questionnaire was administered via a Microsoft Teams link in the same way that the class often completes reflections. For question wording, I also drew reference points from reader-response research interventions, which often use very open-ended response formats (Giovanelli, 2017; Vijayarajoo & Samuel, 2013) – even so open-ended as to ask students to "write anything you want about the book" (Cox & Many, 1992, p. 43) – because the way in which the student chooses to frame the response is itself the focus of analysis.

Some reader-response studies also combined written responses with recorded discussions or interviews (Giovanelli, 2017; Vijayarajoo & Samuel, 2013) or relied on recorded discussion entirely (Park, 2012); I chose to triangulate similarly.

3.3.2 - Interviews

The interviews were conducted with students from the Year 10 class who had volunteered; of the volunteers, four pairs were chosen to be interviewed before and after the intervention during free lunch periods. Audio recordings were then transcribed and anonymised.

The students were interviewed in pairs to allow access to the wider class's socially constructed views. Arnot et al. (2004) highlight the ability of student focus groups to access social dynamics and shared understanding, and Cohen et al. (2018) similarly emphasise that group interviews can serve to emphasise consensus opinions, as well as allowing students to express risky opinions to a peer without needing to disagree with the teacher or interviewer. I also paired students with their friends, in an effort to keep them comfortable expressing themselves (Cohen et al., 2018).

The interviews were semi-structured, and four topics were addressed in each:

1. What students feel connects them to a text or character.
2. Whether they feel connected to *Macbeth*, and why.
3. Whether they feel connected to Lady Macbeth, and why.
4. A "think-out-loud" planning of an exam-style question.

The second set of interviews also asked, within the second and third topics, whether the intervention had changed students' views. Full transcripts can

be found in Appendix 4. Similarly to the questionnaire, questions were extremely open-ended partially to allow for the depth and "social situatedness" of understanding (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 506) that interviews foster, and partially because I did not want to limit students' responses before analysing their chosen approaches through a reader-response lens.

3.4 – Collaboration

My primary collaboration was during the discussion lesson, when a colleague who was completing her teacher training observed and took field notes (Appendix 5) on what factors students mentioned when evaluating pastiches. These field notes were a practical solution to a loud setting. Royce (2011) also highlights the social sensitivity of a human as an "intuitive data processor" (p. 5)—my colleague was able to evaluate what students were focusing on and excited about. Field notes notably add an element of bias (Cohen et al., 2018; Royce, 2011), which is a limitation but also served as helpful triangulation to test my own biased view of the class.

Asking a trainee who was also my mentee to observe also contributed to the longer term collaborative goals of this research project: evaluating and re-shaping departmental teaching. The observation formed the basis for mentoring discussions about the nature of student reading, which then fed into my mentee's reflections on a novel she was teaching at Key Stage 3. In the wider department, as I shared my ongoing project results later in the year during professional

development meetings, the field notes from an observer less biased about my teaching than me provided a helpful endorsement of the project's effects on the class.

3.5 – Ethical considerations

Throughout the project, in addition to obtaining ethical approval from CUREC (reference EDUC_C1A_23_319), I was careful to follow ethical guidelines as laid out by BERA (2018). This involved a range of considerations, some practical and some more emotional.

The most practical ethical consideration was data protection; following CUREC guidelines, all research data was stored on secure encrypted servers, and the school retained students' personal data (such as names on consent forms).

3.5.1 – Informed consent

Farrimond (2016) and Cohen et al. (2018) highlight genuine informed consent as a central tenet of ethical research. I took a number of measures to ensure that I received informed consent from participants. Following the standard for research involving children (Farrimond, 2016), I obtained written opt-in consent from the parents of students taking part in the questionnaire and intervention, and separate and additional consent from the parents of students being interviewed.

Crucially, as participants must have the ability to withdraw consent (Cohen et al., 2018), I reminded students before each task that involvement was optional, and I provided alternative tasks to try and support students who might find it difficult "being the one person to say no" (Farrimond, 2016, p. 11-12). Students who did not wish to participate in the questionnaire were given a separate reflection task about English work instead, and two Year 11s did choose this option. Students who did not wish to take part in the intervention were given the option to undertake revision tasks in the library instead, as the intervention was occurring during lesson time. No Year 10s took this latter option; while this may indicate an element of peer pressure, it could also stem from the fact that—as their questionnaire responses went on to reflect—they viewed the intervention tasks as more fun than typical lessons. Lastly, interview participants were volunteers and were reminded at both interviews that there was no obligation to continue.

3.5.2 – Anonymity

Cohen et al. (2018) highlight the importance of anonymity for participants to feel safe to be honest, a need exacerbated by the power dynamic between teachers and students (Farrimond, 2016). In order to keep responses confidential while still tracking participants across both questionnaires and the pastiches, each student was given a letter as a pseudonym; these were distributed randomly by a student to the rest of the class, and they were glued into students' planners so

that they could check them without worrying that I might access them. One limitation of this method is that students could have switched letters between phases of the research, but the need for genuine anonymity outweighed this somewhat unlikely possibility. It can often be especially difficult for students to trust anonymity in the context of working with a teacher who knows them and might recognise their tone (Farrimond, 2016) or even, in the pastiches, their handwriting; for this reason, I was careful to reiterate anonymity at each stage and to remind students that I would not be reading responses in my role as their teacher but in my role as a researcher. The presence of very negative responses, such as “Lady Macbeth sucks” (H1, Appendix 2) and “Rubbish Play” (N1, Appendix 2), suggests that students felt safe to be at least moderately honest.

3.5.3 – Power imbalances

A power imbalance is inextricable from conducting research as an adult with students, and even more so as a teacher with my own class (Farrimond, 2016). It is also undeniable that my close relationship with both classes affected the research, in positive ways such as comfort expressing themselves, but also in potentially negative ways such as the decision of all students except two Year 11s to participate. I took a number of measures to attempt to counterbalance this ethical concern.

First, I focused on minimal burden, as Cohen et al. (2018) emphasise the need to respect participants’ time and comfort. The questionnaires and

intervention took place during ordinary lesson time using ordinary tools, such as school laptops, and students were offered alternative tasks that were equally familiar. The interviews, which did require extra time from students, were scheduled during lunchtimes that students volunteered as free. Lastly, I invited a colleague who was a PGCE student to do the lesson observation because she needed to observe lessons as part of her training, meaning that this represented a mutual benefit rather than an additional burden; as her mentor, it was important to respectfully navigate the power imbalance between us as well.

I was also conscious of keeping my teacher and researcher roles separate where possible. This included reminding students that their submissions would not be judged in the context of the school and would not affect their work in my lessons, and it also included asking my colleague to take on the “researcher role” of observer during the lesson when I would necessarily be in my teaching role.

Finally, the ethical principle that underpinned my whole approach was the need for the research to have net value (Cohen et al., 2018) and be a positive experience for participants, both educationally and emotionally. While I will explore the positive learning and positive emotions of the intervention further in my discussion, the positivity of student participation was also highlighted by the fact that so many students volunteered for interviews that I raised my planned number of interviewees from four to eight in order to disappoint fewer students.

3.6 - Limitations

The aspects of the project that promote personal subjectivity also bring inherent limitations. The first limitation is the small sample size of biased participants. In relying on voluntary participation from a class I know well, I have been able to exercise more nuanced, "intuitive" data analysis (Royce, 2011). However, equally, this small sample size makes it difficult to generalise the results to other school contexts, particularly those with different demographics.

My own subjectivity as interviewer, coder, and analyst offers a similar dichotomy: while this consistency and familiarity helps to access nuances of tone and social aspects of the data, it also involves my own confirmation bias at every stage, however unconsciously (Royce, 2011). I have taken steps through triangulation and transparency to counterbalance this bias, but it remains a limitation.

4. Findings and Discussion

The first questionnaire provided data to explore my first research question:

1. To what extent do students already feel a connection to the text or the character?

4.1 – Questionnaire 1

Questionnaire 1, undertaken by 51 Year 10 and 11 students, asked three questions:

1. How do you feel about Macbeth as a play? Please explain your reasons.
2. How do you feel about Lady Macbeth as a character? Please explain your reasons.
3. Please fill at least 4 lines of text with your main knowledge, impressions, and/or ideas about Lady Macbeth.

Answers were thematically coded both deductively and inductively. I will refer to students throughout this discussion by their anonymised pseudonyms, letters A-Z for Year 10 and A1-Y1 for Year 11.

4.1.1 - Relatedness

The first theme that emerged was references to "connection" in the form of relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017) and self-relevance (Vansteenkiste et al., 2018). References were categorised as connection or disconnection, and then divided into "self," "context," and "language."

Positive connection codes were relatively absent. Connection to self was mentioned only once across the first questionnaire, and positive connection to context was brought up only four times (Appendix 7.1), such as when Q1 acknowledged *Macbeth*'s "relevance today with character archetypes in modern literature" (Appendix 2). No student referenced positive connection to language.

Disconnection, meanwhile, was more prevalent. Disconnection to self, such as "it is hard to relate to any of the characters" (U, Appendix 2), appeared just three times, but disconnection to context, such as D's complaint that *Macbeth*

"was written for a Jacobean audience (I'm not Jacobean)" (Appendix 2) appeared 13 times (Appendix 7.1). The most frequently referenced disconnection was to language, most vehemently when N1 asked, "Why on gods green earth do I need to analyse some ancient play spoken in a language that's basically not even English?" (Appendix 2). Language disconnection was mentioned 16 times, all in Question 1 (Appendix 7.1), highlighting how much Shakespeare's language affected students' view of the play overall.

4.1.2 – Efferent and aesthetic stances

I also examined reader-text connection through the lens of efferent and aesthetic reading stances (Rosenblatt, 1995; Atherton, 2024).

Five responses were clearly efferent overall (Appendix 7.1), such as G1's description of *Macbeth* which was so neutrally factual as to be generic: "It follows a relatively simple plotline written in a way which makes it one of the most famous plays of all time. It reflects upon key ideas and concepts of the time" (Appendix 2). By contrast, 13 answers were coded as clearly aesthetic (Appendix 7.1). For example, V gave an experiential narration of how "such a horrible person" meets "such a horrible end" and referred to his own emotional involvement with words like "satisfying," "pity," and "lost" (Appendix 2).

However, the remaining 135 responses mixed both efferent and aesthetic elements (Appendix 7.1), such as Y's assertion that *Macbeth* "has an interesting plot and interesting characters which allows it to be a play that is nice to read

through" (Appendix 2). His focus on personal emotion—"interesting" and "nice"—is too emotive for an entirely efferent stance, but lacks the specificity to be fully aesthetic.

In order to more precisely unpick such mixtures, I coded for a range of more granular efferent and aesthetic features (Appendix 8).

4.1.3 – Efferent stance indicators

Rosenblatt (1995) presents an efferent stance as including "analytic classification" (p. 28) and focusing on "ideas to be tested" and "actions to be performed" (p. 24). As efferent features, I therefore coded direct references to the exam, which appeared 3 times, or to elements of exam essays—such as "analysis" or "context"—which appeared in 15 instances (Appendix 7.1). Similarly, I tracked students' use of technical subject terminology, such as "metaphor." As a whole, "terminology" was the most common efferent code, appearing 47 times (Appendix 7.1). Terminology use was often strikingly efferent, such as M's complaint that "we have had to hunt for themes and motifs in it and memorise quotes" (Appendix 2), though not necessarily negative: "I like the way that all of the motifs and themes link together" (H, Appendix 2).

I also counted completely impersonal references to story detail as efferent (Cox & Many, 1992, p. 45; Rosenblatt, 1995). This included 16 instances of direct quotations; 20 instances of named themes and motifs, such as "blood and heaven and hell and equivocation" (P1, Appendix 2); and 17 instances (Appendix 7.1) of

emotionless references to plot or sequence, such as E1's observation that "the main story is about a thane called Macbeth who killed the king Duncan" (Appendix 2).

These totals highlight that efference was much more often associated with students' focus on exam preparation—such as terminology and studied motifs—than with the final code of lacking emotion about story events.

I also inductively discovered an unexpected form of impersonal "manufactured reading," (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021) in the form of plagiarised responses. C and L both submitted responses for Question 3 that were much more eloquent than their first two answers, such as C's shift from a punctuation-free claim that Lady Macbeth "makes macbeth do something he doesnt want to do" to the grandiose assertion that "Lady Macbeth's unbridled ambition propels her husband towards regicide in Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'" (Appendix 2). Putting Question 3 directly into the generative AI website ChatGPT produced exceedingly similar responses; all instances can be seen alongside my generated results in Appendix 9. As a result of this discovery, C and L's Question 3 responses were removed from all codes other than "ChatGPT," though I left their other answers—which seemed genuine in their brevity and grammatical errors—intact.

This discovery raises an interesting case of manufactured response from students unwilling to "fill 4 lines of text" with personal ideas, highlighting that manufactured reading may be not only a "safer option" (Giovanelli & Mason,

2015, p. 43) for students under exam pressure, but also in some cases an easier option.

While I carefully evaluated all the responses for any other clear cases of copying, this case also brought to light a limitation of the questionnaire data as a whole: students' typed responses had access to online "expert" sources much more freely than hand-written or verbal responses would.

4.1.4 – Aesthetic stance indicators

Taking Cox and Many's (1992, p. 45) efferent-aesthetic scale as a reference, I established basic categories for student emotional involvement by distinguishing between "feelings"—students' personal emotions—and "judgment," for evaluations of quality in the text (Appendix 8.2). These were further categorised as positive, negative, or neutral (Appendix 7.10.1). Positive views, such as B's description of *Macbeth* as a "lovely play," were most common at 108 total instances, though negative views, such as H1's assertion that "she sucks," were not insignificant at 53 instances. Feelings and judgment also overlapped very closely in positive-negative sentiment, with the notable exception of positive views in Question 2: students expressed that Lady Macbeth is a well-written character 10 more times than they expressed that they like or enjoy her (Appendix 7.10.1).

In order to examine this pattern with more detail, I also rated all "feelings" instances by how strongly they were expressed (Appendix 7.10.2). While most

expressions of feeling were coded as “moderate,” Question 1 had the most “weak” expressions of feeling, and Questions 2 and 3 had almost none. In other words, students expressed feelings about Lady Macbeth more intensely than about the play as a whole. Comparing strength of feeling to positive-negative sentiment revealed that, of 16 “strong” sentiments, 11 were negative (Appendix 7.2). In other words, the highly emotional response to Lady Macbeth was in many instances expressing dislike, such as when N1 declared that Lady Macbeth is “annoying as hell” (Appendix 2).

This pattern suggests that a broad view of aesthetic and efferent reading as emotive versus unemotive is not an adequate proxy for connection, as some students’ antipathy for Lady Macbeth was expressed very emotively and yet represents a clear reader-character disconnection. I therefore turned to concepts from narrative empathy (Keen, 2023) as an avenue to examine this disconnection and explore how fully aesthetic and experiential students’ approach to her actually was.

4.1.5 – Character connection and narrative empathy

Descriptions of Lady Macbeth were sorted into three categories of characterisation (Appendix 8.5). Descriptions that expressed exclusively negative qualities, such as R1’s description that “Lady Macbeth is a weak character that is cunning and backstabbing with not much honour” (Appendix 2) were categorised as “evil.” By contrast, descriptions that justified or praised Lady Macbeth such E1’s

description of her as “An advanced and empowering character particularly for the time the play was written” (Appendix 2) received a “good-sympathetic” code. Finally, the remaining descriptions received a “mixed” characterisation code, as they mentioned negative aspects but acknowledged contrasting sides or changes, such as B’s assertion that “at first she is manipulative towards Macbeth but the tables turn” (Appendix 2).

Across Questionnaire 1, Lady Macbeth was characterised as purely evil 55 times, as “good-sympathetic” just 7 times, and her characterisation was “mixed” 39 times (Appendix 7.1). More than half of the characterisations of her focused exclusively on negative qualities, confirming my anecdotal sense that my students often do not recognise her sympathetic aspects.

Within the components of narrative empathy (Keen, 2023; Burke et al., 2016), theory of mind is sometimes positioned as an ingredient that fosters fuller empathic feelings (Kidd & Castano, 2013), or as a material from which a fuller simulation of a character’s experience can be generated (Caracciolo, 2014). I therefore decided to examine whether some students’ lack of sympathy for Lady Macbeth might stem from not understanding her perspective—such as H, who said that Lady Macbeth “doesn't have a lot of character nuance. Her main purpose is giving Macbeth the motivation to kill Duncan […] I think there should have been more […] fleshing her out as a character” (Appendix 2).

In coding for theory of mind, any descriptions of Lady Macbeth’s interiority—thoughts or feelings, including interpretations of what she means

when speaking—were coded as affective, cognitive, or both, and they were rated as “simple” or “nuanced” (Appendix 8.4). For example, P’s statement that she “is hiding stuff throughout the play” is simple and cognitive, while F’s statement that she “begins to build a nagging guilt that builds up into an unbearable depression” is affective and nuanced (Appendix 2). I coded “confused” theory of mind when students expressed being unable to parse Lady Macbeth’s interiority, such as Z’s complaint that “I did not understand when she was remind[ed of] her father” (Appendix 2).

Across the first questionnaire, 97 cognitive interpretations notably outweighed 68 affective instances, and 129 “simple” instances even further outstripped the 36 “nuanced” (Appendix 7.10.3).

Theory of mind coding highlighted two clear patterns when compared with characterisation and with student feeling. First, nuanced and affective theory of mind often coincided both with more positive characterisation and with enjoyment (Appendix 7.10.4). Most strikingly, “affective-nuanced” coding overlapped exclusively with positive enjoyment, and with mixed and good characterisation in all overlaps except one (Appendix 7.10.4).

Conversely, evil characterisations of Lady Macbeth overlapped with “simple” interpretations 75 times and with “nuanced” only five; evil characterisation similarly coincided with cognitive interpretation 57 times and with affective only 23 (Appendix 7.10.4). In other words, students who took a fully

negative view of Lady Macbeth often expressed a simple understanding of her mindset and did not focus on her feelings.

I went on to examine these positive and negative clusters in more depth.

4.1.6 – Empathic concern

To examine positive views of Lady Macbeth more closely, I coded for "empathic concern," or sympathy for what she experiences (Keen, 2022, p. 20). I distinguished between empathic concern appearing "somewhat" or "clearly." For example, U's statement that "she shows a more vulnerable side" expresses empathic concern somewhat, while M1's assertion that "she was not truly evil but simply wanted Macbeth to kill Duncan to further the little influence she had" (Appendix 2) shows clear empathic concern.

The "somewhat" code appeared 20 times, and the "clear" code 7 times (Appendix 7.1). Of these 7 "clear" instances, 5 overlapped with nuanced affective theory of mind instances, and 4 overlapped—unsurprisingly—with "sympathetic-good" characterisation descriptions, with no other significant overlapping codes (Appendix 7.2). The "somewhat" code for empathic concern, meanwhile, overlapped 12 times with mixed characterisation descriptions, 5 times with each affective theory of mind code, and fewer than 5 times with any other code (Appendix 7.2). Sympathy, therefore, was clearly tied both to a more positive view of Lady Macbeth and to thinking about her emotions.

4.1.7 – Stereotyping Lady Macbeth

In considering negative views of Lady Macbeth, I noticed repeated themes. A word frequency search revealed that the single most common word describing Lady Macbeth was "manipulative," with forms of this word appearing 51 times across Questionnaire 1. Connecting this with synonyms, I built up two clusters of common descriptions for Lady Macbeth. One centred on power and included forms of the words "power," "ambition," and "domination"; this code appeared 59 times (Appendix 7.1). The other common profile centred on manipulation and included forms of the words "control," "cunning," "influence," and "manipulate"; this appeared 86 times (Appendix 7.1).

Of 145 total instances, 75 overlapped with "evil" characterisation descriptions, 33 with "mixed," and 22 with "sympathetic-good" characterisation. Out of the categories of theory of mind coding, stereotype wording overlapped most, at 53 instances, with simple cognitive theory of mind (Appendix 7.2). This suggests a pattern of students who disliked Lady Macbeth not necessarily ignoring her interiority so much as simplifying it.

One more troubling pattern that I noticed in examining this "stereotype" cluster was a pattern of responses that verged on misogynistic sentiments (Appendix 7.10.5). References to Lady Macbeth marrying "for wealth" and wanting "a male child" are concerning because they have no basis in the play. Even more alarming are references to personal views, such as R1's assumption that Lady Macbeth "must be beautiful," T1's note that she "wouldn't be a good

mum" and wish that she had died sooner, and V1's comparison of Lady Macbeth's negative qualities to "females of this generation" (Appendix 7.10.5).

This pattern was an important discovery on a few fronts. As a teacher, I was obligated to bring up this pattern to my department and pastoral staff as evidence of a wider concern about students' views of gender in an all-boys school. The school has ongoing efforts to address this issue, and these comments offered evidence of how necessary my department's continuing work is to refine our curriculum's approach to gender.

On a research front, this pattern highlighted the importance of students' trust in the anonymity of my data collection; no student would have articulated one of these views to me directly, but the mechanism of research allowed me to access an important facet of my students' thoughts.

Finally, in their alignment with stereotypical language and shallow theory of mind, these responses highlight the importance of my project's goal of connection. Failing to connect with texts and characters does not merely make English less fun, it risks fostering an uncritical approach to human communication that can extend from characters to—as Student V1 so exemplifies with his view of "females of this generation"—students' lives as a whole.

4.1.8 – Year group differences

Year 11 were included in Questionnaire 1 both to establish a baseline for my GCSE teaching in general, and to confirm that there were no very unusual

patterns in my Year 10 sample. Overall, the two classes' responses aligned quite closely, with a few small differences. Year 11s were, unsurprisingly, more focused on exams, with 7 more references to exam technique and 10 more references to motifs than Year 10 (Appendix 7.1). Year 11 expressed negative feelings 8 more times than Year 10, and Year 11 accounted for four of the five comments flagged for misogyny. Overall, this suggests a pattern of higher frustration in Year 11 that may be connected to their more immediate exam pressure.

4.1.9 – Disconnection findings

Overall, Questionnaire 1 highlighted patterns of both connection and disconnection to the text and character. While there was little positive connection in terms of relatedness, many students expressed positive feelings towards the text, and the most positive views of Lady Macbeth as a character often aligned with a nuanced and affective theory of mind.

However, students reported significant disconnection as well by all metrics. Many students felt disconnected to the play's context and language, and many students' connection to the text was limited by an efferent focus on technique or, more emotively, by antipathy towards Lady Macbeth. This dislike strongly overlapped with simplification of her perspective and a lack of attention to her emotions, in particular when describing her through a common focus on power and manipulation.

Having explored my first research question with the first questionnaire, my next research questions are as follows:

2. *Does the intervention affect perceived connection to the text or character?*

3. *Does the intervention affect how students subsequently approach exam-style work focused on the same character?*

I will trace both of these questions through the data collected during the intervention itself and the subsequent questionnaire, as analysis highlighted that the two questions were often interconnected. I will then revisit the two questions more discretely in discussing the interview data.

4.2 – The written pastiches

In writing their pastiches, students were asked to consider both character and style, but the task was otherwise deliberately very open (Appendix 1). The resulting pastiches, transcribed from hand-written originals, can be found in Appendix 6.

4.2.1 – Approaches to character

Characterisations of Lady Macbeth differed quite significantly in the pastiches as compared to Questionnaire 1. Following the same standards of uniquely negative qualities earning an "evil" code, only three pastiches presented her as evil (Appendix 7.3), such as U's pastiche, in which Lady Macbeth plots to have a side character called Seyton overthrow Macbeth (Appendix 6). This

represents a large shift from Questionnaire 1, where evil characterisations were the most common by far. Six pastiches presented her as "sympathetic-good," such as S's piece, which depicts Lady Macbeth asking after Macbeth's whereabouts and expressing her fears (Appendix 6), and the remaining 17 pastiches presented a mixed characterisation (Appendix 7.3), such as F's pastiche, where Lady Macbeth calls Macbeth a "treacherous fool," but later in the scene breaks down hoping for "a place in heaven" (Appendix 6). Considering sympathy as separable from positive characterisation, I coded pastiches which included some focus on Lady Macbeth suffering emotionally; this included 20 of the 26 pastiches, and none of the "evil" characterisations (Appendix 7.3).

I also rated the degree of interiority present in each scene; Caracciolo (2014) emphasises taking a first-person perspective as a key component of empathy, and Keen (2022) similarly highlights perspective-taking as associated with narrative empathy. Of the pastiches, 11 were devoted exclusively to Lady Macbeth's interior thoughts, 9 were mixtures of interior thoughts and interaction with other characters, and just six were exclusively interaction from an external perspective (Appendix 7.3). The only notable correlations between scene perspective and characterisation were that all of the "sympathetic-good" characterisations featured at least partial interiority, and of the 20 pastiches that featured suffering, 17 featured some interiority (Appendix 7.3).

These patterns all suggest that the majority of the class took the opportunity to engage with Lady Macbeth's affective theory of mind, and that in many cases this already began to temper evil characterisations.

4.2.2 – Approaches to style

As a teacher, I was hoping to find two things in students' pastiches. First, evidence of students engaging with Shakespeare's language and style in order to create their own—the dialogic process that McCallum (2012) refers to as "writer-reponse" (p. 57). Second, I was hoping to see students deploying language and structure to create deliberate effects, in the hopes that this might help them with analysis.

I coded techniques that students used on the basis of how connected to Shakespeare's writing they were. There were two ways in which I held students' writing to be disconnected from a writer-response dialogue: if they had written a piece that was entirely original with no Shakespearean inflection, or else if they had written a piece which was entirely copied from Shakespeare with no original elements.

C's and E's pieces fell into the first category of almost avoiding Shakespearean language influence entirely—for example, E's emotive but entirely modern line, "If I could restart I would take it" (Appendix 6). Each student referenced wording from the play text only once.

At the other end of the scale, Q and T relied heavily on copying direct wording from the play, though their scenes were not without some original characterisation – Student T, for example, came up with the bold concept of Lady Macbeth meeting with the witch goddess Hecate, but he composed Lady Macbeth's lines almost entirely of quote fragments (Appendix 6). Quotes and quote fragments featured 36 times across the pastiches (Appendix 7.4), but other students interspersed these with more varied techniques.

Some students used what I have called "Shakespearisms," such as "thee" and "O," in an attempt to imitate a Shakespearean tone. This code featured across all characterisation categories and all levels of interiority (Appendix 7.3), but it represents a dialogue with Shakespeare's style almost as shallow as direct copying.

By contrast, many students deployed Shakespearean techniques for both structure and language while still using their own words, and these techniques were more often tied to sympathetic characterisation and to interiority.

Structural techniques such as repetition and rhyme featured 17 times, and none overlapped with "evil" characterisation (Appendix 7.3). Repetition especially was used to intensify emotion, such as when F used repetition to convey Lady Macbeth's desperate attempts to convince herself: "See! See! The light is in the palm of my hand / The light… The… The light shines bright, I shine bright!" (Appendix 6). Similarly, H compellingly used alliteration to convey a Lady Macbeth who is overwhelmed and disgusted at the way her husband has been "spitting,

sobbing and screaming at the void" (Appendix 6). These examples demonstrate that students leveraged these techniques not just to sound Shakespearean, but to convey emotion—navigating the nuances of Lady Macbeth's affective theory of mind.

The most interesting pattern that emerged was the range of imagery used by students. Imagery has been associated with cognitive linguistics concepts like text-worlds (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015) and transportation (Johnson et al., 2013), which examine the mental imagery that readers form. I therefore treated imagery as a potential feature of immersion, and in coding for imagery I again found a range in how original students' approaches were.

Some imagery was a fairly direct copy of existing motifs, such as P's description that "Macbeth hath dealt with darkness" (Appendix 6). Much like "Shakespearisms," these directly copied motifs featured across all categories of characterisation and scene (Appendix 7.3), showing that this technique was not strongly tied to students' approach to character.

Some students, by contrast, extended existing motifs to create their own imagery. Examples include S's piece where Lady Macbeth fears that Macbeth is like a "lone wolf" who "moves easy till they meet the stronger pack"—a clear use of the play's motif of animal imagery, and yet an effective new image for Macbeth's growing isolation in his ferocity. These more original images could only be created if students involved themselves, at least to some extent, in the character's mindset. This may be why, although this technique appeared 33 times

across the pieces, it did not appear in any of the evil characterisations and only appeared twice in purely external scenes (Appendix 7.3).

Lastly, some students created new imagery entirely that nevertheless stayed true to the atmosphere of the original play, such as L's Lady Macbeth, who asks, "What are these thoughts, encroaching on my mind like the morning frost on the lawn" (Appendix 6). This image stays within the play's palette of natural imagery but shows original thinking in conveying a very precise feeling for Lady Macbeth – the quiet growth of her chilling doubts. This technique appeared six times and did not overlap either with evil characterisation or with a purely external scene (Appendix 7.3).

Students' more original and genuine dialogues with Shakespeare's techniques repeatedly aligned with more nuanced treatment of Lady Macbeth's character, suggesting that fully taking on the role of the writer imaginatively made it harder to portray her character as a shallow villain.

4.2.3 – Student reflections

I also asked students to explain their work (Appendix 1), as a further window into their thinking. Only two students gave no explanation at all. Interestingly, these were two of the three pieces with purely evil characterisation (Appendix 7.4), potentially indicating a lack of interest or of confidence.

12 students explicitly connected techniques they had used to the play text (Appendix 7.4), such as V's explanation that his "fine sands of Egypt" image is

"similar to Neptune's oceans." These can be viewed as one form of student-text connection.

The single most common focus of explanations, however, was to narrate or clarify the scene in terms of theory of mind, a form of student-character connection. Theory of mind references appeared in 23 out of the 24 explanations (Appendix 7.4), such as N's explanation: "As lady Macbeth is often viewed as stronger than Macbeth through the play I have decided to add her saying how she'd hate for him to see how weak she was" (Appendix 6).

Some students joined both patterns by explaining a technique as well as its effect. This code appeared 10 times; of the 6 students who had characterised Lady Macbeth as "sympathetic-good," 5 included an explanation of technique with effect in their reflection, making this code disproportionately common for positive characterisation (Appendix 7.4). Some of these explanations were impressively nuanced, like Y's explanation that "she calls Macbeth 'my lord' rather than his name to show a sense of formality and therefore a feeling of distance after Macbeth has Banquo killed without telling her" (Appendix 6). This again potentially suggests an alignment between genuine writer-response—students aligning themselves with the writer—and a more positive connection to character. Crucially, this explanation of technique and effect is also what students must do for exam analysis (Roberts, 2020), suggesting that this kind of creative task may be aligned with rather than against practical assessment preparation.

4.3 – The class discussion

The field notes, which can be seen in Appendix 5, aimed to capture what topics students raised in evaluating which monologues their group found most convincing.

The first pattern that became clear in the field notes was the highly social nature of the discussion. One form this took was several groups' early discussion of who had written each of the five monologues under discussion; the monologues had been anonymised, but several students openly claimed authorship and overrode the anonymity (Appendix 5). The discussion was also very socially lively throughout the lesson. For example, the notes record one student exclaiming "This is crazy, bro!" about a piece, and during the class-wide debate there was repeated calling out and even "booing" in disagreement with other groups' rankings (Appendix 5). These aspects highlight that, out of the phases of the intervention, the discussion at least fostered some level of relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017), as students took the anonymised task and translated it into a very social experience.

Other aspects of the discussion varied in their relevance to connection. Some of the grounds on which students were judging the monologues had little to do with the text itself—for example, four references to how long the monologues were and whether this fit the task sufficiently (Appendix 7.5). However, many of the arguments made gravitated towards characterisation and many to the style and techniques of the pastiches.

4.3.1 - Characterisation

Students' discussion of Lady Macbeth's character generally took the form of theory of mind. Across the discussion, the field notes captured 12 examples of cognitive theory of mind (Appendix 7.5), such as one student's argument that "she's not as controlled by greed as Macbeth" (Appendix 5), and 13 examples of affective theory of mind (Appendix 7.5), such as the assertion, "If you think how [Lady Macbeth] is feeling at this point, she would be crying and falling apart, not the anger" (Appendix 5). While many examples were simpler than these, the field notes capture students' confidence in their own readings.

The discussions of Lady Macbeth's thoughts and feelings also distinctly lacked overtly evil characterisation. The most villainous examples were references to her insanity and one discussion of a piece that called her a "servant of the shadows" (Appendix 5). The rest were all neutral and in some cases quite sympathetic, as when multiple students noted how upset and "broken up" she was (Appendix 5).

4.3.2 – Techniques and the "real people" problem

Elliott and Olive (2023) highlight that teachers of Shakespeare are wary of the potential of creative methods to cause students to "treat characters as […] real people" (p. 2), with the assumption that treating the characters as people runs counter to viewing them as a "construction of the author" (p. 2).

I found in the class discussion that the opposite was repeatedly true: despite theory of mind that often talked about Lady Macbeth as a person, students maintained a strong focus on writing technique as well. This was a spontaneous focus from the class, as I had only asked them to consider which monologues were "convincing."

Students brought up techniques 17 times in what the field notes captured (Appendix 7.5). Some of these mentioned the techniques in order to connect them to the play, such as when students mentioned the "theme of harvest" and the "animal imagery motif" (Appendix 5).

However, eight of the comments connected techniques to effects in the form of theory of mind. One striking example is an argument about repetition, in which one student claimed that "the repetition in one spot 'shows how desperate she is,'" and another student disagreed and argued that it "doesn't add much" and "doesn't match the style of her earlier repetition" (Appendix 5). Discussion points like this show a confident melding of efferent and aesthetic lenses—"repetition" with "desperate." However, what is most gratifying as a teacher is the strength of the disagreement, because it highlights the authenticity of the students' views; there was an absence throughout the discussion of appeals to a "correct" character reading received from an authority (Appendix 5), as might be the case in a manufactured reading (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021).

Overall, the class discussion suggested promising answers to both my second and third research questions: in more closely connecting with and taking

ownership of their reading of Lady Macbeth, some students naturally began to leverage this reading to connect technique to effect.

4.4 – Questionnaire 2

The questionnaire was re-completed by 25 Year 10 students after the intervention, with an additional reflection question; the full responses can be seen in Appendix 3. These responses suggest a few noteworthy shifts.

4.4.1 – Reader-character connection

The most notable change was in Lady Macbeth's characterisation. Comparing only Year 10 responses from before the intervention, "evil" descriptions of Lady Macbeth fell from 31 instances to 8, while mixed and "sympathetic-good" descriptions rose by 6 and 3 respectively (Appendix 7.6).

References to theory of mind shifted as well. "Simple" theory of mind codes, such as R's statement that "she kinda coocoo" (Appendix 3), appeared much less often, with cognitive instances falling by 18 and affective by 13, while "confused" theory of mind instances fell to almost nothing (Appendix 7.6). By contrast, nuanced cognitive theory of mind instances rose by 5 and affective by 7 (Appendix 7.6). Examples include U's description that Lady Macbeth "looks on helplessly at her husband becoming insane and going too far down the path of reckless ambition" (Appendix 3).

Most strikingly, Z moved from explicitly struggling with theory of mind to explicitly having a better sense of it. Before the intervention, he complained, “I did not understand when she was remind[ed of] her father by King Duncan” (Appendix 2), while afterwards, he said, “she has plenty of interpretations and is a bit more of a deeper character with lots more going on in her head than I once thought” (Appendix 3).

Another pattern suggesting a shift from simplicity to detail was mentions of Lady Macbeth’s “complexity,” an inductive code which included explicit mentions of complexity or multiple interpretations, such as F’s assertion that “Shes one of the most complex characters and i feel like she is more interesting than macbeth” (Appendix 3). This code rose from 7 instances to 23 (Appendix 7.6), showing much greater attention to Lady Macbeth’s complexity.

Most gratifyingly, the single greatest change to an individual code was the “stereotype language” code, which tracked wording frequency in describing Lady Macbeth as manipulative or power-focused. While this code was still significantly present at 42 counts, it fell by 34 compared to the first questionnaire (Appendix 7.6).

Unfortunately, the most flagrant cases of disconnection were not improved. C and L once again appeared to plagiarise just their answers to Question 3, which were removed from coding (Appendix 7.7). Only one Year 10 response had been flagged as aligned with misogynist views; unfortunately, this student, who had previously written “oh she a gold digger” (T, Appendix 2),

instead on the second questionnaire copied and pasted a description of Lady Macbeth's ambition from an internet source (Appendix 3). This answer was removed from other coding as well (Appendix 7.7), but it serves to emphasise that students' shift to more thoughtful responses was far from universal.

4.4.2 – Emotion and reader-text connection

The changes in characterisation aligned with changes in personal sentiment. Positive sentiments rose by 17 instances, while negative sentiments sank by 17 (Appendix 7.10.6), reflecting much more positivity towards both text and character.

Efferent feature coding, meanwhile, lowered by 16 instances overall (Appendix 7.6). Direct quotation and emotionless recount of "factual story" events both disappeared entirely (Appendix 7.6). However, terminology remained high at 22 counts, and mention of specific themes and motifs rose by four counts (Appendix 7.6). In some cases, this terminology use remained very generic and therefore extremely efferent, such as B's note that Shakespeare "uses motifs to emphasise certain recurring scenes."

However, some instances of terminology and of motifs were much less generic. For example, S said of Lady Macbeth, "she can easily change her mood and the motif of false faces is very much part of her character" (Appendix 3). For some students, as already suggested by the class discussion data, the intervention

seems to have served as a way to tie efferent understanding of techniques to a more experiential and emotive view of character.

Overall, these shifts to greater positivity and emotive nuance suggest that the class broadly did feel more connected to Lady Macbeth, while their continued references to terminology imply that connecting with Lady Macbeth did not undermine their focus on exam work.

4.4.3 – Student reflections

An additional question in Questionnaire 2 asked students to "Explain your opinion (positive, negative, or both)" (Appendix 3) of the intervention. Responses were uniformly positive except for A, who complained of "too many questions" (Appendix 3).

I therefore examined what students approved of. Nine students raised the creative aspect of the lessons (Appendix 7.8), such as K, who appreciated that it "allowed my creative juices to flow" (Appendix 3). Eight students referred instead to interaction with classmates' views – getting to "see how people have written their LMs" (V, Appendix 3)—as what they enjoyed (Appendix 7.8), a social response in line with straightforward relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2017).

A number of responses also specifically addressed how their reading had changed. Many students referred to their conception of Lady Macbeth growing, with 12 students referring to an expansion (Appendix 7.8), such as Z's statement that "It forced us to think about her as a character in whole and not too zoomed

in," and four referring to depth (Appendix 7.8), as when W explained, "it pushed me to go deeper in her character and get in her mindset" (Appendix 3). These references to expansion and depth align with the cognitive linguistic concept of narrative schemas (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015), mental conceptions of a story which can expand with new understanding. In a related pattern, S observed that "it helped me picture M and LM in different ways," while G said that it "opened my eyes to more views," both students adopting very visual language that aligns with the conception of a text-world as a "mental picture" (Gavins, 2007, p. 2).

While these reflections suggest aspects of aesthetic reading, the interviews provided a richer view of students' reading experiences.

4.5 – Interviews: Question 1

In analysing the interviews, I first explored my second research question:

2. *Does the intervention affect perceived connection to the text or character?*

The first interview question asked students what makes them connect with stories or characters in general (Appendix 4). I asked this to prompt students to think beyond personal relatedness in the rest of their answers, and also to test the relevance of my literature review by seeing if they naturally brought up other kinds of connection.

Some concepts aligning with relatedness did arise: similarly to the questionnaires, I coded expressions of connection or disconnection to self,

context, and language. These appeared very minimally (Appendix 7.9), with two exceptions. Before the intervention, students expressed connection to context six times, such as when S3 observed that "you can see parallels of, like, Macbeth in other stories" like "the *Lion King*" (Appendix 4.1B); after the intervention, connection to context was not mentioned (Appendix 7.9). Connection to self, by contrast, was brought up five times both before after the intervention (Appendix 7.9), such as when S7 said "maybe if like I was in a similar situation, I'd do something similar" (Appendix 4.1D).

Students also brought up conceptions of experiential reader-text connection. S2 referenced a concept similar to aesthetic reading before the intervention, saying that he feels connected to characters by "seeing how they change […] it makes them feel more like a person and less like [...] an archetype" (Appendix 4.1A). After the intervention, similar statements were made three times, such as S7's explanation of "the emotional response that I get […] if it's meant to be sad and I feel sad after" (Appendix 4.2D) – a description which also overlaps with "emotional contagion," a concept connected to empathy (Burke et al., 2016, p. 9).

Finally, several students before the intervention described concepts aligned with empathy, such as perspective taking and theory of mind. The clearest was S1: "you can put yourself in the shoes of the character […] think like, what would they be thinking" (Appendix 4.1A). These direct references fell after the intervention, but instead a pattern of four references to immersion arose

(Appendix 7.9) – such as when S2 described enjoying if "you can also put yourself into the book" (Appendix 4.2A).

These responses highlighted that students did not limit their view of connection to interpersonal relatedness and conceived of connections to text and character.

4.6 – Interviews: Questions 2 and 3

The second and third questions in each interview asked students whether they felt connected to *Macbeth* as a play and Lady Macbeth as a character. After the intervention, I also asked students whether the intervention had changed their views – I have labelled this Question 3.5 in coding (Appendix 7.9).

As an initial metric, I coded whether students explicitly reported feeling connected. Statements of disconnection fell by 9 instances after the intervention, and statements of connection rose by 6, particularly for Lady Macbeth as a character (Appendix 7.10.7).

Two new categories of less explicit connection also appeared inductively. The first was social connection, which was brought up twice before the intervention and then 11 times after, particularly in the additional "Question 3.5" (Appendix 7.9). Students praised the social aspects of studying the play generally, such as when S8 appreciated "when certain people got permanent roles" (Appendix 4.1D). After the intervention, they enjoyed the social connection within the intervention, such as when S1 found it "interesting to see […] what everyone

thought of Lady Macbeth and how they interpreted her" (Appendix 4.2A). This focus on connecting with others aligns with relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017), but also with disciplinary conceptions of the social nature of English learning (Elliott, 2021).

Another new category that emerged was student expressions of agency and ownership; this code appeared once before the intervention, and 10 times after (Appendix 7.9). Examples include S1's praise of how students would "defend their view of the character" (Appendix 4.2A), and S4's declaration that "I liked how we added to the world of Macbeth with our own writing" (Appendix 4.2B). This willingness to claim interpretations can be viewed as a form of personal relevance, and it aligns with SDT's framing of relatedness as intertwined with autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2017). This code also evokes McCallum's (2012) conception of writer-response and the power of role-play to foster students "sharing authority with the authors of the texts they are studying" (Bryer et al., 2024, p. 67). Students readily referred to themselves as writers, such as when S1 enjoyed "just to be able to think about, okay, if I was writing this, what would I do" (Appendix 4.2A), or when students repeatedly mentioned each other's "interpretations," a code which appeared 15 times after the intervention (Appendix 7.9).

4.6.1 – Aesthetic and efferent features

The same codes used for aesthetic and efferent features in the questionnaire responses were applied to interview data, though they appeared much less often (Appendix 7.9). Tracking student sentiment as an aesthetic feature revealed very little. Student expressions of positive feeling were moderately high and shifted by only one after the intervention (Appendix 7.9). Coding for narrative empathy, meanwhile, was initially alarming, as theory of mind coding fell by 6 instances after the intervention and empathic concern stayed low at 2 (Appendix 7.9).

Examining student wording revealed that this shift is misleading in that several students in the second interview discussed their reading more meta-cognitively – this meant that their interview discussion came across as less aesthetic in itself, but some gave striking descriptions of experiential reading. Three students described reading in newly aesthetic terms (Appendix 7.9), most clearly S1:

> I just think about Lady Macbeth much more as a character now […] more as a character from a story, as opposed to a point to analyse or something. […] if you're doing something […] for the sole sake of analysing it in an exam, in the end, it can be quite easy to just think of the story as evidence (Appendix 4.2A)

More subtly, after the intervention, students six times (Appendix 7.9) referenced mental imagery in a way that aligns with conceptions of mental story constructions, such as narrative schemas (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015) and Text

World Theory (Gavins, 2007). For example, S1 declared that "everyone had built up a pretty strong image of the character in their mind" (Appendix 4.2A), and S3 explained that the task "gives you a more full picture of, like, how the characters are" (Appendix 4.2B).

Similarly, while not expressing theory of mind and empathic concern directly, students meta-cognitively described an improved theory of mind five times (Appendix 7.9), such as S4's statement that "Now I can kind of see what's going on in her head, before the like big dip in her power" (Appendix 4.2B). S2 even aligned theory of mind with implications of respect and personhood:

> At the time of the last interview, I think I just kind of saw her as there to give Macbeth the motivation, but I thought she didn't really have a lot of character herself. […] I can see more how she was a character, and how she had […] her own kind of goals and motivations (Appendix 4.2A)

On the other end of the reading stance continuum, efferent features were minimal in initial responses (Appendix 7.9), perhaps a result of the biased sample of volunteers who wanted to talk about English. However, two efferent features were present and later fell: mentions of exam technique fell from five to zero, while references to "atomisation," or breaking text up into small units (Eaglestone, 2021), fell from three to zero (Appendix 7.9).

The majority of these efferent instances before the intervention were contained in S3's criticism, encapsulated when he complained, "I feel like what we do for the exam makes us less connected to characters in general […] since it's like quote-centric, and like language and structure, you don't get like an overall—you

don't think of like an overall arc" (Appendix 4.1B). S3 reports a concern shared by Eaglestone (2021) that the formalist focus and atomisation prompted by exam analysis can get in the way of more genuine reading. While S3 did not raise this concern after the intervention, this does not suggest that his view of quotation analysis necessarily changed.

Overall, however, by student self-report and by several metrics of relatedness, reader-text connection, and reader-character connection, students seemed to feel more connected after the intervention.

4.7 – Interviews: Exam-style planning

The final part of the interviews was used to explore the third research question:

3. Does the intervention affect how students subsequently approach exam-style work focused on the same character?

At the end of each interview, students were given an exam-style extract question (Appendix 10). This always included the same question—"Explore the extent to which Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a powerful character"—but the extract differed; both extracts were from scenes the class had previously focused on, to provide as comparable a task as possible.

4.7.1 – Shifts in reading stance

One striking difference between the two interviews was the manner in which students approached the extract.

In the first set of interviews, students mentioned exam techniques 31 times (Appendix 7.9). Some of these were in the context of describing practical planning steps, such as S8's suggestion that the "false appearances quote, that links back to when Lady Macbeth kept talking about false appearances" (Appendix 4.1D). However, in multiple cases, students' first impulse on receiving the extract was to describe generic technique—for example: "I'd find some interesting quotes or any vocabulary that Shakespeare has purposefully used which […] would be good for analysis" (S6, Appendix 4.1C).

After the intervention, references to exam technique dropped to just 14 instances (Appendix 7.9). In the second interviews, none of these were generic descriptions, but more purposeful descriptions of what students would construct, such as "If you interpreted this as manipulation, then you could get a paragraph out of that" (S3, Appendix 4.2B).

Before the intervention, there was also repeatedly some confusion in students' approach to the extract itself. The code for "confused" interpretation of theory of mind occurred in 8 instances (Appendix 7.9), often associated with difficulties of language, such as S3's struggle: "who is this talking about? Is this calling him a shard-borne beetle?" (Appendix 4.1B). Students were also sometimes tentative in opinions, as when S1 first asked, "would you put that as,

like, Lady Macbeth influences others?" only to switch a few sentences later to a diametrically opposed reading: "wait. I'd change the first one[…] Lady Macbeth has less influence" (Appendix 4.1A).

By contrast, theory of mind appeared more often and more confidently after the intervention. "Confused" interpretation instances dropped to zero, while instances of nuanced theory of mind rose by 29 (Appendix 7.9) For example, S1 – who had vacillated between Lady Macbeth influencing or being influenced the first time – almost immediately marshalled an argument based in confident theory of mind: "these are two examples of her, like, leveraging her influence and power over Macbeth and basically calling him out on his cowardice" (Appendix 4.2A).

Often, expressions of theory of mind took the form of students working through their answers by "translating" the text. This occurred only twice before the intervention and occurred 14 times afterwards (Appendix 7.9). Examples include direct line translations, like S5's explanation: "'a little water clears us of this deed,' so like, she's kind of dismissing the fact that this is a big crime" (Appendix 4.2C). Some students also summarised meaning, as when S7 narrated, "she's like, what are you doing, keep, get your act together" (Appendix 4.2D). This kind of translation of Lady Macbeth's intention represents "moment-by-moment participation" in the scene (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 28), a characteristic of aesthetic reading, and it also demonstrates a precise theory of mind. Students sometimes even slipped into first-person translation, as when S3 explained: "like 'the rugged Russian bear,' like, I'll take on any animal" (Appendix 4.2B). Caracciolo (2014)

highlights first-person participation in a character's perspective as a key aspect of mental simulation, aligned with narrative empathy (Burke et al., 2016).

This pattern of increased theory of mind and translation highlights a common shift from more efferent to more aesthetic reading during students' planning. The clearest example is S3's contrasting references to the same quote. Before the intervention, S3 said:

> if we're gonna look at the extract, we could think what are good bits. I think this is a good one. "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck." Because I think earlier in the play […] He calls Lady Macbeth, like, "dearest partner of greatness." […] I think you could compare that (Appendix 4.1B)

By contrast, after the intervention S3 referred to the same quote this way:

> Oh, this stuff is like, her being kind of condescending towards Macbeth and ignoring him. Whereas later you can see Macbeth being, like, condescending towards her. With, like, something "dearest chuck." (Appendix 4.2B)

In both, S3 links two appropriate quotes, but his approach moves from efferent to aesthetic. An explicit focus on parcelling up "good bits" disappears, and instead of connecting identical words ("dearest"), he bases the comparison on the more experiential insight that both characters are "being condescending."

4.7.2 – Quality of analysis

Despite the common fear that prompting students to think of characters as people might inhibit viewing them as a "construction of the author" (Elliott &

Olive, 2023, p. 2), students' increased focus on Lady Macbeth did not seem to weaken their approach to exam work.

While efferent mentions of exam technique fell, as discussed, students' application of exam technique is separable from how often they mentioned it. To examine their strategy in a more exam-oriented way, I coded for features that I would usually credit in exam writing (Table 1).

Table 1

Codes for exam-style analysis, adapted from department practice and from the OCR (2022) specification.

Code	**Explanation**
DET	Evidence details
TECH	Named technical features
EFF	Effects of language or structure
DEV	Development – multi-faceted extended points
CLAIM	Argument claims

Of these elements, the explanation of technique and effect that Roberts (2020) describes as the "bones of analysis" (p. 133) is captured in the basic sequence of DET and TECH followed by EFF. CLAIM articulates student arguments, and DEV would characterise higher-scoring responses.

DET was coded for direct quotations, while TECH was credited for technical features, such as "rhyming" (Appendix 4.1D). After the intervention, DET fell by 10 instances and TECH fell by 8 (Appendix 7.9).

By contrast, EFF rose from 5 to 16, DEV from 1 to 9, and CLAIM from 9 to 14 (Appendix 7.9). Students pointed out fewer techniques and pieces of evidence, but they focused more on effects (EFF), such as S5's explanation that "dearest partner of greatness" shows that Macbeth "addressed her as a more equal position" (Appendix 4.1C). DEV was coded for cases such as S1 extending his reading of "'out, damn spot'" from Lady Macbeth's "concern" about "blood" to build to the wider insight of "how her power changes throughout the play" (Appendix 4.2A). Finally, CLAIM applied to arguments about the overall extract question, such as S6's assertion that "a point about her being a powerful character—is how she seems to keep her cool in this, after they've killed Duncan" (Appendix 4.2C).

The reduction of DET and TECH does not necessarily indicate less detail – rather, responses often benefitted from an extended line of interpretation, rather than multiple discrete techniques unattached to insights. The best example of this contrast is S5's and S6's initial points (Table 2).

Table 2

Excerpts from Appendices 4.1C and 4.2C, with codes added in red to underlined instances.

Before	**After**
S5: The first thing that comes to mind is that Macbeth is […] speaking in long, like, speeches and paragraphs (TECH). And Lady Macbeth is just saying, like, really short replies (TECH). Um.	**S6:** A part where Lady Macbeth is portrayed as a powerful character is […] when she has exclamation marks (TECH) after her speech. Like "infirm of purpose" (DET) shows her loudness and her dominance (EFF) in that time.

[pause] And also she's ordering him around. **S6:** Yeah. And also Macbeth is speaking in a rhym-ey (TECH) tone, like "still" and "ill." (DET) Which shows that he's getting evil (EFF) like the witches.	**S5:** Yeah. And also "how easy it were then." (DET) That also has an exclamation mark. (TECH) So she's kind of scolding Macbeth, (EFF) you know, that he's not up to her expectations. […] As well as scolding him, she's also, like, insulting him, (DEV) with saying—with calling him "infirm of purpose." (DET) And also like, "my hands are of your colour but I shame to wear a heart so white." (DET) And so all this, kind of, degrading him (DEV) kind of shows that she's the more powerful one in the relationship (CLAIM).

The first response aligns with what Eaglestone (2021) criticises as "feature spotting" (p. 25); S5 notices technical features but has little to say about them. S6's point that rhyming is "like the witches," meanwhile, is borrowed from our lessons and therefore manufactured (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021).

By contrast, both students' first points after the intervention flow from technique directly into effect. Their effects are more nuanced, even in vocabulary: S6 starts with "loudness" but adds "dominance in [Shakespeare's] time," and S5 considers layers of tone: "as well as scolding him, she's insulting him […] degrading him." This sensitivity speaks not only to a clear theory of mind, but also to a more aesthetic stance; Rosenblatt (1995) emphasises sensitivity to textual nuances, such as between "fire," "flame," and "combustion" (p. 29), as characteristic of aesthetic reading. The interplay between narration and analysis in the second interview also aligns with Giovanelli and Mason's (2015) conception of authentic reading as combining initial aesthetic experience with interpretation.

Some of this experiential immersion also meant that students struggled more than before with exam techniques, as the more genuine ideas sometimes did not arrive in the right shape. Two students broke off mid-interpretation to express worries about technique: S7 struggled with whether his "answer actually fits the question" (Appendix 4.2D), and S3 worried about whether he could follow his impulse to compare quotes "from the same extract" (Appendix 4.2B). Therefore, while the answer to my second research question is that students' connection did increase in many ways, the answer to the third research question is more mixed: students benefitted from more genuine responses to the text, but in doing so, they lost some of their confidence with the rigidities of exam writing.

5. Conclusion

This practitioner research addressed three questions:

1. To what extent do students already feel a connection to the text or the character?
2. Does the intervention affect perceived connection to the text or the character?
3. Does the intervention affect how students subsequently approach exam-style work focused on the same character?

I found that before the intervention, students felt elements of both connection and disconnection, with disconnection centred on Shakespeare's

language, on exams' focus on techniques, and on widespread dislike for Lady Macbeth combined with shallow theory of mind and stereotypes.

Following the intervention, all of these disconnection categories changed positively for some students, though not for all. Many students achieved a more nuanced grasp of Lady Macbeth's theory of mind both during and after the intervention, which in turn led to much more positive characterisation and enjoyment of her character across the group.

Even more promisingly, these shifts did not detract from the quality of their exam work and in fact, in some students, promoted more confident connections of technique to character interpretation.

5.1 – Collaboration and future implications

This research has already altered my own teaching practice. Following the interviews, I created lessons for all my GCSE classes explicitly addressing reading stance, and I have begun testing more ways to promote experiential, personal reading as a necessary bridge to authentic analysis (Atherton, 2024; Mason & Giovanelli, 2021), rather than a separable phenomenon associated with reading for pleasure. For example, my Year 9 teaching has shifted to include practical strategies for "reading well," such as tracking emotional impressions in the margins of texts.

I was also able to share the intervention resources with my department, and while the creative task itself was not popular—perhaps due to time

pressure—the initial lesson on interpretations of Lady Macbeth was borrowed by colleagues. In the departmental focus on reading that followed, I was able to benefit in turn from a colleague's creation of a lesson sequence on different reading approaches. In addition to these shared practical efforts, we discussed my initial findings during end-of-year professional development sessions, alongside our existing student survey data; this forms part of our ongoing efforts to refine teaching and to address the continued problem of A-Level English uptake.

Finally, my hope is that, in interrogating each part of the intervention in detail and in maintaining a focus on students' approach to exam-style work, this project provides an array of concepts and steps which are discrete and practical enough to be applied individually or wholesale in other contexts. Certainly, in order to make any claims beyond the scope of my individual Year 10 class, pastiche interventions would need to be explored across very different GCSE English settings; I plan to continue this exploration myself.

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Appendix 1 – Pastiche Task Handout

Different actors and directors sometimes take extremely different approaches to Lady Macbeth as a character—there is a big range of possible interpretations based on her limited text in the play. First we'll consider some differences in how she has been interpreted before—then you will have to decide on your own interpretation and (at least in writing) step into her shoes yourself.

Different Interpretations – As we watch different versions of this scene, jot down your impressions of: a) how Lady Macbeth is feeling here, b) what her relationship with Macbeth is like here.

Version 1 –

Version 2 –

Version 3 (if time) –

The Task

PART 1: Write a monologue for Lady Macbeth to deliver in Act 4 (the act when we do not see her).

CRITERIA:

- Context: You will have to imagine your own extra scene—when and where is she speaking? Is she alone?--and you should include a brief explanation of what happens in this imaginary scene to introduce the monologue. If you would like to include some more of your imagined scene—for example, another character responding to her—you can, but it's not required.
- Length: She must speak at least 10 lines, and at least 6 of them must be in one long speech.
- Goal: Above all, aim to make this convincing for Lady Macbeth as a character, both in terms of what she says (e.g. emotions, personality, plot) and how she is saying it (e.g. language, style, tone). You should NOT imitate "Shakespearean" language in terms of spellings, thee/thou, or old-fashioned verb forms (dost, giveth, etc.). Everything else is up to you.

PART 2: Alongside your monologue, write an explanation of your work. You should explain how what she is saying (e.g. emotions, personality, plot) and how she is saying it (e.g. language, style, tone) both fit your view of her as a character. I care as much about your explanation as about what you put in the speech! It is this personal interpretation of her character that I'm most interested in.

I will choose 3 of the most convincing and interesting monologues to share anonymously with the class in a lesson next week, and all of the work (for anyone who has turned in their consent form) will be anonymously used for my research. In other words, the only person who will know what you wrote is me—so don't be stressed, and feel free to stretch your skills and have fun with this.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire 1 – Full Responses

Student	QUESTION 1: How do you feel about Macbeth as a play? Please explain your reason(s).	QUESTION 2: How do you feel about Lady Macbeth as a character? Please explain your reason(s).	QUESTION 3: Please fill at least 4 lines of text with your main knowledge, impressions, and/or ideas about Lady Macbeth:
A	Fun and interesting to find the hidden themes throughout the play	Mysterious cool character. See her rise in power is cool	She is a mysterious character who is ambitious for more power. Th night of the murder is when her power starts fading.
B	It is a lovely play, I believe Shakespeare was on a winning streak when he wrote it as it delves into key human characteristics and has a magnificent story.	She is developed well and at first she shows signs of manipulation however slowly the tables turn throughout the play.	She is the wife of Macbeth and Duncan looks like her father. She is very committed to tasks and will evidently do whatever it takes. This takes its toll on her at the end of the play however. At first she is manipulative towards Macbeth but the tables turns and he starts hiding things from her. All in all they go from she dominates to equal to he dominates.
C	very hard to decipher as weird English language is used.	manipulative and hypocrite as she manipulates Macbeth into doing things he doesn't want to do, but feels guilty herself	Lady Macbeth, driven by ambition, spurs her husband to commit regicide in Shakespeare's "Macbeth." As guilt overtakes her, her sleepwalking reveals the psychological toll. She stands as a symbol of the destructive impact of unchecked ambition.
D	I think that it is an interesting play to study. I don't like the play itself (personal preference), obviously this play was written for a Jacobean audience (I'm not Jacobean). I enjoyed learning about the	She is treacherous and against God. She is also controlling. She was partly the reason why everything went wrong for Macbeth. (Macbeth originally concluded that he was to do nothing ans	- Lady macbeth is treacherous Lady Macbeth may have had some kindness before (She wouldnt kill Duncan as he looked like her father) - Lady Macbeth is controlling, "let my spirits chastise his [M's] mind"

	play, I thought that it was taught well, and I especially liked the clarity in which the essay structures were taught. Thank you. #	would let nature take its course)	- LM is manipulative and ambitious
E	I think Macbeth is a pretty good play as it is interesting. Learning the vocabulary and the way it is written is pretty difficult at first but as you go on it gets easier.	I think the way Lady Macbeth progressed in the play was great and it gave the story a lot more detail and depth.	- Arrogant - Wants to be the leader - Acts kind but in reality is devilish - Drowns herself in her own actions and can't talk it anymore
F	I just need to learn it for the GCSE, but it is a very well-written play	Manipulative but I feel sorry for her	At the start of the play she is a cunning ad manipulative woman who has Macbeth wrapped around her thumb, but after the murder she begins to build a nagging guilt that builds up into an unbearable depression. The fact that she kills herself is interesting + the power dynamic with Macbeth.
G	I think it is a interesting play as it is set in a very different world to the one we live in now, and it is informative and shows what sort of things were acceptable at the time. It also seems very complex with many different layers, and so many different way of interpreting it that they are still being discussed today.	I personally found her quite annoying, as when she was first introduced she came on very strong and immediately started to encourage Macbeth to commit murder. Then, after the murder, she said to Macbeth that he should stop worrying, even though later on she was the only one that was actually affected by it, which I think she definitely deserved. It also didn't help that she was being played by [classmate]. All that considered she is a well written character.	See previous answer for some of the details which I will not cover again here. She seems to want to present herself as powerful and in control, this can be seen in the banquet where instead of letting people think Macbeth is mad so he is taken off the throne, she instead shows that she is in control of Macbeth, therefore (by extension) in control of the kingdom.

H	I like the way that all of the motifs and themes link together throughout, even when not seemingly obvious. I think that it is a major influence on modern day media since the story is easily appliable.	A good influence on Macbeth by giving him ideas. Because of this, very important within the play.	At the beginning, it was made very clear that she is just meant to be pure evil, and because of this doesn't have a lot of character nuance. Her main purpose is giving Macbeth the motivation to kind Duncan, and after that doesn't have a lot of input into the play. I liked when we saw some of her more vulnerable tendencies, when she claims she couldn't have killed Duncan because "he resembled her father as he slept." I think there should have been more about this and fleshing her out as a character.
I	Interesting because of the build up of the change of characters throughout the play especially Macbeth's change in his attitude to murder.	Lady Macbeth is very interesting because her character changes very frequently with being very determined to achieve her goal to hesitating to kill Duncan.	Lady Macbeth is very deceptive and manipulative at the start and I get the impression that she is crazy. Towards the end she becomes overcome with guilt in my interpretation of the play. Lady Macbeth has a lot of power throughout the play over Macbeth but after the roles are reversed and Lady Macbeth is less powerful.
J	Captivating, as the way Shakespeare present different emotions and feelings in very interesting ways.	cool	Lady macbeth is presented as an evil character by shakespeare. Her main goal is to influence macbeth into killing duncan. I liked her as a character as she really envelops how a person can do bad things not because they were evil, but were influenced by another person.

K	Macbeth is a masterpiece. The way Shakespeare presents all the character really brings the play together. However, though I did enjoy the way we learnt it in class, I don't have a particular feeling towards the play. It does not excite but but I do not mind it	I think she made the play a lot more interesting as her virtues contrast societal norms.	At the start of the play, Lady Macbeth is a power-hungry manipulative woman who uses double meaning and false appearances to take advantage of peoples trust. However, later on in the play, her guilt ends up getting to he which leads to her eventual death. The power dynamic between her and Macbeth evolved throughout the play, as she (at the start) was considered more powerful and was making the big decisions but Macbeth started making important decisions without her input and advice.
L	i think its an interesting play	She's not a great person, and is quite manipulative.	Lady Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's most complex and intriguing characters, embodying ambition, manipulation, and the consequences of unchecked ambition. However, her guilt and descent into madness highlight the tragic consequences of her actions, showcasing the psychological toll of ambition unrestrained by morality.
M	I think it has great writing and use of language, although this makes it hard to understand at times. The arc of the characters are really interesting e.g. Macbeth becoming more tyrannical, Lady Macbeth going insane One think I don't like about the story is the random addition of the plot twist of	When we first encountered Lady Macbeth, in Act 1 Scene 5, she seemed manipulative, cunning and evil, and it was hard to relate to her as it was confusing how she'd become like this, and how the 'noble' Macbeth had agreed to marry her in the first place. When we	Character Arc: Mourning (before play started) ---- Manipulative ----Evil ----- Crazy Power dynamic between her and Macbeth Ambition because she's a woman? - Gender stereotypes - wanting to break the mold Trying to be a backseat driver somewhat, takes the

	Macduff being born via C-Section, while Macbeth is fighting him. I think this is a really random addition to the plot, making the arc of the heroes (Macduff and Malcolm), somewhat diluted. Had Malcolm been the hero in the end, slaying Macbeth, it would have been better as his revenge would have been from the start of the play, when Macbeth killed his father Duncan, rather than Macduff's hero arc only stemming from Act 4 when Macbeth killed his family.	are able to understand that LM and M had lost a child, she becomes easier to understand, and more relatable when M isn't telling her things, such as Banquo's murder - 'Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck'.	reins when she returns the daggers to the murder scene
N	I don't have any strong views on Macbeth, It's a good play and entertaining but at the same time it can get boring and tedious at times because of Shakespearean language.	Confusing, she goes from being manipulative at the start to naive later on. Similarly she changed up her personality a lot during the play - wouldn't kill Duncan but would kill her on child??	Some mental disability - seems psychopathy/sociopathic or even bipolar. Psychopathy as she is often very heartless through Macbeth and often satanic also very manipulative, bipolar because she often changing up her opinion through ought the play. Evil genius when it comes to manipulating Macbeth as she guides Macbeth who was a loyal soldier to Duncan into corrupting him and getting him to betray Duncan.
O	I feel that Macbeth is a very interesting play to study in this day and age since the morals and plot is quite dissimilar to modern day productions. For example, the emphasis on the monarchy and kings is not really prevalent in the current society and being able to link that historical	I feel that Lady Macbeth is manipulative and cunning throughout the play since she convinces the already contemplating Macbeth into killing his noble and good king.	She is manipulative and cunning She went against the gender stereotype in that era She is smart but cowardly, commits suicide More dominant than Macbeth before and for a short time after killing

	context to the play is quite intriguing .		Duncan until she eventually go crazy
P	It's very good, there is constant tension throughout the text.	Personally, I dislike Lady Macbeth as a character because she is manipulative and I would say one of the main antagonists. However, I would say Shakespeare probably intended her to be like this so I would say she is a well written character.	Lady Macbeth seems manipulative and is hiding stuff throughout the play, it seems that the power dynamic between her and Macbeth throughout the play is unbalanced in her favour, so she uses him to achieve her goals and motives. She also implies that she is siding with the devil in the first scene she is on stage, because of this she is one of the main antagonists in the play.
Q	Macbeth is an initially confusing play, with its old English seemingly being difficult to understand and therefore intimidating. However, the poetic or metaphorical techniques Shakespeare uses to represent a diversity of themes throughout the story renders the play to be a masterpiece. One of these themes is distrust, which has been presented in the form of double meanings ("Fair is foul and foul is fair"), similes/ historical context ("Look like th'innocent flower, but be the serpent under't" having historical connotations to the silver medal created in commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot's discovery, which depicted a	Lady Macbeth seems to be not only an exception to the stereotyped meekness of women but also not an exception, as she dies from being driven to suicide by her thirst for power.	Macbeth's wife establishes herself as a fair lady at the start of the play. She is later on corrupted by her own power-hungry desires which gives her a high, declining power dynamic over Macbeth until she is driven to her suicide.

	serpent under a flower.) and metaphors ("There's no art to read the mind's construction in the face.")		
R	It's interesting (but a little difficult to understand) to learn about, as there are some cool quotes & themes/ motifs that appear throughout the play. But I don't like the ending (+end of the middle section), as I think that it was a bit rushed (bc Macduff and Banquo suddenly appear and then everything is all good again. I feel that there could be more about the reign of Macbeth as a king, so that there is a comparison between M & D/Macd.	I think that she was manipulative at the start of the play, but around the middle of the play, thought that I had misunderstood her character (bc she said stuff about her baby). I thought that	manipulating, crazy, power dynamics between M &LM r mad
S	Macbeth is an interesting play which is reasonably easy to follow. It is captivating and has a nice storyline. Sometimes it is a bit hard to follow if you don't know the characters such as which are Duncan's sons and which are noblemen.	Lady Macbeth is a good contrast to Macbeth the character as the relationship between them gives an interesting side-part to the play and apart from the murder and battle. She is a vey useful character in understanding the play and, when put in context with Shakespeares time period, it shows us how strong and powerful she really is as the leading, and pretty much only, female character.	Lady Macbeth is a strong character and an important factor within the play. She is a key influence on Macbeths life and ideas including the murder of Duncan. She is also a nice contrast to stereotypical women in Shakespeares time and uses this to undermine Macbeth throughout the play.
T	As a play I feel like Macbeth does not have a satisfying ending where Macbeth dies as in the start of the play he is considered as a hero at the start and even though he does change, I think it is	Lady Macbeth is a evil character. Oh she a gold digger because she treats Macbeth as someone to climb higher and preassures him to kill	Evil Gold Digger Greedy Malicious

	too sudden and not applicable in real life. Also I see not point of spending of half a year learning about a play. It is not useful in real life and for future skills and most people in this school do not take englsih for a levels. I think it should be in the GCSEs		
U	I feel pretty indifferent to the play as a whole as its a familiar story and it is hard to relate to any of the characters. However it is pretty fun play as shown in its old and modern adaptations.	As a character, I feel shes definitely one of the best in Macbeth as she's not one-sided	At the start she has lots of ambition and uses macbeth to try and get more power. However, as the play goes on she shows a more vulnerable side and then in the end becoming regretful and having so much guilt she goes insane. This gives me the impression that she's almost the opposite of macbeth in terms of character arc as macbeth goes from regretting to having more ambition. I think that she's the main villain in the play apart from the witches as, like adam and eve in the garden of eden, she influences macbeth to kill duncan
V	I enjoyed Macbeth as a play. Macbeth's rise to power is pretty interesting, with him and Lady Macbeth's attitudes towards murder constantly changing (main change right after murder) and people growing somewhat suspicious of him. From then on, when Macbeth is king, the whole thing feels a bit uncomfortable (them going insane). The ending with the rightful king Malcolm returning is a	Lady Macbeth is probably the most interesting character in the play. I find her character arc (which I mention below) kind of satisfying, as it seems right that such a horrible person such meet such a horrible end, but I also almost pity her as she really falls out of the loop after Macbeth becomes king and she just seems kind of lost and irrelevant towards the end. She is also one	She started off as a cruel person, and then asked to be crueler, only breaking this façade when killing Duncan. Then, it's interesting how she seems relatively less cruel in the second half of the play once Macbeth has become more like her and becomes slightly less relevant in the play. Then she's just gone for a while and comes back completely broken, but seems to have developed more sympathy at this

	really nice end to the play, but I think it would have been more satisfying if Malcolm killed him, as it would be a cycle of kings killing kings (and link in to more moral right/wrong and justified murder). The plot is simple, but the characters are very well-developed and it's interesting to see how the more complex characters change (like how Macbeth and Lady Macbeth descend into madness in a rather disturbing fashion)	of the strangest characters as nobody knows how she ended up so cruel to start with	point (i.e. she fears for LadyMacduff)
W	It is overly dramatic with lots of unnecessary dialogue, the plot is good. It is tedious and not appealing to a modern audience.	Manipulative and conniving, she is sly but is hypocritical.	At the start of the play she is cunning and manipulative, she controls Macbeth and is in power. In the middle Macbeth takes more power. At the end lady Macbeth goes crazy and kills herself. I definitely thing she is the most interesting person who is present during the length of the play known as Macbeth
X	I feel that its a bit boring and not very appealing to a modern audience.	She's quite manipulative and acts powerful but I think she acts like that cause she's trying to reassure herself, cause inside she's not actually powerful. False appearances.	Lady Macbeth is manipulative and puts on an appearance in order to hide her insecurities. She's smart and was willing to embrace darkness, however as the play progressed, she began to show her insecurities during her madness spiral.
Y	I enjoyed Macbeth as a play because it has an interesting plot and interesting characters which allows it to be a play that is nice to read through and engaging to follow along.	I think that Lady Macbeth is quite an interesting character who starts of deceptive and slowly she changes throughout the play, making her valuable to follow along with through the play.	I think as a character, Lady Macbeth seems quite cunning and deceptive early on in the play as well as being quite an emotionless person, however as the play progresses, she becomes

			more emotional and understanding of her actions, especially when she feels quite guilty closer to her death. She also goes from being quite independent to being quite clingy and needy as can be seen when she writes letters to Macbeth for no reason while he is gone.
Z	i Feel like i have gained a good understanding of the play as we have read through it and looked through many interpretations of it such as films and tv.	I feel like I understand her power shifts but some bits seemed sudden and I did not understand when she was remindher father by King Duncan.	I feel like she is a manipulative, power-hungry character. She gives impressions of wanting power over Macbeth and is using Macbeth for her selfish intentions.
A1	I decently like Macbeth because its quite easy to analyse. However, in terms of the actual experience it wasn't very fun and is quite boring.	Lady Macbeth is an interesting character as she is different as she goes against normality at the time.	Goes against gender norms at the time, likes the supernatural and that, her role diminishes throughout the play as well, she is also interesting
B1	Alright, idk don't really have any strong opinion.	Good antagonist, rise and fall, overambition all things that can be applied to the 21 century.	Ambition - Women in the 11th century weren't allowed many managerial roles of power and so LM own ambition for such roles is projected onto M which is seen in quotes such as "unsex me here" and the emotionless "a little water will clear us of this deed" which is in stark contrast to M's own "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood".
C1	Macbeth has a decent plot considering the time it was written and I had a bit of fun reading it in my own time. But a big problem for me was the language it uses: it's written in old English which at times makes it a bit difficult to	Lady Macbeth is a very interesting character. She is one the most important characters to the story and her progression of character is very detailed.	Originally after Lady Macbeth finds out about Macbeth's plans, she encourages him greatly to kill Duncan and take the throne for himself. She fights to oppose the gender stereotypes of the time that women were weak.

	understand. There is a lot to analyse in the play though which is useful considering its on my gcse :).		
D1	It has an interesting plot with some cool things like the supernatural witches. I like the iconic Shakespearean quotes. I also like that there are many different interpretations of the play, allowing for unique productions which are genuinely good to watch	Villainous. Persuades her noble husband to kill the King for no reason and cries about it afterwards.	Wife of Macbeth, but unlike most wives in the Jacobean era, she is very ambitious and Macbeth sees her as an equal, perhaps even dominant to him. She is manipulative and insults Macbeth's masculinity to get what she wants. She seems "witchy" and wants dark spirits to come inside of her. However, she cannot bring herself to murder Duncan and is full of guilt inside.
E1	An interesting read for sure as it is a nice mix of tragedy, comedy and in the end the story closes fittingly.	An advanced and empowering character particularly for the time the play was written and changed the dynamic of how women can be seen in all plays and pieces. This is because she changed the way female characters are seen in Elizabethan prose and encouraged many others later on in time to give female characters a larger role in big performances.	The main story is about a thane called Macbeth who killed the king Duncan to become king, it led to him going mentally insane due to the guilt he felt and he is eventually killed by two men called MacDuff and Malcom. The main impressions received from this story are equivocation, betrayal and deceit.
F1	Too much of the action in the play happens in the start of the play and the rest of the book is boring with no action	Shes goes from dominant to submissive for the lack of a better word cause shes manipulative	Lady macbeth is quite manipulative in the process of duncans death however after that macbeth dismisses LM and no longer tell his plans to her showing her lack of power - sumbissive

G1	It follows a relatively simple plotline written in a way which makes it one of the most famous plays of all time. It reflects upon key ideas and concepts of the time, and uses motifs throughout that if noticed make the reader appreciate it even more.	I feel that she is a woman trying to carve her path in a world where it is hard for women to do so. This involves her being heavily manipulative and outwardly cold, and unmovable. However, on the inside, she seems much more unsure and less confident, and seeks to be more man-like than redefine 'woman-like'.	We meet Lady Macbeth as the manipulative wife of Macbeth, who declares his deep love for her in his letter to her. Lady Macbeth doesn't seem to reciprocate these feelings towards her husband, caring more for his role and power than him as a person. As the play progresses, she seems to change from a level-headed, steely determined partner to Macbeth into a meek, less powerful and more mentally challenged character, ultimately ending her own life. Lady Macbeth constantly challenges Macbeth's manliness and mocks his fears, yet succumbs to these same fears at the end. She also refers to having had a child die at a young age.
H1	Macbeth is a good play, with well thought out characters and an interesting plot. it explores ideas such as religion, the supernatural and royalty and combines them very well. overall i enjoyed it significantly more than the other books.	Lady Macbeth is a good character, she is made out to be a ambitious and manipulative. However later in the book we see her begin to collapse under the pressure of everything, eventually killing herself. she calls upon the supernatural to give her power and begins to go slightly insane.	lady macbeth is a manipulative character who begins to control Macbeths mind throughout the book, she appears to be strong and powerful however we see she isn't really, she relies heavily on others, as well as the supernatural and she by herself is weak and while she is a good as character for the plot, she sucks
I1	I used to hate it, but after encountering The War Of The Worlds it doesn't seem so bad. The idea of how too much ambition can change a man for the worse is a very interesting topic, and Macbeth carries it out quite	Interesting at the start (especially to an Elizabeth audience) since she uses manipulation and persuasion to make Macbeth do what she wants, and is very cunning. But, later on in	She is extremely manipulative and cunning, and also shown to be quite evil. She instantly calls upon evil spirits upon receiving news from Macbeth, showing that she's pretty evil and not

	convincingly. The old English language is very annoying to navigate, and some of the older concepts (like the witches) come off as a bit silly (I can't blame Shakespeare for this though, since it would have obviously been more relevant at the time (context!!)).	the play she gets sidelined and even used just to show how ambitious Macbeth has become which is pretty sad because she was a very interesting character with major significance early on.	very moral. Also when Macbeth doesn't want to murder Duncan, she mocks him (like the poor cat i' the adage) and questions his manliness (are you not a man) showing how manipulative she is, and that she's willing to do things like this in order to get what she wants. Also she's all talk since she mocks Macbeth for being traumatised by the murder and ends up killing herself over her guilt.
J1	The plot of Macbeth is good although it is relatively simple. It contains many motifs which can be easily missed which contribute to the overall ideas portrayed over the course of the play, but once identified, can be powerful indicators to the tone and intentions at that current moment.	She is very hypocritical throughout the play and seems like she only looks for things that benefit her. For example she fuels Macbeth's ambition in becoming the King of Scotland since she will also be able to gain the profit, but further on through the play, she insults him and diminishes his manhood as he fears the consequences of their plot being discovered.	Lady Macbeth is a very dominant female character in the play and her character arc takes many turns. We see her initially as Macbeth's loving wife as they support each other throughout the opening scenes. However, she progresses to become a manipulator later on in the play as she sees opportunity for her own benefit, slowly taking away Macbeth's own power. She does go on to regret her decisions that she made earlier in the play, showing us some humanity in that sense, but by then it is too late and the consequences of their plot begin to show.
K1	It's culturally a significant play with an interesting storyline, and I like it as a play. I struggle to understand it as a script though, and struggle with looking at it any deeper than the basic story, unlike with Never Let Me Go	She is certainly interesting. I really like the interactions between Lady Macbeth and Macbeth in their collective descent into insanity, and how they keep switching up (how thrilling!)	Lady Macbeth begins (shortly after the witches' prophecy to Macbeth) by being the more 'evil' than Macbeth, pushing him to "catch the nearest way,"-- and Macbeth seems to resist a bit, which is interesting, because it's all

	where I feel it has more significance outside of just a simple story (which is good, because Never Let Me Go's storyline is a bit boring)		very much against gender stereotypes. The relationship between Lady Macbeth feels to me more like a criminal gang organisation than a romantic relationship, which I guess is a bit weird, but it's at least not cliché.
L1	I would say Macbeth as a play is a pretty good play however we study it too intricately to the point where it's useless. I would say it is a solid 7/10.	The personality of the character is pretty bad however the contrast of personalities in the scheme of the book and play. And provides some spice. But i don't like her.	Lady Macbeth is the wife of Macbeth and initially in the book is the think tank behind the killing of Duncan however as the play continues she's become blindsided by mabeth and becomes ill. She can't have kids.
M1	I think it is an interesting play with an interesting plot, albeit quite a depressing one, but I dislike the way that we have had to hunt for themes and motifs in it and memorise quotes, which I find very difficult.	I think she is very cunning at the start, as seen by how she hides her true feelings from Duncan and even Macbeth when motivating him to kill Duncan despite her not wanting to herself because he resembled her father as he slept. However, her ambition and cunning can be understood better in the context of the play, set in Medieval Scotland and written in the Jacobean period, when women had little power and were considered inferior simply due to their gender, and relied on their husband being powerful to have any influence. This also explains her descent into madness, as it could be said that she was not truly evil but simply wanted Macbeth to kill Duncan to further the little influence she had -	I think she is very cunning at the start, as seen by how she hides her true feelings from Duncan and even Macbeth when motivating him to kill Duncan despite her not wanting to herself because he resembled her father as he slept. However, her ambition and cunning can be understood better in the context of the play, set in Medieval Scotland and written in the Jacobean period, when women had little power and were considered inferior simply due to their gender, and relied on their husband being powerful to have any influence. This also explains her descent into madness, as it could be said that she was not truly evil but simply wanted Macbeth to kill Duncan to further the little influence she had - but when Macbeth becomes a tyrant, she feels remorse as

		but when Macbeth becomes a tyrant, she feels remorse as she blames herself for pushing him into this and actually loses her power from her influence over Macbeth.	she blames herself for pushing him into this and actually loses her power from her influence over Macbeth.
N1	Rubbish Play. Overhyped. Overrated. Why on gods green earth do I need to analyse some ancient play spoken in a language that's basically not even English at this point? It doesn't make sense. Never in my life will I ever, ever, EVER need to know why or care about why Macbeth was a good guy turned bad or anything else to do with the play.	Irrelevant. Waste of space. Professional victim + gaslighter. Annoying as hell because she's manipulating and being evil and stuff and then she's suddenly feeling guilty. If she wants to be bare evil, then go through with it for crying out loud. Stupid character.	Lady Macbeth is a massively, crazily, indubitably evil character that manipulated the future, albeit temporary Scottish King known as Macbeth. For the beginning, she seems to be the most evil one, corrupting Macbeth, channeling the witches prophecy through her. Later in the play, Macbeth become more evil and Lady Macbeth takes a backseat and become guilty and submissive. Perchance.
O1	I think Macbeth is a good play. I enjoyed going through it and analyzing it and understanding the different characters and how it relates back to the Jacobean time. I think the main themes are portrayed well throughout the play through the different characters and their responses to situations	I think Lady Macbeth is a cruel character and I believe that Shakespeare portrayed the complexity of her character well by including the supernatural and masculinity into her character. One of the main reasons she is seen as extremely psychotic is not only because of her actions, but also because of how she breaks the "rules" of the Jacobean society and acts so weird and hypnotised.	Lady Macbeth is a manipulative character that, when not alone, relies on acting innocent to cover her true desires and motives. She does not hesitate to cruelly disrespect her husband and continues to act more masculine and supernatural throughout the play, shaming her image in the eyes of a jacobean audience. She clearly has no regard to human life and will do anything to get what she wants.

P1	I found Macbeth relatively more interesting than the other topics covered as it is a good play, and the characters have many interesting sides to them, for example Macbeth's changing perspective on taking the throne for himself by killing Duncan and going from feeling guilty and talking about how he heard a voice that he will sleep no more to going past the point of no return and that hes stepped so far into blood that he can wade no more and returning is as tedious as it is to go over. I also found the motifs of blood and heaven and hell and equivocation very interesting.	I think she is written well as an evil character who does anything to achieve her goals but after Macbeths resolve strengthens I feel that she became fairly irrelevant.	Lm is a manipulative character who hides her true nature and advises macbeth to do the same in her pursuit of power, and doesnt hesitate to do whatever it takes to get her way, exclaiming that she would kill her own child if it achieved her goals. She acts more masculine than Macbeth and often emasculates him at the start of the play, though in the later stages lady macbeth falls from this position when macbeth takes control and she becomes less impactful on his decisions,
Q1	As a play, Macbeth is generally entertaining. Macbeth is also interesting when you look at the characters and themes throughout and seeing the relevance today with character archetypes in modern literature and films.	Lady Macbeth is an unlikeable character due to her actions throughout the play with the constant manipulation and gaslighting and with her being a large factor in why Macbeth commits regicide in the first place.	Lady Macbeth is prominent character in the play being one of the main 'villians' of the story. Most of her actions are manipulative towards Macbeth and tries to use him as a vehicle for her intentions contrasting to Macbeth treating her as an equal (until the end of the play). In tandem with her constant hypocrisy, she becomes a very unlikeable character. Her only redeemable quality is that she doesn't submit to Macbeth which, at the time, was considered the norm.

R1	- its not a bad play with some good character development, however it is a bit dull	- Lady Macbeth is a weak character that is cunning and backstabbing with not much honour	- LM must be beautiful as she is foul and it Shakepseare wouldnot make her ugly both in and out - she is an ambituous woman who can not havekids - she has a weak soul - she is hypocritical
S1	I enjoyed Macbeth more having studied it because I understood and appreciated the clever and thoughtful writing of the play better than the first time I read it	Lady Macbeth had good character development as her and Macbeth swap roles. Her character at the beginning of the play also seriously challenges the feminine standards of the time. I also think that her falling of the stage and cursing the play forever is quite cool especially the fact actors refer to the play as the scottish play rather than Macbeth	Lady Macbeth at the start of the play is very strong and manipulative, constantly trying to be more masculine and shaming Macbeth as feminine to make him do what she wishes. However, after the death of Duncan, she becomes haunted by the murder and the bloodthirsty nature of her husband, who becomes the more controlling one in their relationship and takes the lead, becoming deceptive and manipulative, like Lady Macbeth at the start of the play, who now roams the halls in her sleep trying to clean her hands
T1	It's not very good. Shakespeare's writing is not very fun to read - it's too old-fashioned, makes the book less interesting to read. There are many parts that seem irrelevant and overall it is disappointing considering it apparently has a good reputation. It was probably alright for people that lived a long time ago but now it is just not a very good play.	She is a very dramatic character who seems to have many mental problems - she goes from bein angry at Macbeth, to loving him, and then acting crazy near the end - she is an annoying character overall but that's probably because of how Shakespeare wanted her to be (for the time that it was written?)	- she is the wife of Macbeth, and plays a big part in his character's parts of the play - she doesn't want to be a women and wants a male child but throughout the play she seems to show signs that she wouldn't be a good mum - she dies at the end (kind of wish it happened earlier) - Macbeth can't cope without her at the end of the play

U1	I have mixed feelings about it. I like the techniques but I dislike the old English used.	I think she is the most important character in the play, she reflects the descent that Macbeth takes and defies female stereotypes of the time.	Defies feminine stereotypes. Might be a witch. Kills herself out of guilt. Slightly, controlled Macbeth at the start.
V1	it is difficult to understand as the language is very different to what we use today	she is very representative of the females of this generation, she is manipulator, she is a liar, and marries for wealth and power.	lady Macbeth is Macbeth's wife, she kills here self
W1	I think that the plot is quite interesting but it is quite hard to understand because of the old English and this lowers the enjoyment.	Lady Macbeth is not a nice character and is very manipulative and plays on the feelings of Macbeth to get where she wants. She married Macbeth for the power and the wealth and ruins Macbeth's life and mind through her manipulation.	Lady Macbeth is Macbeth's wife and convinces Macbeth that he wants to become King. This leads to Macbeth going on a killing-spree. She begins to go crazy and starts hallucinating and questioning herself. Lady Macbeth dies when she is beheaded by Duncan.
X1	Macbeth as a play is interesting in terms of concept but it is not very pleasant reading it as it is written in Shakespearean English and its hard to get a full picture but at the same time, it leaves it open to your own interpretation	Lady Macbeth is a complex character who changes and develops throughout the play. Her character progression is very interesting and surprising as she contrasts with the the gender stereotype around the time.	Lady Macbeth originally starts off as a normal woman, but once she finds out about the witches' prophecy about Macbeth, she shows her true colours and becomes manipulative, convincing Macbeth to kill Duncan when Macbeth originally doesn't want to and even helps him out in the murder. Later feels guilty about the murder despite getting what she wanted and kills herself. Her personality and characteristics contrasts with the gender stereotype of women being weak that was believed around the time the play was published.

Y1	I quite like the concept and plot of Macbeth and it is enjoyable to watch but reading it and understanding it fully is quite difficult due to it being written in Shakespearean English. I also like how certain parts of Macbeth are left to your interpretation such as whether Macbeth actually sees the floating daggers or if he is hallucinating	Lady Macbeth is a complex character whose character progresses and changes throughout the play. Her character is quite interesting as it contrasts with the gender stereotype in 17th Century England.	Lady Macbeth originally starts off seeming to be a normal woman, but then after hearing the prophecy about Macbeth becoming king, she progresses into a controlling deceptive person who manipulates Macbeth into killing Duncan and even helps him with the murder. Later in the play, she feels guilty about the murder and eventually kills herself. She could potentially be a witch (open to interpretation) and goes against the gender stereotype at the time

Appendix 3: Questionnaire 2 – Full Responses

Student	QUESTION 1: How do you feel about Macbeth as a play? Please explain your reasons.	QUESTION 2: How do you feel about Lady Macbeth as a character? Please explain your reasons.	QUESTION 3: Please fill at least 4 lines of text with your main knowledge, impressions, and/or ideas about Lady Macbeth:
A	Macbeth is a fun and interesting play/	She is cool and msterious	Mysterious embraces darkness at first but changes towards the end. She urges Macbeth to kill King Duncan
B	Macbeth Is a powerful play it is well written and uses motifs to emphasise certain recurring scenes throughout the play.	She is interesting and well developed as a character Shakespeare uses an evident writing techniques when describing her which improves how complex her personality is within the play	She is a woman therefore it is meant to be that in Shakespeare's time she would be meek however she is a powerful character in some parts with an evident control over the scene
C	It is a pretty good play as it follows a very interesting and understandable flow of a story however understanding the English used is hard.	She is very manipulative and makes macbeth do something he doesnt want to do.	Lady Macbeth's unbridled ambition propels her husband towards regicide in Shakespeare's "Macbeth." Consumed by guilt, her sleepwalking exposes the psychological toll of their actions. She becomes emblematic of the destructive consequences of uncontrolled ambition.
D	I really like "Macbeth" as a play. The story about ambition and its consequences is interesting, and the characters are strong. Shakespeare did a great	I think that she is a treacherous character, however in the past she may have been much more kinder, she may have had a child before, however the death of he/she/they/them/	Lady Macbeth is a character in "Macbeth" who's really ambitious. She encourages her husband to do bad things to become king. She's strong and

	job making it a story about people and the problems that come with wanting too much power.	xhe/xer/ input correct pronoun, may have taken her remorse and guilt away.	determined but gets haunted by guilt later. Lady Macbeth shows how unchecked ambition can mess with a person's mind and lead to consequences.
E	I like Macbeth as a play because it is interesting but it's a bit hard to learn the quotes and language	I think Lady Macbeth is a good character because her character development is in my opinion is really good and she progresses well	- Arrogant - Acts innocent but is a devil underneath - Attention-seeker - Wants to be the leader
F	Its a good play juggling lots of themes and messages and very entertaining	Shes one of the most complex characters and i feel like she is more interesting than macbeth in lots of scenes	She starts off like the main villain but then becomes a more sympathetic character unlike Macbeth so she serves as a perfect partner to him. As well as this, by being absent in Act 4 it creates speculation as to how she became insane, adding to the supernatural element of the play as well as, providing a great activity as well
G	My opinion from last time has not really changed, apart from now I have more appreciation for how well crafted the play is.	I have now realized just how many different ways there are of interpreting Lady Macbeth, and just how many of there are wrong. Why would someone think that number 5 would be something that would be said by Lady Macbeth (sorry [classmate]), because it feels like someone tried really hard to cram all the motifs into one monologue, but motifs need to be spread out throughout a scene, and the motif of plants/nature is limited to a single scene and	See previous answer/rant.

		is only used between Banquo and Duncan to represent their innocence because plants would not do anything wrong. Personally I enjoyed number 2 because it went all in on one motif (the motif of light) and also introduces to us how she got the candle and explains even further why she uses the candle, and it perfectly resembles the bridge between the two acts, as we see her still awake, but going mad slowly, and shows us how she is still hoping to go to heaven even though she has done so many terrible things. I also enjoyed number 1 because of the new perspective with the porter and how he is the one who is telling her that Banquo has not returned yet. I also enjoyed 4 because it was going with the idea that Lady Macbeth is also a witch, and it was obvious how much work was put into it (there was even an entirely new apparition to resemble Macbeth, which was the two-headed snake) and I would have loved to see the rest of the scene and what direction the author ([classmate]) would have taken next, and whether he would have had an even more secretly active Lady Macbeth.	
H	The way you feel about it can be very subjective and the way that you perceive parts of the play can be completely different. For example, contemporary	There's a lot of mystery around her that we never get to see in the play, so it's hard to base a strong idea of who she is on what we get.	Many productions have portrayed her in different ways, being more empathetic, angry or getting a lot more emotional distraught

	audiences would have believed in all the supernatural elements, but modern examiners might attribute it to mental illness and insanity. There is a rigid structure to the play, but a lot of the play could still be changed and keep the same feeling.		throughout the plot. I think this is somewhat a good choice for Shakespeare to make her so vague so that different interpretations can be different, but also a bit annoying that we can't really see his vision of her.
I	Macbeth is very interesting because of the character development throughout the play and how their attitudes to other people change.	Lady Macbeth is interesting because of the power dynamic between her and Macbeth and as opposed to stereo types she would be considered masculine. Lady Macbeth is very evil and manipulative in the start of the play.	Lady Macbeth is manipulative and evil opposed to stereo types. She manipulates Macbeth throughout the play and encourages him to commit murder despite not being able to herself.
J	thought provoking, because it uses complex language to present complicated characters in a cool way.	she is	I think lady mab
K	The play Macbeth is a masterpiece. Shakespeare's portrayal of each character is what truly makes the play feel complete. Nevertheless, I don't feel any particular way about the play, even if I did appreciate how we learned it in class. Although it doesn't thrill me, I don't mind it.	Lady Macbeth is a fundamental character in Macbeth, and she made the play more interesting with her personality and virtues.	At the beginning of the play, Lady Macbeth is a manipulative, power-hungry woman who capitalises on people's trust by giving false faces and using double meanings. But later in the play, her guilt finally gets the better of her, and that ultimately results in her demise. Throughout the play, the power dynamics between her and Macbeth changed. While she was first seen as more powerful and was making the major decisions, Macbeth began taking the lead on

			crucial decisions without her guidance or advise.
L	I think its interesting and the best thing about it is the different character dynamics and how they develop over the play	i like how shakespeare has left it up to the reader how thwy interperet lady M.	Lady Macbeth is a complex character in Shakespeare's play "Macbeth," known for her ambition and manipulation. She is driven by her desire for power and control, pushing her husband to commit murder to fulfill their ambitions.
M	Pretty cool. I like the idea of false appearances and how lines from completely different sections of the play can be connected through motif's. However, while I think the arcs of the 'villains' (M +LM) are very interesting, I think the character arcs of the heroes are slightly confusing, as the role of the hero is split into both Malcolm and Macduff.	I like the way that her arc develops, from cold evil to tragic depression, showing how the devil etc can ruin a person's development. I also think that she's incredibly important for how she influences Macbeths character, for example directly in A1S5 and indirectly through her death later in the play.	Lady Macbeth is evil at the start Lady Macbeth is sad at the end LM shows how evil can influence a person Later on we see how much Macbeth cared about Lady Macbeth, but only really when she dies
N	I enjoy Macbeth as a play as it's interesting but at the same time the Shakespearean language and length, etc. can make it get tedious at times.	Lady Macbeth is a well written and good character.	Lady Macbeth starts as one of the mentally stronger characters and slowly throughout the play, especially after the death of Duncan she descends into mental insanity and eventually suicide. She is a good female icon especially at the time the play was set being a strong female figure and leading Macbeth as a wife.
O	I think that Macbeth is a very good play as it explores many themes such as betrayal and is quite different from	I feel that Lady Macbeth is very cunning and smart. Throughout the play she has a more powerful role and is more mentally capable than	My main ideas about Lady Macbeth is that she is cunning and manipulative Her and Macbeth had a

	modern movies and visual representations of things since it can be tweaked and identified from many different perspectives.	Macbeth but eventually gives in to the guilt and commits suicide.	lost child She doesn't want to fit the traditional gender stereotype during that era and pleads with the witches to unsex her Lady Macbeth has a very smart demeanor up till her death
P	It's a good play, the plot is interesting and it implements ideas similar to the Lion King and, whilst that is a simplistic plot, it is done well.	I don't like her but I think she is well written, as a character she is manipulative and I would argue she is potentially a main antagonist.	I believe that Lady Macbeth is one of the main antagonists in this play, this is because that not only does she manipulate Macbeth causing his paranoia, but she also implies that she sides with the devil in her first scene. Additionally, Lady Macbeth shares strange similarities with the witches which I believe are the other main antagonists, which may indicate that she is also another antagonist.
Q	As a book, it is full of links, foreshadowing and historical context. As (an adaptation of) a play, there a myriad of soliloquys and monologues, including a spectrum of character developments and is therefore a masterpiece.	Lady Macbeth, as of Jacobean times, was an unladylike woman with an insatiable desire for power which eventually consumes her and leads to her ultimate suicide.	Lady Macbeth ironically establishes herself as a strong-willed, power-hungry wife near the start of the play, which would shock Jacobean audiences as of the time, women were stereotypically meek and gentle. These traits could be seen to be reflected on Lady Macbeth near her death, as she eventually commits suicide once consumed by her unladylike desires.
R	I now think that this play is more interesting, as it has multiple ways to be read and interpreted.	I think that she is an interesting character with multiple ways to read her character.	manipulative-manipulates Macbeth into killing D corrupting- breaks

	+other productions all have slightly different ways of showing the producer's thoughts		through to Macbeth and influences him to do bad things corrupted- she slowing becomes further & further away from Macbeth + she kinda coocoo broken-she is completely broken at the end+ carrying a light thing
S	Macbeth is an interesting play with captivating characters which give the play a nice amount of depth. It has a good storyline and, when looked at deeper, the plot and meaning of each scene becomes clear.	Lady Macbeth is one of the most important characters in Macbeth. She is always providing alternate views to Macbeth himself, whether they are the same or different views.	My idea of Lady Macbeth is that she is a manipulative person who understands peoples thoughts very well. I think if she can easily change her mood and the motif of false faces is very much part of her character.
T	I honestly respect Macbeth. He wanted power and did what he had to, with an equally competent wife, to get it and keep it. Many call him bad, but Macduff isn't entirely respectable either. He ran to the English, the long time rival of Scotland, to help throw him off the throne. He betrayed Scotlands national sovereignty so he too, could take the throne. Macbeth was a military man and was loyal to Scotland. He would do whatever he could to increase Scotlands prosperity under his reign. After all, he defeated the Norwegian invaders beforehand right in the beginning. If Macbeth had	Lady Macbeth is quite a frightening character because of how she commits herself entirely to her ambition. Ambition for her is an act of sacrifice: she abandons all hopes of virtue or salvation by calling upon evil spirits.	Scary Ambious Evil Scary

	been able to rule, perhaps Scotlands history would be spared the fate of Englands lesser		
U	I feel that it's a pretty entertaining play with loads of interesting themes, a clever plot and fleshed out characters. I loved how Macbeths downfall was done, but the final parts of the play were slightly disappointing as to how it was resolved quickly and with us not seeing much of lady macbeth. as well as this, i feel that its slightly overrated as to how genius it is in terms of its themes, what with the porter and other characters basically explaining to the audience what things mean as well as shakespeare making banquo the best guy to please king james.	I think she at first was a very engaging character but her downfall wasnt done as well as her husbands	I think when we first meet her, she immediately is the most exciting character, and just from the play it seems she's very evil and the main antagonist and bad influence of Macbeth. However we get hints that she's not as bad as she says she is, needing help from things like evil spirits. However we do not get to see this come to fruition as she looks on helplessly at her husband becoming insane and going too far down the path of reckless ambition that she set him on
V	Overall, I still really enjoy Macbeth as a play: the plot is satisfying (the downfall of LM/M), the characters are nicely developed, and it was quite a nice play to study.	Lady Macbeth is the most intriguing/mysterious character in the play, because her origins of cruelty are unknown and she changes a lot in the one act in the play where she isn't there. This means it can be interesting to think about what happens in that time, but also can be a little frustrating to not have a response from Shakespeare.	Lady Macbeth starts off the play as a somewhat cruel person, before asking the spirits of hell to make her crueler: she then continues to manipulate Macbeth throughout the scene, ultimately encouraging him to commit murder, despite not having the courage/bravery to do that herself. She then chastises Macbeth for his fear after the murder and tries to shrug it off. Throughout Act 3, it becomes clear than Macbeth has taken more of a driving seat and LM

			falls out of the loop, ultimately not being told about Banquo's murder. However, she still cares for Macbeth as seen by her response at the banquet. She then disappears for an act and comes back incredibly broken, which is part of her mystery, the other being whether she had a child that ultimately died (referencing killing a child to chastise Macbeth)
W	Macbeth is a bit boring, the monologues are too long and tediuos. some of the scenes feel irrelavent and some characters feel misplaced.	i like lady macbeth as a charcater. she is well developed and not overused, it is also interesting as to how she splits her personality with macbeth and everyone else.	she is cunning and has lots of drama. she is also frightening and she is ambitions but not to the extent as macbeth as she will not get her hands dirty. she also has alot of power not just with macbeth but with all the other characters in the castle whilst keeping up a sweet mask using FALSE APPEARANCE.
X			
Y	Overall, I still feel that Macbeth is a very interesting play as it has good character depth and an easy plot to follow.	I feel that Lady Macbeth is still a very interesting character due to her changing emotions and viewpoints.	Lady Macbeth starts off early in the play as quite a deceptive and controlling person as can be seen when she convinces Macbeth to take action and kill Duncan however as she progresses through the play, her emotions start to change and she starts to understand the importance of her actions, leading to her starting to feel guilty

			and eventually break down after going insane.
Z	I feel more interested as I have learned of what different people think of it and certain ideas.	I feel now that she has plenty of interpretations and is a bit more of a deeper character with lots more going on in her head than I once thought.	She is a manipuative person who is rather selfish. However, she has emotions such as guilt as we see in the later chapters which was quite intersting.

Student	**QUESTION 4: Explain your opinion (positive, negative, or both) of our lessons since the last questionnaire, giving reasons for what you liked, valued, or disliked.**
A	Too many questions
B	I thought they were entertaining and informative
C	I liked writing a different interpretation for LM in ACT 4 where she wasn't seen.
D	I liked the way the lessons were discussion based - it was interesting to hear other people's opinion, however, my views didn't change so i didnt feel that i learnt too much.
E	I liked where we got to write our own opinions on Lady Macbeth and reviewed different versions of it so that we can interpret it in different ways than we thought
F	positive because it was fun and made me have a different opinion and better understanding of the play
G	I enjoyed them as they were very fun, but as I said before, they would take too much time.
H	I liked how we got to the impact of different writers on changing a character. Lady Macbeth was very adapted to the productions. I think we could have had a bit more time to write our monologues because there was a lot I still wanted to include that I didn't have the opportunity to.
I	I liked our last few lessons because it allowed us to think more of Lady Macbeth as a character and some form of context of what could've happened to Lady Macbeth in Act 4.
J	they were fun, becuase we got to see how different people portayed her.
K	I enjoyed creating an Act4 scene as it allowed my creative juices to flow and it was very interesting going through others and evaluating how it portrays Lady Macbeth.
L	Positive, engaging, fresh and new.
M	It was interesting, as we got to see more of the character arcs, which are sometimes missed when skipping scenes etc.
N	Lessons have been more involving and have expanded my view on my classmates views along with my own.
O	I think the lessons were quite good since we got to focus on a character that almost seems to be uninvolved with most of the mishap in the play, but is actually the mastermind behind everything.

P	I found the lessons quite interesting however I would've liked more time on the creative task as I didn't feel I could finish articulating my ideas.
Q	The activities were engaging because it adapted skills from creative writing into monologues in Macbeth.
R	I think that they were very interesting and enabled a bit of creativity, that was understandably lacking.
S	I really liked writing a scene for Macbeth as it helps my understanding and was just really enjoyable. Watching a specific scene from several different film adaptations of the play also helped my understanding as it helped me picture M and LM in different ways.
T	Positive because I feel like have learnt how to write speeches on Macbeth
U	I really liked seeing peoples interpretations of things that lady macbeth couldve got up to while she was offstage and some of them were actually amazingly good
V	Positive: it was really nice to do some creative writing after ages of analytical writing, and I really enjoyed being able to make up my own LM scene and reading other peoples' scenes (which were all really good and sounded like Shakespeare).
W	they are creative and helpful to understand more about each character.
X	
Y	I think that our lessons have definitely had a positive impact on me as they have made me think a lot more about Lady Macbeth as a character and the play as a whole. One thing I would say is it may be more beneficial to go into a similar amount of depth into other characters rather than just Lady Macbeth as it may help with understanding the play and characters better.
Z	i valued writing the monologue. It gave me a better understanding of how she may be feeling. It forced us to think about her as a character in whole and not too zoomed in.

Appendix 4: Interview Transcripts

Interview Transcripts Contents:

4.1A – First Interview, Pair A – S1 and S2

4.1B – First Interview, Pair B – S3 and S4

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4.1B – First Interview, Pair D – S7 and S8

4.2A – Second Interview, Pair A – S1 and S2

4.2B – Second Interview, Pair B – S3 and S4

4.2C – Second Interview, Pair C – S5 and S6

4.2D – Second Interview, Pair D – S7 and S8

4.1A – First Interview, Pair A – S1 and S2

Pair A:

S1 = Student 1: Y10, my English set, predicted 9 for English Literature GCSE

S2 = Student 2: Y10, my English set, predicted 9 for English Literature GCSE

INT = Interviewer

INT: My first question is pretty open-ended. I'm interested in, in general, what makes you connect with stories or characters.

S2: I guess, like, seeing how they change throughout the story. Because, uh, well, it makes them feel more like a person and less like, just, kind of, um… I don't know, like an archetype. Yeah.

INT: Cool. Okay.

S1: Yeah, something I think—like when there's enough detail about a character that you kind of know how they think. I think that can make a lot of difference. Because it's not just, oh, they're doing these actions, you kind of get—you can see with their perspective and stuff. And when you can really, you can put yourself in the shoes of the character, I think that's when it's best, you can actually think like, what would they be thinking in this moment.

INT: Nice. Okay. We might get this speedily, because those were very succinct thoughtful answers. Um. Okay. So second question. Do you feel that you've connected with *Macbeth* as a play, and why, or why not?

S1: Yeah, I think yes, because in Macbeth, just in the soliloquies where people talk about their thoughts they wouldn't share with others. It's interesting first of all to see, you know, what they think, and also what they wouldn't share—what thoughts they do or don't share with others. And especially with like Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, how those thoughts change over the course of the play. Like you see towards the end of the play, they aren't talking to each other at all, and Macbeth has a soliloquy about Banquo, just not telling Lady Macbeth. Whereas I

think earlier, that would have been something he would have talked to Lady Macbeth about.

S2: Yeah. Uh. Well it's kind of quite a, like, classic play. And so you can see a lot of influences from it in modern day media. Because if you break it down into the basic plot, it's quite a simple kind of idea you can apply to many things. So, I think it's quite interesting, like seeing parts of Macbeth in the world around us.

INT: Yeah, cool. Do you have any examples of that? It's okay if not.

S2: Um… no.

INT: That's okay. I was just curious, because I like that thought. Okay. And then, specifically, do you feel connected with Lady Macbeth as a character, and why or why not?

[long pause]

S1: I might be being critical. I think you can see how she changes throughout the play. And I think you can see why she changes throughout the play. But I think in the beginning, I don't know, I think it's just a bit of like… I think it works, but I think it would be interesting to see why she has, like, such a cruel attitude to begin with. Because I think that's, like, the one, like… the one thing that's sort of different in the play. Like if you imagine at Shakespeare's time, I don't think—like, the general assumption is that men are the brave ones, and then women are seen as the meeker ones. I think Lady Macbeth just goes so against the grain of what

would have been expected to have been written at that time. So I think it would have been kind of interesting… like we talked about a few of the things, like did she have a child before that died or whatever, so I think it would have been interesting to see why she starts there. Otherwise, yeah, you can see in the play how she changes, why she changes. And it's quite interesting because she's always—she's the more cool [as in cold] one, but it ends up breaking her first. I think that's really interesting.

INT: Thanks.

S2: Yeah, I think, uh… there's not really enough of her in the play. Because in the beginning it's kind of, she's the one who motivates Macbeth into killing Duncan, and that's like, she doesn't have much more of a role than that. So I think it would be interesting if her character was like developed more, and sort of… like he said, more about what makes her cruel, in the beginning. But I thought it was quite, uh, interesting seeing how, uh… she—like when she says that she wouldn't have been able to kill Duncan because he resembled her father, then that's kind of letting us into her, like, weaker side. Which I think is quite interesting as well.

INT: Nice. So, if only in hints. Brilliant. So, then—and you're welcome to write on this or anything, or equally you could just talk about it. But I will give you both this. Feel free to scoot if you want to look at it. Then we'll just spend 5 minutes. I would like to hear if you had to plan this, what would you be thinking as you start to break it down?

[4:57]

[pause]

S1: I think probably the very first thing I'd do is, like, before we even look at the question, I'd probably just read the passage and just think about what's going on. So to just read this, and kind of get my bearings as to where this is in the play. And then just read through it again.

S2: Yeah. And when you read through it, you can think about, were there any of those recurring motifs, like the motif of blood. Like see if that shows up at any point.

[pause]

S1: Then I think we should jump back into the question. It says Lady Macbeth is a powerful character. So I'd be thinking of, like, times that Lady Macbeth has been the most powerful person on stage, and kind of relate if there's anything, like… so for example, Lady Macbeth talks a lot about like deception and false appearances. So just think of, like, false appearances, Lady Macbeth, in the play somewhere. And then if I can think of any, like, quotes at the same time I could, like, link somewhere in here as well.

[pause]

S2: One thing I've noticed is that, um, earlier on in the play, Lady Macbeth has said, um, what was it… 'Look like the innocent flower but be the serpent under it.'

And I can see that here Macbeth is saying, 'Make our faces vizards to our hearts.' Uh, which is kind of like he's kind of taking on her advice.

S1: Yeah. So you could—would you put that as, like, Lady Macbeth influences others? Or like she gives it up? Cause it's kind of like the other way around in terms of who's instructing whom. So like Macbeth's gotten the idea from Lady Macbeth. So I might put that as someone influences the thoughts—like, how others think.

S2: Yeah.

S1: That, and then…

[long pause]

INT: Equally, if there are things that are not aligning, or like not making sense, feel free to say that.

S1: Yeah. I think another one that could go would be like, 'be innocent of the knowledge,' and link that to how, like… 1.7 when they have a discussion where Macbeth is, um, like, I don't want to kill him, and I would do… it's kind of similar, but it's kind of like how Macbeth is drifting away from Lady Macbeth, and Lady Macbeth… wait. I'd change the first one, because this one is now saying like Lady Macbeth has less influence over Macbeth. And in the first one I could say maybe like her power decreases after Duncan's murder, or something like that.

S2: Macbeth calls Lady Macbeth 'dearest chuck,' which is like kind of diminishing, and like, um… a bit patronising.

S1: Yeah.

S2: So I guess it kind of shows like that, um, she doesn't hold as much, like, power over him. By now.

S1: Yeah. Cool.

[pause]

S1: I'm not sure if it's really linked to power, but obviously this whole conversation is like basically Lady Macbeth trying to—at least it starts off as Lady Macbeth trying to like comfort and console Macbeth. Even though maybe like her power's diminished, or they've like drifted far apart, Lady Macbeth is like still there. As someone who can support Macbeth. It's not like they're completed isolated. So I actually feel like 'O full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife'—and then probably life, pfff, uh, 2.2 maybe where he's freaking out over the blood on his hands, I'd do like, 'a little water clears us of this deed.' Might be the two quotes I'd do, in terms of like Lady Macbeth supporting Macbeth.

[pause]

INT: This has been brilliant. Any final thoughts? It's okay if not.

S1: There are just like a few things I see here. Like. It says, 'come seeling night.' I'm just thinking of like, how they… there's the motif of darkness there. There's

‘bloody and invisible hand,’ you’ve got blood there, potentially. ‘Which keeps me pale.’ So, if you think about Lady Macbeth and ‘pale,’ it could link to where she’s like, ‘my hands are of your colour, but I shame to wear a heart so white,’ so there’s maybe that. These are just little… Like these probably wouldn’t be paragraph topics, but it’s just things that I notice, that I think link to Lady Macbeth, somehow, outside of this extract.

S2: So. Macbeth starts talking about, like, Hecate and things. And earlier on, Lady Macbeth was kind of talking to the spirits, and kind of telling them to make her purely evil. So it’s like Macbeth has kind of inherited some of that, like, demonic, witchy…

S1: Yeah. It’s like the power has been transferred, almost.

INT: Lovely. Alright, we will stop there.

4.1B – First Interview, Pair B – S3 and S4

Pair B:

S3 = Student 3: Y10, my English set, predicted 9 for English Literature GCSE

S4 = Student 4: Y10, my English set, predicted 8 for English Literature GCSE

INT = Interviewer

INT: First question. You can answer this in any order, and you can go back and forth if you have a new thought or something. First question is: in general, in your opinion, what makes you connect with stories or with characters?

S3: I think if I'm, like, if it's like a relatable thing. Like a story about someone who's like a teenager… and if it was like Macbeth, like an old thing in like, 1100, you need… for a story to be good, and like easy to read… not easy to read, but like nice to read, and something you'd like, it doesn't have to be something you connect to necessarily. Because a lot of the time you use reading as, like, an escape from reality. So it doesn't need to be connected to you, because that kind of brings it back. Yeah.

INT: Thanks. That totally makes sense. S4, your opinion?

S4: I think—I don't like watching the movies in class. Because then, within a production, it gives a very concrete view of what Lady Macbeth or another character does. I like reading the script and thinking what Lady Macbeth or another character would be, in your own head.

INT: So getting to kind of control it yourself is something that you prefer for connecting.

[Pause in which S4 presumably nods.]

INT: Brilliant. Any other thoughts on what makes you connect with stories or with characters in general?

S3: Also if it's something about, like, a personal interest, or something that you like, like if you're a person who likes war movies and stuff, you might connect with things like Macbeth more. If you're a person who likes different kinds of things, you might not connect with it as much.

INT: That makes sense. Okay. You guys have already kind of answered this, but you might have more thoughts about this – do you feel you've connected with Macbeth as a play, why or why not?

S3: I think… I'm not really sure what you mean by connected.

INT: It could mean a bunch of different things.

S3: Well. If you mean do we like it, well, I like it quite a lot. But I think it's quite, um, connected, like you can see parallels of, like, Macbeth in other stories. Like early on when we were doing Macbeth, we connected it to the Lion King and stuff. Which was a way to make it more, like, accessible.

INT: Thanks. S4? Have you connected with Macbeth as a play?

S4: Um. Well. Why did we skip some scenes?

INT: [laughs] Um. Well. Because they were not – I didn't think that they were super interesting scenes or that they were scenes that would be useful to you guys.

S4: I just wanted to see those scenes sometime.

INT: So… skipping some scenes disconnected you from it, is that what you're saying?

S4: Yeah.

INT: Okay. That's valid. Anything you guys want to add about reasons that you do feel connected to it, or that you feel disconnected from it?

S3: I think because it's such a, like… the way that they—the way the play's written, since it's so long ago and it, like, Shakespeare and it's quite foreign-

S4: Confusing.

S3: Yeah, it's a bit confusing. So I think when you, like, can understand things it makes you feel, like, better. Because it's like you actually had to work to understand it.

INT: It's almost like you've unlocked it.

S3: Yeah.

S4: But in the books—doesn't our book give definitions on the side to help explain?

S3: Yeah. Those are quite helpful. I think the books help.

INT: Okay. Thanks. Final question, do you feel you've connected with Lady Macbeth as a character, and why or why not?

S4: I think we did quite a lot of lessons on Lady—

S3: We did do quite a lot of lessons on Lady Macbeth. I think the way that she connected is like, sort of—you know how sometimes you have, like, the angel and the devil? Yeah, she's like the devil. Not that she's, like, a horrible person, but especially in the start—well, she kind of is. But in the start, she's like telling Macbeth things—it's like your inner monologue, but like a bad inner monologue. Also I think it connects because she's like, um—this might be a bit of a wild comparison. But you know how in the Cold War, there was like Russia, and then there was like the hand, like the puppet state? It was kind of like that. It was like Lady Macbeth is controlling everything, from behind the scenes.

INT: I know exactly what you mean. Thanks. S4? You're allowed to disagree. Have you connected to Lady Macbeth?

S4: Yeah, I feel connected to her cause I understand her a lot more now. Because we did so many lessons on her, I get how she's thinking. But I think I want to know how she developed a little bit more.

S3: Yeah. Because she kind of suddenly goes—she starts in this position of power, and suddenly drops off. Also, something I think makes us less connected to her, is like the fact that—her experience of life is just, like, so different to ours. Like, being a woman, in the nobility, in like… ages ago. It's quite different to us, so it becomes quite disconnected from us.

INT: Yeah.

S4: Do you have any way to look at the book as a whole, so then you can see the whole thing? Instead of just, like, specific quotes? Or not?

INT: Um, I know what you mean. It's a really good question. Um, when we have time to, that's something that I like doing, like when we did that chart, I feel like people responded to that really well. Obviously the exam means that we do have to look at quotes to some extent, but part of why I'm doing this project is to kind of hear what people value about looking at Macbeth and what people don't.

S3: I feel like what we do for the exam makes us less connected to characters in general, like, not just Lady Macbeth. It's that, since it's like quote-centric, and like language and structure, you don't get like an overall—you don't think of like an overall arc. She's more like—

S4: It's because you compare-

S3: You compare 2 quotes in a paragraph. You go from like this to this, you don't see what—anything about how she like, how that arc develops, you don't get to see that because we focus on individual quotes. Yeah.

INT: Makes a lot of sense. This is all so useful, thank you. Okay. I have for you guys an extract question. If you can, as much as possible, say what you're thinking out loud—how would you approach this, what would you be thinking about if you were planning. I'm going to set a 5-minute timer so that I don't keep you longer than necessary, and I'm just interested in what you'd be thinking.

[pause]

S4: I'd look at the question first.

S3: Yeah. I'd look at the question.

S4: And then I'd think of any quotes that, like, relate to the question.

S3: Yeah. I think the fact that they've worded it "the extent to which" means you have to make—it has to be comparative… um, or you think of other words, other ways to describe it. It could powerful in like having a lot of power, like being a queen is more powerful than being, like the wife of a thane. Being a queen would be powerful. But there's also powerful in their marriage, like how at the start Lady Macbeth is more powerful than Macbeth in their dialogue.

S4: You'd also see, like, where in the story it is. So how much power she has in this part sort of.

S3: Yeah. This is…

S4: "Oh full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife."

S3: This is—I think this is at the beginning of—

S4: Oh, okay.

S3: The knowledge of… is this after he kills—I think after he sent the murderers to kill Banquo.

S4: I don't think he's dead yet.

S3: We could think, if we're gonna look at the extract, we could think what are good bits. I think this is a good one. "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck." Because I think earlier in the play, in Act 1… I can't remember. He calls Lady Macbeth, like, "dearest partner of greatness."

S4: Yeah.

S3: So I think you could compare that. [pause] This is kind of a witch thing…

S4: Isn't Hecate the witch god?

S3: Yeah. I think she's in Act 4 somewhere. So you could compare…

S4: "The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hum"

S3: Who is this talking about? Is this calling him a shard-borne beetle, maybe drowsy…

S4: Hm.

S3: I'm not sure. I think… we could just look at things that, maybe…

S4: Like…

S3: Recur throughout Macbeth…

S4: Like this… maybe.

S3: Hm. This might be like a stretch, but "be bright and jovial" is kind of a command. Like to his character. But I'm not sure if we can use that.

[long pause]

S4: We just have to memorise all the other quotes?

S3: I think so. Yeah.

S4: Ugh.

S3: I don't think it's that… Like it can't be that hard.

S4: Yeah.

[long pause]

S3: "Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond which keeps me pale…"

S4: "Makes wing…" Wait, that's not the raven here though.

[long pause]

S3: Uhhh.

[pause]

INT: Do you agree with the question?

S3: Well. What—how can you agree with the question? It's "the extent to which."

INT: Yeah. So what extent? What do you think?

S3: I think it depends.

S4: Yeah, I think it's a very closed question.

S3: It changes throughout the play.

S4: Yeah. In different paragraphs could we do like different stages?

S3: Yeah, we could have that as like an arc. Um. Uh… if it's all about Lady Macbeth, there has to be quotes. I don't see anything, really, about power.

S4: Oh, there.

S3: When it's like, "be innocent of the knowledge dearest chuck," and like, in general, it could be like, even though she's a queen—it's about different meanings of the word power. [pause] What does "peal" mean?

INT: Uh… a peal is like the peal of a bell, usually.

S4: Dear wife, and then dearest chuck.

S3: Yeah. You could compare the two.

S4: Yeah. [long pause] We could compare "my lord" with "dearest chuck."

S3: Yeah. Versus, like, earlier in the play, "dearest partner of greatness," and, like… I'm not sure what Lady Macbeth would say.

[pause]

INT: Alright. Thank you guys so much.

4.1C – First Interview, Pair C – S5 and S6

Pair C:

S5 = Student 5: Y10, my English set, predicted 8 for English Literature GCSE

S6 = Student 6: Y10, my English set, predicted 8 for English Literature GCSE

INT = Interviewer

INT: Okay. First question. In general, in your opinion, what makes you connect with stories or with characters?

S5: Um. I mean. If the main character or any one of the characters is either—I can relate to them personally, or if—if the world is like somewhere where I would want to live, like kind of escapism. Either like relatability, or liking the setting. Yeah.

S6: I think for me, if I can relate to the characters—like normally around my age, and if they have—if they have similar hobbies that I like doing or something, I'll have like an emotional connection.

INT: Nice. Um. So in other words, to connect to stories you want a character that you can really connect to. Yeah? Cool. That makes sense. Um, so, follow-up question. Do you feel that you've connected with Macbeth as a play, and why or why not?

S5: I feel like I haven't really connected to any of the characters. But the kind of setting, and like premises of the play, and then like the themes of the play are interesting, and I've kind of connected more to that. So even though I don't really

relate to any of the characters, or I'm not super interested in any of them, um, it's, like, interesting as a whole.

INT: Could you give an example of something that you do find interesting?

S5: So like how the context of history comes into the play, so like reading—while it's an interesting story, it would also reflect what's going on at the time, which is interesting.

INT: Nice. S6?

S6: For me, I haven't really connected with any of the characters we meet, like Macbeth, or the themes, but I think it's quite interesting thing to learn as a whole. Just to get like an insight of the things happening at the time.

INT: Do you have a sense of why you haven't connected to the characters?

S6: Um. I don't like things associated with murder or anything, that's probably why I haven't connected to the characters. Um, I think also the themes that—they're quite interesting to analyse them, I know you have the themes under the surface that you have to work out, you can't just like look at them and like see them immediately.

INT: Nice. Okay. And then, third question. Do you feel you've connected with Lady Macbeth as a character, and why or why not?

S5: I feel like, not really. And a factor of that is obviously that she is doing a lot of stuff that I would never do. And that the start of her character, even before she

done a lot of like the evil stuff, is not really relatable to where I am right now, or who I will be. But—and also the fact that she doesn't really talk, like, in a modern way, obviously because the play is so old. Yeah. So like, it kind of makes her hard to connect to, if you don't understand some of what she's saying as well as, um. Yeah.

INT: Fair enough. S6?

S6: I agree with S5. Though I think it's relatable in the sense that after she did something bad, she changed in herself and she felt guilty. She felt guilty afterwards. It shows that she felt remorse for what she'd done. And the changing, which is kind of… I kind of relate to that. Not that I'd do evil stuff, but I'm just changing in general to be a better person.

INT: Okay. So you like one aspect of her that's more relatable. Okay. Any other thoughts that you've not gotten to share about this?

S5: Not really.

S6: I think it would be quite nice to see more scenes with her in. But you can't do… she's quite a mysterious character, in that you don't really get to see her. She's just off-stage. That's the only thing I would say.

S5: I feel like in the plays that we've watched, she was kind of portrayed in a very similar way. So like, the Soairse Ronan one, or like the other one—one that I watched, they're all very like similar portrayals of Lady Macbeth, so maybe if there

was like a different… or at least, some parts a different portrayal of her, then I feel like that could—that would help. If I could get a different perspective.

INT: Nice. Okay. Well, I look forward to seeing what you guys think of what we do next week. But I have one final thing now. So. If I were to give you this extract question—I'll set a five-minute timer so I don't keep you too long, and if you could talk out loud to each other, ideally, about what you'd be thinking about if you were planning this.

[pause]

S6: Okay. First I'm reading the question. I'd be using your technique, so exploding the question, finding the key words in the actual question.

S5: Yeah. So I'd be thinking, how does Lady Macbeth like become powerful, and what she does. And also, from what you said, looking at where they start and end the extract, they started it there and ended it there, so why they did that.

S6: Yeah. I think, um, another aspect of the question is like thinking of scenes that you already know connected to the question, or answering the question.

[pause]

S5: And then the first thing that comes to mind is that Macbeth is having, like—is speaking in long, like, speeches and paragraphs. And Lady Macbeth is just saying, like, really short replies. Um.

[pause]

S5: And also she's ordering him around.

S6: Yeah. And also Macbeth is speaking in a rhym-ey tone, like "still" and "ill." Which shows that he's getting evil, like the witches.

[pause]

S6: There's also a good quote here. "O full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife." Which is one of the most important, uh, quotes in the play.

[pause]

S6: I'd find some interesting—I'd find some interesting quotes or any vocabulary that Shakespeare has purposefully used which, um, which would be good for analysis.

S5: Yeah. And I feel like at the start of the extract, she's more in powerful—more, like, in power, and a more powerful character, like ordering him around. But since she doesn't know that Macbeth, uh, had like Banquo, uh, and his son—ordered them to be murdered—uh, and then she asks him what's to be done, and he says, "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck." Uh, that's a contrast to earlier on, when she was more powerful, and he addressed her as a more equal position. Like, "dearest partner of greatness." And now it's "dearest chuck." And where she was planning—she was planning the murders, now he is.

[pause]

S5: And now he's telling her that they should make their faces "vizards to our hearts, disguising what they are." Whereas, that's basically repeating what she said earlier, where she said, "false face must…"

S6: "False face must hide what the heart does know," or something.

S5: Yeah.

S6: It's false appearances.

S5: Yeah. And link that to like to themes of like, false appearances and equivocation and, um, how the power dynamic has changed from Lady Macbeth to Macbeth. It has reversed.

INT: Any final thoughts? Alright. Thank you guys so much.

4.1D – First Interview, Pair D – S7 and S8

Pair D:

S7 = Student 5: Y10, my English set, predicted 8 for English Literature GCSE

S8 = Student 6: Y10, my English set, predicted 8 for English Literature GCSE

INT = Interviewer

INT: So, first question. In general, in your opinion, what makes you connect with stories or characters?

S7: I think probably the, like—the emotional response you get out of certain actions that characters do, which I feel like sometimes you sort of recognise. Like you might—like that character, they've done, like maybe they were angry at someone, and maybe if like I was in a similar situation, I'd do something similar. Or something not similar.

INT: Okay, yeah. So that kind of being able to put yourself in their shoes.

S7: Yeah.

INT: Because of the emotions. I like that. S8?

S8: What was the question?

INT: The question was what makes you connect with stories or characters, in your opinion?

S8: Uh, maybe how like creative they are, and how much they branch from what usually happens and what could have happened.

INT: Okay. So when they do, like, unexpected things, or when they have layers?

S8: Yeah.

INT: Nice. Okay. Follow-up to that. Do you feel you've connected with Macbeth as a play, and why or why not?

S8: Yeah. I feel like I connected because we got to do the acting out-

S7: Yeah, the acting in class was really good.

S8: Especially when certain people got permanent roles.

S7: Yeah.

S8: You really connected with those characters.

S7: Like especially when [classmate] was Lady Macbeth.

S8: And me as Macduff.

S7: I had a permanent role as Duncan.

S8: Yeah.

INT: Okay. So getting to actually getting to like put people in those roles and embody them.

S7: Yeah.

INT: Okay. So you liked that in the teaching of the play. Anything else about the play and whether you've connected with it, or not?

S8: Well, as the play goes, it seems like the actions are reasonable considering the characters. But you get to know the characters well, so whatever they do feels incredibly reasonable, and what they would actually do.

INT: Thanks. S7?

S7: I mean—I think I'm just going to have to agree with that, really. I have kind of a similar kind of thing. I mean obviously, like—I suppose when we say "reasonable," not like, I'm not really saying like, "oh yeah that's a reasonable thing—" or like,

“oh yeah, I’m gonna kill my best friend,” that doesn’t seem reasonable to me. But like, obviously, in the context of that time there would have been—it would have made a bit more sense. Yeah.

INT: Okay. Fair enough. And then last question. Do you feel you’ve connected specifically with Lady Macbeth as a character, and why or why not?

S7: I think mostly it’s been—really mostly been just me feeling sorry for Macbeth, like sort of having to deal with like, sort of the situation where—like she’s quite a manipulative character. Like, mostly. I just feel like, I just kind of feel sorry for Macbeth in the situation. And I kind of feel like maybe he wouldn’t have turned out like—like you know you’ve got the idea of Macbeth being kind of like corrupted, and slowly going wrong. But that wouldn’t have turned out as much if it weren’t for Lady Macbeth doing her thing.

INT: Fair enough. S8?

S8: I personally found her quite annoying, especially when [classmate] was playing her. Because, uh, she just—when we’re first introduced to her, she has this entire monologue about basically how evil she is. Uh, which comes on very strong. And then she says after the murder, oh it’ll be fine. And then she suffers the repercussions. So I feel like she very much deserved those.

INT: Okay. So we’re not necessarily Lady Macbeth fans. That is—

S7: I feel like—I'm assuming that that was kind of the role intended of what Lady Macbeth was meant to be as a character at the time. So I feel like that is—I'd say she's a well-written character, but I don't think that necessarily means that I like her as a character.

INT: Yeah. Absolutely. Fair enough. Any other thoughts that you've not gotten to express on Lady Macbeth and connecting to her or not connecting to her?

S7: No.

S8: Nope.

INT: Fair enough. So, I'm now going to give you an extract question. I'll set a five minute timer so that I don't keep you too long. And I'd ask you to just talk out loud, like to each other, about what you'd be thinking if you were planning this for an essay.

S7: Can we annotate it?

INT: Sure, I have a pen.

S7: It just works better if we can annotate it.

INT: You can, but you are not obligated to. Alright. Here you go.

S7: I feel like I remember this scene.

S8: Yeah.

S7: Act 3, scene…

S8: Just before the banquet.

S7: Yeah.

S8: There. That's a key quote.

INT: What's a key quote?

S8: "Vizards to our hearts."

S7: I found, um, animal imagery here. Scorpions.

S8: Yup. That's another key quote. "Full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife."

S7: That could, like—maybe the scorpions represent something?

S8: Yeah. Like how tangled their mind is.

S7: Yeah.

S8: Uh, we could make a loose point here, "be bright."

S7: Yeah, yeah.

S8: Because of light imagery.

S7: You could also mention—it mentions Hecate. That's a link to the witches.

S8: Yeah.

[pause]

S8: Uh, "with thy bloody and invisible hand," murder imagery.

S7: Mm-hm. I assume the context is like after the murder.

S8: Yeah.

S7: It might be a bit of stretch, but it does mention wood. That could connect to later on. But that's a bit of a, that's a bit too much of a stretch.

[pause]

S7: Ooh. Look at all the rhyming here, you've got "drowse" and "rouse" and you've got these. Cause it's kind of like how the witches speak.

S8: Yeah.

S7: So-

S8: Could it be with this?

S7: "Rouse," yeah, goes with "drowse" I think.

S8: There's a mention of the witches. And also there's like "agents," that links to later in the play, about—no, previous "instruments of darkness."

[pause]

S7: And then you've got, like—you've got, Macbeth's kind of like paranoid.

INT: Have you guys considered the question?

S8: Oh.

S7: Good point, right. "Lady Macbeth as a powerful character."

S8: Um.

S7: Hmm.

[pause]

S8: That—the um, false appearances quote, that links back to when Lady Macbeth kept talking about false appearances.

S7: Yeah. What—what quote do you reckon we could draw out of that? Maybe that one about-

S8: Yeah, “look like the innocent flower but be the serpent under it.”

[pause]

S7: I think it’s interesting how—they’ve got an extract question talking about Lady Macbeth, and yet they haven’t actually got a lot of dialogue from Lady Macbeth.

S8: Yeah, so it’s probably like Macbeth’s reaction to Lady Macbeth.

S7: Yeah, and like our interpretation of how she is.

S8: Which means that you could go with this.

S7: Yeah.

S8: And that. She’s the one who caused that paranoia.

S7: Yeah. And yet he’s also still looking to her to solve it. There’s kind of a bit—there’s a power aspect in that. He’s like seeing her as, like—he’s sort of seeing her as the all-powerful.

S8: We could also talk about, this is right before Lady Macbeth's high point during the banquet, because she was in almost full control of Macbeth there.

[pause]

S8: Doesn't she mention in her first monologue something about siding with Hecate?

S7: She was—she mentions siding with the devil, that's kind of linked. Yeah.

S8: Yeah, because witches were thought to be possessed by the devil.

[pause]

S8: And the blood imagery could go later, or with any—"all great Neptune's oceans wash the blood from my hand." Or "out damn spot."

S7: Yeah. I was thinking "out damn spot," cause it mentions—at least with one interpretation, like hallucinating or going crazy. That could kind of link to that in that way.

INT: So, final question, because I don't want to keep you. It says "explore the extent to which." So you guys—you guys just agree?

S7: I'd say yeah—to a very, to a large extent.

S8: It depends on—well, because the majority, she's powerful, but then she leaves—we don't see her for a while. Then she comes back—

S7: Yeah, at the end it's all kind of gotten worse.

INT: Okay. Thank you very—

S8: Ooh wait, can I make one more point? One thing that's relevant to what you said before. I think maybe another lesson on historical context, because I know that something that—I can't find historical context most-- there isn't much to-- Just a lesson to go back to maybe motifs, and some historical context.

INT: Yeah. For sure, we can go over that at some point. Thank you so much, both of you.

4.2A – Second Interview, Pair A – S1 and S2

Pair A:

S1 = Student 1: Y10, my English set, predicted 9 for English Literature GCSE

S2 = Student 2: Y10, my English set, predicted 9 for English Literature GCSE

INT = Interviewer

INT: In general, in your opinion, what makes you connect with stories or characters?

S1: Well I think with stories, something has to captivate you in the story. So that could either be in terms of like relatability, like a character your age or something like that, you might relate to the character more. But it doesn't necessarily have to be that. I think with other stories it's like, it's entertaining. That really helps. Like,

when there's like a certain level of depth to it, where it's not just, okay, this happens and that happens. But it's, like, running themes throughout it. I think that some of my favourite books are just ones that like have more than just a basic plot, a few things happen, here are a few characters, this guy's tall, this guy's short, these people don't like the other… it's just deeper, I think having more… like I really enjoy reading into books, and I think that's something that like really helps you connect with stories, having like a deeper sense of meaning to it.

INT: Thanks. Makes sense.

S2: If you've got an atmosphere with, like, the setting, the relationships between the characters, then it's a lot easier to know what's going on in the book, or in the story. And then you can also put yourself into the book as well.

INT: Okay, thank you. I'll start with S2 this time. Uh, do you feel like you've connected with *Macbeth* as a play in general, and do you feel like the series of lessons we did had any impact on that, or no?

S2: Um. Well, definitely analysing the text has helped me understand it more. Cause it's very, like, complicated language. So breaking it down into smaller parts makes it a lot easier to understand. Um.

INT: Have you connected with it in general?

S2: [pause] I think I have. [hesitant pause]

INT: I'll let you ponder. S1?

S1: I think I haven't looked at *Macbeth* at all for a few weeks now. I think some bits, like with most stories, like some bits are a bit boring, a bit dry and so on. But I think some of the quotes really stick in your head a lot more than with any book. There's just a lot of iconic quotes, because it is a play. And also I think going through it and analysis the text, while it might be a bit tedious. It kind of helps to uncover the themes. It might seem obvious, but you now see what they're used for and how they can change throughout the piece. Which is interesting. And with the additional lessons we did, it was—it was just fun. After having sat through loads of analysis, just to be able to think about, okay, if I was writing this, what would I do. And it was interesting to see how different people interpreted Lady Macbeth, and how people tried to weave some of the themes in, as if it was written by Shakespeare. I just thought that was really just a nice change of pace. And interesting to see how everyone felt about the same character, that we're all reading the exact same text about.

INT: Okay. Anything you want to add about connecting with *Macbeth*? As a play?

S2: Um. Well. I think it was quite interesting to see how you could use all the themes that we've seen throughout, like, um, darkness imagery, and blood, and using that in our, um, Lady Macbeth monologue, because it kind of makes you think, what's something new that you can do using these themes, that you haven't already seen in the play.

INT: Okay. And then, last official question. Do you feel you've connected with Lady Macbeth specifically as a character, why or why not? And do you feel like that creative writing series of lessons had any impact on that?

S1: Um, so, it's kind of similar to last time, how it's still a very interesting character because we don't know about her origins. And we still don't know about her origins, we didn't, like, find any secret text or anything. But it was just interesting to see how—what everyone thought of Lady Macbeth and how they interpreted her, and how they would have written it. I'm not sure I gained much, like, new understanding. But I just think about Lady Macbeth much more as a character now, like I think of her more as a character from a story, as opposed to a point to analyse or something. And I—you just think—because if you're doing something for the point, basically for the sole sake of analysing it in an exam, in the end, it can be quite easy to just think of the story as evidence for, you know, here's some stuff, here's points I can make. And so I think doing the creative writing made me think a lot more about the people as actual characters, and that's something that might be difficult, especially when it's really not relatable—written over 300 years ago, about something over like 500 years ago. So sometimes it's quite easy to lose track of the fact that these are supposed to be characters in a story. And so I think doing that creative writing made me think a lot more about how I would read Lady Macbeth as a character, and also it was really nice to see how other people viewed her character.

S2: At the time of the last interview, I think I just kind of saw her as there to give Macbeth the motivation, but I thought she didn't really have a lot of character herself. But then going back and seeing all of her different monologues, and all of the parts that she was in, I think I can see more how she was a character, and how she had her own, um… her own kind of goals and motivations, and how she wasn't just written in there to kind of, um… not sure what the word is.

S1: Like challenge Macbeth?

S2: Yeah.

INT: That very much makes sense. Alright. Anything—any reactions or thoughts about that series of lessons that you want to share that you haven't gotten to share yet?

S1: I think that when we went over the 5 that you had chosen, I think it was really interesting to see, kind of, how much everyone had—a lot of people were very much invested in it, and a lot of people were very strong in their views about why they liked one thing and why they didn't like another. And there'd be a lot of back and forth between different people about why they thought this was good, no it's bad, or it's good because of this reason. And I thought it was just really interesting to see how everyone had built up a pretty strong image of the character in their mind throughout the course of studying it. And they, they would like defend their view of the character when faced with these different interpretations of it.

INT: That's great. S2, any final thoughts?

S2: Um. Well there were some—some of the writings did get a lot more of the votes than other ones, but there were still quite a wide variety of how people voted for these different, um, pastiches. But, yeah, I think it's interesting how people have their own view of the character, and how they can relate to it through these different pieces of writing.

INT: Nice. Alright. Final thing, just like last time, I'm going to give you guys an extract question. It's the same question as last time, but a different extract. I'll give you 5 minutes to basically think out loud, talk through what you would be thinking if you were starting to plan this with each other. I won't interrupt you.

[8:00]

[pause]

S1: Well, for like power, for a powerful character, I'm thinking about significance, control, like who's in control, Lady Macbeth manipulating Macbeth… in the scene, it could be whether she's taking charge or not. So a few things, before even reading the scene, that I'm thinking about.

[pause]

S2: In this scene, we see Macbeth is being a bit, um, cowardly. And Lady Macbeth is there to kind of bring him to his senses. So… I think that shows that she has some power over him, that she's trying to calm him down.

[pause]

S1: Currently, so a few things… 'My hands are of your colour, but I shame to wear a heart so white.' So she's saying, she's also got blood on her hands, but she's not as cowardly as Macbeth. And then there's also 'tis the eye of childhood that fears a painted devil.' So, she's calling him childish. So these are two examples of her, like, leveraging her influence and power over Macbeth and basically calling him out on his cowardice.

S2: And, I guess it's more related to kind of plot, but the fact that she takes the daggers, and she's the one to put them next to the, um, bodyguards, shows how she's, um, yeah, she's sharing his guilt, and she's not afraid to get involved in the murder.

[pause]

S1: And then comparing outside. There'd be like, the 'cat in the adage,' for example, I might do that with, like, 'tis the eye of childhood,' as like calling him a scaredy-cat, or like as scared as a child. That's one comparison I'd probably do.

[long pause]

S1: There's 'a little water clears us of this deed' at the end. Like, we've mentioned there's a reason that they start and end the extracts where they start and end them. So I'd probably do something with that. And there's, there's some… I can't remember the quote, but something like, Lady Macbeth's, like her later reaction to having the blood on her hands. Like 'out, damn spot' where she's much more concerned about this blood than she is here. So I could do maybe how, uh,

something to do with like how her power changes throughout the play, I would probably compare and contrast those two things.

[pause]

S2: You could say how, uh, the opposite of her being a powerful character. Where Macbeth is actually influencing her. Because here he says, 'Will all great Neptune's oceans wash this blood clean from my hand.' And, uh, I think it's the last act where Lady Macbeth says, uh, 'all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.' So that shows how Macbeth is influencing her, maybe as much as she's influencing him.

[pause]

INT: Lovely. Any final thoughts you want to add?

S1: Uh, not really. Those are the points I'd start with, and then, I'm not sure where I'd go from there, but…

INT: Fair enough. That's plenty. S2, anything you want to add?

S2: No… I don't think there's anything.

INT: Alright. We'll end there.

4.2B – Second Interview, Pair B – S3 and S4

Pair B:

S3 = Student 3: Y10, my English set, predicted 9 for English Literature GCSE

S4 = Student 4: Y10, my English set, predicted 8 for English Literature GCSE

INT = Interviewer

INT: It's going to be the same questions as last time because I'm interested to see whether your answers have changed, and then there will be one slightly different question. So. What makes you connect with stories or characters, in your opinion?

S3: Okay, I'll start. I think one thing is like relatability, if you can see your self in their image—like often teenage stories, stuff like that. That makes me connect, cause you sort of have those experiences, even if there's slight differences. Uh, but also it doesn't have to be exactly the same, like, person, but you can have the same character. Like, if you think of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and what they're like as a person, and if you're someone like that. Like if you're like that, I guess you could connect to them.

INT: Fair. S4, what makes you connect with stories or characters?

S4: When I actually fully understand the story. And I understand like all the interpretations. As in, like, how different characters can be viewed.

INT: Nice. So. Do you feel you've connected with Macbeth as a play, and do you feel like what we did last week affected that at all? It's okay if the answer's no.

S4: I think yes, because I liked how we added to the world of Macbeth with our own writing. That was quite interesting because we got to see what could be

happening behind the scenes and get a better understanding of what's going on in the play.

S3: I agree. I think it gives you a more full picture of, like, how the characters are. And, like, obviously the thing I wrote and the thing S4 wrote weren't the same, you can see like different interpretations. Um, yeah.

INT: Fair enough. Okay. Do you feel you've connected with Lady Macbeth as a character, why or why not?

S4: Now that we've done the writing, I think I connect a lot more. Because before we didn't see her that much in Act 4. Now I can kind of see what's going on in her head, before the like big dip in her power shift, which I didn't really understand before doing that.

S3: I think, I'm not sure I necessarily connected, um, because it's like, she's a very weird person. And I don't think I know anyone who's particularly like that. But I don't think that's necessarily—I don't think that—S4, don't make a face, I was addressing INT. I think… now I've forgotten. What did I last say?

INT: You were saying that she's a bit of a weird character, but…

S3: Oh yeah. It's not necessarily a bad thing. Because you can like understand—you can not fully understand someone, but still get how they develop.

INT: Okay. So do you feel like what we did last week kind of affected your view of her or your feelings about her character?

S3: I think it depends on the way the thing was written. Like some people made her like not… not great. While some people made me feel like more sorry for her and stuff. So I think depends on, like, the thing that we wrote. If that makes sense.

INT: Yeah. Totally. Okay, so. Last thing. Unless there's anything you want to add about your thoughts?

S4: Watching the, um, movies helped a lot. Like they were completely contrasting things in the movies, and that was really interesting to see.

INT: What did you like about it?

S4: Well, how in some of them she was, like, really soft kind of. And then in the other interpretation she was a bit more aggressive. That's like really contrasting. Yeah.

S3: I think—I agree that the movies, like the different versions of the play definitely helped understand, like, the whole picture. Because, obviously the way that Shakespeare isn't—like, we wouldn't normally see someone talk that way. And so, like, it can have more impact with, like, interpretations.

INT: Okay. Thanks. Last thing, just like last time, I'm going to give you an extract question and ask you to kind of say your thinking out loud, what you'd be thinking if you were planning this essay. I'll set a 5-minute timer so I don't keep you too long, and I won't interrupt you. Make sense?

S3: Yeah.

INT: Alright. Here you go. It's the same question but a different extract.

S3: "Lady Macbeth as a powerful character." So, I think… I think, if you think of Lady Macbeth, and like if she's connected to power, I think you can think about how her power, like, drops throughout the play.

S4: Yeah.

S3: Until she, you know, kills herself. Yeah. So we could—

S4: So where in the play is this?

S3: This is just after the murder. Look at… oh, this stuff is like, her being kind of condescending towards Macbeth and ignoring him. Whereas later you can see Macbeth being, like, condescending towards her. With, like, something "dearest chuck." With her being-

S4: So this represents her power over Macbeth. And then, but "worthy thane" shows the respect before that, right?

S3: I think… I'm not sure it's her showing respect. I think it's more, like, her being kind to Macbeth so that, like, he doesn't freak out.

S4: Yeah.

S3: If you know what I mean. Like, Lady Macbeth recognises that he's gone a bit crazy. And so she's just being nice, basically. Um…

[pause]

S3: I think this-

S4: Yeah, I was looking at this quote. The “my hands are of your colour, but I shame to wear a heart so white.”

S3: Yeah, that’s a relevant—one of the ones in the quote bank.

S4: Yeah.

S3: And like it shows… um, “hands are of you colour, but I shame…”

S4: Guilt.

S3: It’s calling Macbeth cowardly, right?

S4: Yeah.

S3: Yeah.

S4: Wait, you—no-

S3: Yeah. “A heart so white.” It’s like, “I *would* shame to wear a heart so white” is like what she’s saying. Um… yeah. Anything else?

[pause]

S3: What could we connect this to?

S4: Um.

S3: Oh, we could connect it to like with the banquet, with the banquet scene where she’s like “are you a man” and stuff like that. Um…

[pause]

S4: Oh, this, this links to the banquet scene, like there's a very similar quote here, like basically to that one… um, "a painting of"… um, I don't remember the exact one, do you know it?

S3: Um, "a painted devil." I'm sure there's something about the devil… it's like, like "the rugged Russian bear," like, I'll take on any animal, but like even the devil would be appalled.

S4: Yeah.

S3: But I'm not sure that's-

S4: Now that I think about it, it's probably not in the banquet scene.

S3: Maybe not. Um. Sometimes… like, she uses the imperative a lot. I guess, maybe we could analyse that. An imperative is like a command. Hmmm… so we've got one, two maybe, kind of…

S4: I don't think I'd get a full paragraph on that, though.

S3: I don't think so either.

INT: Which one?

S3: On like using the imperative here. Um…

[pause]

S3: If you interpreted this as manipulation, then you could get a paragraph out of that probably. Um…

[pause]

S3: Um, yeah. That might be… this is Macbeth…

S4: These two link. “Not all great Neptune’s oceans wash this blood” and then “a little water clears us of this deed.” There’s like a contrast—

S3: You can’t connect two from the same extract-

S4: Are we allowed to?

INT: You could, actually.

S3: Oh.

INT: If it was like one collective bit of evidence.

S3: Oh. But you would have to also compare it to something else, like outside.

INT: Yeah.

S3: I’m not sure-

S4: I think we could do that.

S3: Yeah.

S4: I would do that as a last paragraph.

S3: Yeah. Like different attitudes towards what they did.

S4: Yeah.

S3: What would you connect that to? Maybe, like, Macbeth—oh, Lady Macbeth figuring out that, um—Banquo's, uh…

S4: No, that Macduff's family's killed.

S3: Yeah. That.

INT: Nice. Okay. Anything else that you want to add? Alright. Magnificent. Thank you guys so much. It is 12:38, go, be free.

4.2C – Second Interview, Pair C – S5 and S6

Pair C:

S5 = Student 5: Y10, my English set, predicted 8 for English Literature GCSE

S6 = Student 6: Y10, my English set, predicted 8 for English Literature GCSE

INT = Interviewer

INT: Like I said, some of these will the same as last time. So first question. We'll start with S6. In your opinion, what makes you connect with stories or characters?

S6: I connect with things that happen or people when they're relatable to me. They don't necessarily have to be my age. I think being my age does help, but it's mainly just having similar hobbies, or if they're described in lots of detail, I find that quite relatable to me. Which makes me feel more connected. Uh, yeah.

INT: Fair enough. What makes you connect with stories or characters, S5?

S5: I think that if they're going through a similar stage in life. So, if I'm experiencing like a similar emotion at the time, like if the character's talking about that, then I would relate to them much more.

INT: Fair enough. Okay. Do you connect with Macbeth as a play? And do you feel like what we did, the lessons with the creative writing a week ago, do you feel like that affected whether or not you connect with the play at all? It's fine if the answer is no.

S6: I don't think I connect with any of the characters or the plot. I think—I still do find it interesting. I think to enjoy books, I don't always have to connect to the characters, I just have to enjoy the plot, and I think the plot of Macbeth has lots of ideas and themes which you wouldn't see in many other books, which makes me enjoy it. But I wouldn't say I really connect with the plot.

INT: Fair enough. S5?

S5: I think I connected with Lady Macbeth a bit more. Especially when we did the activity of writing, um, what would she have been going through when she realises her husband was slipping down, like, this bad path, and it's going to go wrong, and she's kind of giving up. Um, I felt like, that part of the play definitely showed a more relatable side to her, even if it was extreme. And the fact that—but it doesn't show much of that in the play. But the fact that we kind of filled in the gaps, I feel like—yeah, that made me connect to Lady Macbeth more.

INT: Yeah, fair enough. Okay, so that was going to be my next question: do you connect with Lady Macbeth, and do you feel like what we did affected that at all? So, you've already said, but S6, did it change anything about connecting with Lady Macbeth?

S6: The Lady Macbeth activity… kind of like what S5 said. I think that having to put yourself in Lady Macbeth's shoes made me connect more with Lady Macbeth. Cause, like he said, we have to like estimate what she was going to say, so I think that kind of made me connect with Lady Macbeth more. I wouldn't say we were too similar though. Yeah.

INT: Fair enough. Okay. So then my last question, before I give you guys another extract question. How did you feel about what we did, the whole little arc with Lady Macbeth, looking at the different interpretations, writing the pastiches, talking about them. Was there anything that you wanted to add about that?

S5: I feel like we could have, like looked at the interpretations of her more, like how views of her character change, or something like that. I know we already looked at—maybe slightly more of them. I'm not sure. But yeah. I think that was really useful. And also, um, and all of the Lady Macbeth versions were good. Yeah.

INT: Okay. You say useful. Useful in what way?

S5: Well, for—I'm more likely to go for like one of the themes associated with Lady Macbeth when I'm writing an essay, because I know it kind of like in more depth, so I'd be more confident in that and, like, analysing stuff about her.

INT: Okay. Great. Any thoughts about those lessons that you want to add, S6?

S6: Um, I think it would be good to create that sort of work for all—just for the most mysterious characters, like Lady Macbeth, and I think looking at the, like, sort of the conspiracy theories about Lady Macbeth has been quite useful. It would allow us to see how other people would think about, like, Lady Macbeth and we could use it in essays. Like how they think she's changing, and how they think Lady Macbeth is someone else.

INT: Nice. Okay, so. Last thing, like before, I'm going to give you 5 minutes and I won't interrupt you. I'm going to give you an extract question, it's the same question but a different extract. And if you could just sort of say out loud what you would be thinking, if you were planning this as an essay.

[pause]

S6: "Explore the extent to which Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a powerful character."

[pause]

S6: I think, um, a part where Lady Macbeth is portrayed as a powerful character is when she—when she has exclamation marks after her speech. Like "infirm of purpose" shows her loudness and her dominance in that time.

S5: Yeah. And also "how easy it were then." That also has an exclamation mark. So she's kind of scolding Macbeth, you know, that he's not up to her expectations.

And also, um, as well as scolding him, she's also, like, insulting him, with saying—with calling him "infirm of purpose." And also like, "my hands are of your colour but I shame to wear a heart so white." And so all this, kind of, degrading him kind of shows that she's the more powerful one in the relationship.

S6: Uh, I have a point about her being a powerful character—is how she seems to keep her cool in this, after they've killed Duncan. But I think this, part of it is—they're partners, but she didn't kill Duncan. But overall she keeps her calm. Whereas Macbeth is, like, whimpering and crying about, like, "Sleep no more." She feels—Lady Macbeth is able to, she's more calm, while Macbeth shows signs of weakness.

S5: Yeah. And Lady Macbeth is also, like, still going ahead with the plan, so she keeps reminding him to get some water. And then also saying, like, "a little water clears us of this deed," so like, she's kind of dismissing the fact that this is a big crime that they've done.

[pause]

S5: Yeah, and she's also telling him—well she keeps repeating what he needs to do. Whereas he's not really, like, responding to her, and just like ignoring whatever she says. And like, um, going insane. Well, not going insane, but like—spiralling, and like despairing about what he's done.

S6: Uh, a part that shows that she's a powerful character is dismissing how big it is, that she's like "the sleeping and the dead are but as pictures," which is to calm

down Macbeth, showing that Lady Macbeth is more powerful, because she has—she's trying to control Macbeth's emotion.

INT: Great. Any final thoughts that you want to add? Fair enough. Alright, thank you so much.

4.2D – Second Interview, Pair D – S7 and S8

Pair D:

S7 = Student 5: Y10, my English set, predicted 8 for English Literature GCSE

S8 = Student 6: Y10, my English set, predicted 8 for English Literature GCSE

INT = Interviewer

INT: So, first question is going to be the same as last time. What, in general, makes you connect to stories or characters?

S7: I might have said this last time, but just the emotional response that I get from it. Like, I feel like if I see a story and I think it's quite—like, if it's meant to be sad and I feel sad after, I feel like I can kind of connect with that. You know?

INT: Yeah, absolutely. S8?

S8: I don't know how to exactly pinpoint it, but if you can feel, I feel connected. And you can really feel it if you hear that someone else has also connected, maybe in a slightly different way to you.

INT: Yeah, that makes sense. Okay. Do you feel you've connected with Macbeth as a play, and why or why not? And did those lessons that we did change anything to do with that? It's okay if the answer is no.

S7: I would say yes, in some ways, yeah. I don't think necessarily the lessons changed much, but I think it changed something. It kind of—I think before, when we've had previous lessons, I felt like—we'd obviously learn what's going on, with like the scene. But I think the little bit of backstory of how the character is was quite good.

S8: I feel that especially for people who were sharing their pieces of writing or who were talking about the ones that they liked or disliked, I feel like they really strengthened how they felt about what was happening in the play.

INT: So do you feel—did it change anything about whether or not you feel connected to the play?

S8: Yeah. I realised some people were very wrong.

INT: [laughter] Okay. Alright. And then for Lady Macbeth specifically, do you feel you connect to her as a character, and did our recent lessons change that at all? It's fine if the answer is no.

S7: I think—I think I still have—I think I like, I think she's well-written, but I don't tend to like her as a character. But just because of like the way she—I suppose she's kind of manipulative, so I guess I don't really like, I wouldn't say I like her as a

person. But I think it's good on Shakespeare, like the way it's written. I think she's—like it's good in that way.

INT: Yeah. Fair enough. Did anything that we did change anything about how you thought about her, or not really?

S7: I think it kind of reinforced what I was thinking, really. I always had a kind of background idea—I kind of felt like Lady Macbeth was kind of like a main antagonist, and I feel like that kind of reinforced that.

INT: Fair enough. S8?

S8: Uh. I never connected to Lady Macbeth, I always thought she was manipulative. And doing that, doing the lesson made me realise that it was because I thought that she only had only one or two things and was a one-trick pony and couldn't really do much. Especially nearer the end.

INT: So did--what was it we did that made you sort of think about that?

S8: Uh, about the motifs. Because that's why I thought [version] five was terrible, and two was really good. Because two had one consistent motif of light, which fits for Lady Macbeth, and five had vomited every motif it could find.

INT: Okay. And so did that affect at all whether or not you connect with her as a character?

S8: I still don't like her.

INT: That's valid. Okay. Do you have any other thoughts about that series of lessons that you want to add?

S7: I think—I did like the creative elements of it. I feel like we could incorporate that more in literature in general. But I feel like—I think I would have liked more time to finish my scene, I think that—because I had quite a lot of ideas, but I started to write them down and there wasn't that much time until the end of the lesson. I didn't actually finish what I was doing.

INT: Yeah. Fair.

S8: Yeah, I feel like maybe more people's work could have been shared? Because I thought that most of them were pretty good, that I—one to four, all except five. Four was pretty good as well. So.

INT: You would have liked to see more of other people's.

S8: I definitely wanted to see the ending to four, because there was so much work put into that one. Like he created a whole new apparition, which fit very well with the story.

INT: Yeah, it did fit very well, that's why I chose it. Yeah. Fantastic. Okay. So last thing—I'm going to give you an extract question, the same question as last time but a different extract. And I'll set a five minute timer. And if you could please try to speak your thinking out loud, what you would be thinking if you had to plan this.

[pause]

S7: Oh it's that scene.

INT: I know you're talking to each other, but if you could like slightly project.

S8: Uh, there's blood.

S7: I think what's interesting is she's kind of like—she's shouting at Macbeth, right, so all of these—cause it says "how Lady Macbeth's a powerful character." So she's kind of taking a higher position in terms of, like, power dynamics.

S8: Mm. And here there's something I've used now quite a few times, it's talking about, saying how like the thing that Macbeth was sharing was only something from his imagination. Uh, and that can also be used as a quote, there have been quite a few situations. Like when Macbeth—

S7: Oh yeah, one of my favourite quotes.

S8: I thought of maybe weakness?

S7: Why does he use it so much?

S8: Weakness like. "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood from my hands."

S7: I feel like he's kind of, like—there's quite a lot of Macbeth panicking. Which I think is kind of a main thing. So maybe, in terms of like breaking it into

paragraphs, how do you reckon that connects to Lady Macbeth as a powerful character?

S8: Uh.

S7: If you can't think of it, that's fine. I can't think of anything either.

S8: I'm a bit tired.

S7: That's fair enough.

[pause]

S7: Yeah, we've got quite a lot of paranoia in this. Like this bit here as well. Like those first three lines, he's kind of, like—can you just think, I'm getting sort of stuck on, I don't think it actually relates to the question. Say, say if you see power in that. Obviously you've got shouting here, so say like, in terms of how she portrays herself, in like, in the power dynamic, it's kind of taking a higher position.

S8: Of course you could go with her taking a higher position and Macbeth being lower, especially for this point in time.

S7: Yeah, especially with like questions, like that one.

S8: Yeah, and there's also Lady Macbeth putting Macbeth down for it.

S7: Yeah—cause here he's like, he's literally going like, he doesn't want to do anything. And she's like, what are you doing, keep, get your act together. Yeah. So

I suppose he's sort of portraying her as powerful, because she's the one—she's telling him what to do.

INT: Great. Any final thoughts on this extract that you want to add? Fair enough. Thank you guys so much.

Appendix 5: Observation Field Notes – Class Discussion

Observation focus: reasons students mention for preferring (or disliking) pieces

- Students discussing in individual groups:
    - Comment: “so much detail”
    - active discussion in several groups of who wrote which piece—some students have openly said they wrote one of the shared pieces—this is being used as a reason for liking and for disliking
    - two groups are reading each monologue out loud dramatically
    - “my favourite is v5 – this is crazy, bro!” – but another student in the group dislikes how dramatic that one is
    - The “theme of harvest” connected to earlier in the play
    - Lots of disagreement within groups
    - Students like the ones that are more close or similar to the speeches from the play, but they are disagreeing about which does this best
    - “v3 has a very unique perspective”
    - “v5 is very similar to the play, it’s rhym-ey, I think that’s good”
    - Lots of active discussion in all groups, though it’s hard to tell from across the room if it’s all on-topic
- Whole class discussion:
    - Teacher asks for each group’s top 3, and a reason that the top 1 is the top “but it can’t just be because of the person who wrote it”

- The very first ranking prompts such strong disagreement that students are excitedly calling out; the next group's ranking results in booing until shushed; the following rankings also prompt muttering and disagreement but less dramatically
- Reasons for liking top choices:
    - Liked the creativity of including the Porter (seconded by another group)
    - Darkness imagery was echoed
    - "It sounded like Shakespeare" – specifically "fine sands" image
    - It "got into her head"
    - Agreed with LM's included views about Macbeth
    - Longest speech
    - Used lots of Shakespearean motifs
    - Liked echo/reversal of a quote in the play, reflecting LM's changing character ("she is the scared one now")
    - "the lone wolf" – animal imagery motif
    - Porter lines match the mood of elsewhere in the play
    - Desperation of LM shown
    - Contrasting light/dark imagery

- “even though she understood she made mistakes, she still thought she was brighter than Macbeth” – agreed with LM’s feelings and view of herself
- Liked that LM said a lot (because they felt this matched the task better)
- Good job at linking together quotes
- Makes the case that the “angry” one could still be expressing sadness well
- Defends LM’s mixed mental state, that she could be more composed in some moments but still be feeling very upset
- Appreciated logical additions to the plot, e.g. with the Porter
- “The writer was very smart to realise that LM is almost going insane, and that that’s adding to how angry she is and broken up”
- “It keeps very one motif strongly, and really captures how LM is starting to go insane”
- The “perfect bridge” between LM’s sanity in Act 3 and her falling apart in Act 5
- “what it adds with the motif is her desperation to get into heaven” – thinks it suits the “end of her character arc”
- The repetition in one spot “show how desperate she is”

- Reasons for dislike (class very excited to argue about this):
    - Relying too much on other characters and not getting to LM's feelings
    - "Doesn't feel like something LM would say, feels like one line from every motif" – caused outcry – "doesn't feel right, doesn't feel like something she would say. It feels random" (counter-argument: LM's falling apart here justifies the sporadic use of imagery)
    - feels like Macbeth should be saying it, not LM. If you think how LM is feeling at this point, she would be crying and falling apart, not the anger" – too direct and angry for LM at this part
    - Illogical plot in the scene (with the Porter)
    - "I don't think it describes the state of mind, she should be more anxious, scared"
    - Disliked feeling that one "copied and pasted random thoughts" – argues that imagery can't just be copied from other characters randomly
    - Jumbled, different lines speaking about different things
    - Thought v3 did not need to declare that LM is a "servant of the shadows" because "she already knows that"

- “she’s never really been that angry… in Act 5 she seems more broken” – dislikes the anger in Act 4 (again)
- “one motif doesn’t make sense” – prefers to combine several, as has happened sometimes earlier in the play
- Another reference to LM’s “jumbled” state of mind
- Feels the repetition “doesn’t add much” to LM’s state of mind and doesn’t match the style of her earlier repetition
- “not realistic that LM would see an apparition… she’s not as controlled by greed as Macbeth, at least in my opinion. She’s greedy but she doesn’t do as much, not really doing much herself, she didn’t even kill Duncan herself”

Appendix 6: Student-Written Lady Macbeth Pastiches

Some students included an explanation of their choices at the end, and some either opted not to or ran out of time.

Student A

LM: O' the dearest Banquo and the innocent Lady Macduff.

Could my lord have seen to this treachery?

(*knock, knock, knock)*

Enter Macbeth

M: My dear partner, we are preparing our soldiers and our horses –

LM: My Lord, was it you who murdered your dearest comrade?

M: Be innocent of the knowledge my dearest chuck. Dear Banquo did not suffer by my hands.

LM: Our deed was a must

But I urge you to gain your trust

I believe you my Lord

But what happens in the dark

Comes to light.

Explanation:

Lady Macbeth asks behind the truth of Banquo and Lady Macduff

Macbeth says she doesn't need to know and equivocates that Banquo did not die by his hands but by the murderers.

Lady Macbeth is sceptical but she rhymes similar to the witches at the end about their trust fading slowly.

Student B

LM: Set off you to Fife on the morrow?

M: Ay, my good wife

LM: I should have craved your presence which still hath been my comfort in these darkest times. Is't long you ride

M: As long, my wife, as will strengthen our bond which hath been lessened by our feasts events

Exeunt Macbeth

LM: Thy beist the blood stain on my hand yet the lotus of mine mind.

Your faithful loyalty hath becomed me to see the light yet your acts defile my body filling me from the tip in blackened hatred

Do not bite the hand that feeds you yet at the same time doth not the wild wolf with weathered jaws tear at the innocent flesh of its tamer.

Thy hath beguiled my mind

Into darkness it has been bind

Where so I can not sleep

My end lies in the deep

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds

Adored by little statesmen philosophers and divines

Explanation:

Echoed Banquo leaving because they used to be friends but no more

She is saying how Macbeth is good to her yet is ruining her

Student C

Enter LM in Chamber with a servant

LM: Clean the dining table, and get me a taper

Servant: Macbeth has left the castle

LM: Him and all his visions, make sure he eats when he returns

Servant: Yes my Queen

LM: Now what are you doing, go

Servant leaves

Mistress enters

Mistress: Would you like me to create another time for the banquet

LM: What's the point now, Macbeth has turned mad, soon the Kingdom will know of his act

Servant enters

Servant: Your taper, your highness

LM: You dumb fool, light it

Servant: Sorry your highness

Servant and mistress leave

LM: What is the point now, life would have been better without this secret to keep

Servant enters with taper and leaves. LM prepares to sleep and then goes to the sink.

LM: Why is there a red stain on my hand. This cannot be wine nor makeup

However here's the smell of blood

I say Out damned spot

Student D

LM:

O, dear Macbeth though I thought he was

The man I married he is no more

Darkness seems apparent & yet he's hesitant

To bathe in it yet it's so simple

With no thought he would rupture the organs

Of the infidels who would deserve it so

With grace & a clean blade;

The gleam of the blade versus the shadow of the action

The transition at one time seemed so effortless

Yet now it's apparent that it isn't so,

My task is to reverse this.

Duncan shall die by the hand of Macbeth but the mind of me.

Explanation:

In this extract LM makes a plan to manipulate Macbeth to kill the king after he is hesitating. LM was being treacherous here, & was planning to help M step into the “darkness.”

She seems bitter that Macbeth has changed to be more soft.

“With grace” = M used to be good at killing enemies

Gleam + shadow = contrast

Student E

Lady Macbeth in her own room, with her own thoughts, thinking about the past few days.

LM: “The guilt is getting to be too much. These past few days all I’ve been thinking about is the murders, my relationship with my husband and how my life is going to turn out. Was it all worth it? Did I need to be this devilish figure or could I have been a nicer human being? I am certain the plotting of Duncan’s murder is going to land me a spot in hell. I regret everything I’ve done in my life. If I could restart I would take it. The thought of hell scares me…”

Explanation:

She is saying it in a scared tone and almost not wanting to speak and just lie in her bed. I think this fits her character as later she kills herself so it makes sense that she is having these thoughts before dying.

Student F

LM:

That fool! That treacherous fool!

He has fallen so far into the darkness

His soul is but a shadow

But my soul… my soul is a few steps away from the light

She picks up a candle

See! See! The light is in the palm of my hand

The light… The… The light shines bright, I shine bright!

Wind blows out the candle

LM breaks down in tears

Dear Lord! Answer me! Is there a place

In heaven without the light? Is there a place in heaven…

M walks in

You! You

Explanation:

Line annotations: Criticising M, light motif, losing mind, heaven motif, blaming M

Student G

LM: Why won't this water cleanse me of this hideous scar that was cut by those who have passed to the beyond. Oh, Macbeth was right to wish for Neptune's sweet grace to free him of his deed, and I realise now that he was not the one who was drunk before the murder, I was: When I condemned myself, I thought that I would be rich in hell, but the only riches I got was golden blood forever staining my hand, and spilling in my mind.

Gentlewoman enters

LM: Why did you take so long to deliver my candles, the light helps to keep me awake?

G: I apologise, I had to get a message for you, the Thane of Fife's wife has died.

Explanation:

LM is staying awake, thinking over what has happened.

Links to:

- Damned spot
- Neptune's oceans
- "was the hope drunk…"
- Aligned herself with hell
- Duncan's golden blood
- Candles
- Thane of Fife's wife

If mine is read out in class and students are reading them, can the true Lady Macbeth read mine.

Student H

LADY MACBETH:

Should I have cause for concern, now that my husband has begun acting in irrational manners: spitting, sobbing and screaming at the void – his steady stream of reason reduced to a mist. The guilt from that fateful night, the shared blood on our hands of the noble Duncan, I could have revelled in it. The passionate crimson reflected in both our cheeks…

Ross enters

Infirm of purpose! How long have you spied upon my inner thoughts?

ROSS:

My lady, I did not have the chance to eavesdrop in my rush with news most alarming. The Thane of Fife had a wife, and a child also, both slaughtered within his castle. I fear this danger may come to you also.

LADY MACBETH:

And what of the Fife?

ROSS:

He seemed to have sensed the peril, and like a sparrow from a nighthawk, took wing and fled to England.

LADY MACBETH:

Leave me. I must think this through.

Ross leaves

His most devoted Banquo, where went he? And the Thane of Fife, fled without regard for his family. At the banquet, Macbeth had given a toast. I might know where this is going.

Explanation:

Lady Macbeth is worried after Macbeth's strange behaviour. Ross enters and tells her Macduff's family was murdered. She thinks it might have been Macbeth.

Student I

Just after the banquet, Lady Macbeth asks the Gentlewoman to find those suspicious people Macbeth was talking to

LM: Go find those sketchy men that

Hath been murmuring dark thoughts

To my dearest husband

Gentlewoman: Of course my lady

Enter murderer 1 and 2

LM: What is it that you hath reported to my husband

M1: Our lord has ordered us to take care of Banquo

M2: And we reported the deed to his Majesty

Exeunt

Enter Lady Macbeth holding a torch

LM: My lord has fallen into the abyss

Explanation:

LM tries to find out what changed after he talked to the murderers as she was worried about Macbeth. After finding out what happened she thinks Macbeth is being haunted by Banquo, Lady Macbeth starts becoming crazy in fear of Duncan's ghost coming to haunt her as she caused all of this

Student J

Oh Macbeth, why must you leave to battle? The darkness is consuming me with guilt and fear. Have you been consumed too? The weird sisters they… have instilled dark desires in us, and we have gone through many of them, we have gone too far to turn back to God. Perhaps the only way to save us from damnation is to prove to the lord that we are willing to repent for our actions. Whether that be our own taking off or

Explanation:

I think LM was guilty as well, so I thought she would be speaking in a weird way, like she's speaking to Macbeth

Student K

In the darkness, where secrets hide, I am confined,

Haunted by my actions, remembering the blood I helped to spill,

The guilt suffocates me like a snake,

Every breath I take, burdened by my sins.

Macbeth is but a stranger these days.

His foolishness will lead him nowhere but Hell.

This candle is the only thing that lights my soul

Explanation:

I was trying to present Lady Macbeth's guilt after Act 3. Showing signs of annoyance after Macbeth's choice of killing Banquo and how there will be consequences to his actions.

Student L

What are these thoughts, encroaching on my mind like the morning frost on the lawn. Icy thoughts bleaching my head and my hands alike – they stay red, but from the blood or the obsession I can no longer tell. My husband is thriving now,

like the cuckoo bird – however I am feeling more and more lost as the days roll on – I'm trapped and searching for a way out.

Explanation:

I was thinking more as a suicide note type speech, and I used blood imagery and animal imagery, as well as the cuckoo bird because it infiltrates other birds' nests and like betrays them like Macbeth.

Student M

Lady Macbeth:

Darkness! If the light of the heavens hath been shone from above, still thou art but a mystery to mine eyes. [*sees what she thinks to be a devil, all in her mind*] Aah! From whence you came, poor wench! Never shake thy gory locks at me! [*collapses*] When the darkness had come begging for a home, I had all but welcomed it, and for that I hold naught but regret. Was the ambition and pure folly, wherein I had dressed myself, drunk? What good must I have thought would come thereafter? The blood stain which hath filled the cesspits of my hands giveth me the greatest remorse. [*crying*] Why? Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck. From whence hath this demeanor arised from thee, my dearest partner of greatness.

Explanation:

In Act 5 scene 1, Lady Macbeth says the short line “Hell is murky.” This scene is about her experience plunging her mind deep into the depths of hell, showing her descent into madness. She also echoes a lot of lines said by Macbeth and herself throughout the play, showing that she thinks of them as one, and showing how upset she is at Macbeth’s recent attitude and behaviour.

Student N

A few nights before sleep walking scene – talking to doctor about symptoms

My mind is cloudy doctor, every night I have terrible nightmares and wake up cold. I have repented for my sins and even hired an exorcist but I still imagine horrific scenes in my sleep, only protected from the darkness by this candle. I am desperate for your aid as my husband is out at war and I would hate for him to see how weak I’ve become during his leave. I wish not to threaten you but I truly am desperate and this is my last chance, I’m constantly suffering and I believe I could be in damnation from my past unforgivable mistakes which I shan’t expand on.

Explanation:

Throughout the speech she slowly opens up more and gets more desperate as from what we can see from the banquet scene, her mental state is slowly deteriorating as she soon after commits suicide, I wanted to clearly display that

this was her last chance due to that too. As lady Macbeth is often viewed as stronger than Macbeth through the play I have decided to add her saying how she'd hate for him to see how weak she was.

Student O

Why must you do this Macbeth. Have we not enough blood staining our petty hands, for you to strip Banquo of his consciousness and valour. No, no… I mustn't dwell on this any longer, I shall go insane if contempt and guilt engulfs me, as it has done so with my worthy Thane of Cawdor. His very

Explanation:

Lady Macbeth is feeling betrayed and confused after realising what Macbeth has done to Banquo. She expresses her anguish and guilt by asking an imaginary Macbeth why he has done such a thing. It is meant to be hypocritical since she eventually realises she was also involved in a similar deed and kills herself.

Student P

Thunder, ENTER the three witches and Lady Macbeth

1st witch: You have a question?

2nd witch: ask away

Lady Macbeth: is my husband conspiring behind my back

3rd witch: do you wish to hear it from our mouths or our masters?

Lady Macbeth: summon them

First witch: pour in sow's blood that hath eaten

Her nine farrows grease that's sweaten

From the murderer's gibbet, throw

Into the flame

All: Come high or low,

Thy self and office deftly show

Thunder, ENTER apparition, a snake with two heads

Lady Macbeth: Unfold your secrets unto me, O veiled spirit

Apparition: Oh dear lady, your mind is at unease

Indeed Macbeth hath dealt with darkness,

But fear not the night, for you are to become

The night.

The apparition vanishes into smoke, entering Lady Macbeth's nose, engulfing her mind

Explanation:

In this scene I wanted to convey that Lady Macbeth was worried about characters' disappearances, but the witches wished to act their will through her

Student Q

Enter Lady Macbeth with a TAPER, wet hands.

Lady Macbeth:

"It won't come off. O, my bloodied hands may

The multitudinous seas incarnadine, if I wash,

Wash, and wash any further. Cursed be the spirits

That hath unsexed me, and taken my milk for gall.

Where liest the Wife,

Of the Thane of Fife? In the hands of whom,

Lay noble Banquo's daggers?

Hell! I lie in a lake of my thickened, black blood,

And my taper warms me more

Than it gives me light in my murky, predestined misfortune!”

Long silence

Lady Macbeth:

“The raven is hoarse.”

Exeunt – she dies here

Explanation:

This theoretical monologue attempts to backshadow on one of LM’s monologues in which she asks for Hell to thicken her emotions and to suppress her insanity, subsequently asking for her own sex and features of a stereotypical woman to Jacobean audiences to be taken away. The theoretical monologue reflects LM’s regret for her previous desires and actions as well as her suspicion on what M has done to Macduff’s family and Banquo. It also includes a direct repeat of M’s “the multitudinous seas incarnadine,” implying that LM feels the same regret M did, just a bit too late.

Student R

LM alone in their bedroom (while M goes to see witches), night, torches around the room.

LM: The light keeps me from seeing a worthy king's corpse sprawling on my bed. Keeps me from imagining the blood-covered husband, weeping about the deed that had been done. The husband; where is he now? He has said that he has gone to check the stables for his friend who did not arrive last night for the banquet. The dear friend, whom we miss… would he be here! Where is the friend now; he should have arrived a day ago. Has he run into trouble?

LM wanders around more, seemingly thinking a lot over. Knocking.

Where is this knocking!? A husband and the lady heard this after a terrible deed had been done. Is it back? Why? How?

Enter servant.

Servant: Only me, my Lady.

Explanation:

Annotations:

1. LM speaks slowly, pondering each word (kinda lost)
2. LM speaks quickly, words spilling out
3. Timid call from offstage/behind door

My ideas:

- LM thinking about what M said at the banquet (about B)
- LM thinks about M lying to LM? (about where he's gone)
- All while M goes to witches

- LM addressing everything “out-of-body”-ly

Student S

Early morning. Sun has just risen. LM asks porter questions.

LM: Where is the king?

Porter: Gone to meet thy weird sisters.

LM: Has Banquo received my queries?

Porter: Tis unknown if he has returned.

Some say he stopped at nightfall.

LM: Should not the king be more worried?

His mighty counterpart hath gone missing

From the herd.

Porter: Ay, but there can only be one king.

LM: I fear. I fear Macbeth will grow and grow till he won’t know when the light meets dark. The lone wolf moves easy till they meet the stronger pack. The hardened warrior softened inside and manipulated by Satanic women who believes are the answer.

I, who walk grandly as the wife of the king fear that he will fall when the candle blows out.

Explanation:

LM is talking to the porter at the start who could be related to witches and may know about B's murder. She then fears that M is trying to move solo through Scotland and leave everyone behind.

Annotations: candle thing; pack = Malcolm and Macduff, lone wolf = animal relation, light vs. dark, motif of darkness

Student T

Lady Macbeth

'The world is murky'

'My hands are red'

'Not all of great Neptune ocean will wash this hand clean'

'I sleep no more'

'The guilt traps my mind'

'Please save me'

Hecate

‘Your soul is mine, hereafter’

‘from now on, you are a servant to the shadows’

‘but of course, this is not the first time’

‘when the innocent babe you milked, you sold for the fame and fortune’

Explanation:

LM is talking to Hecate about selling her soul to become queen and Hecate responds about her selling her soul before. She copies Macbeth’s quote when he killed Duncan to show the severe impact that the death had on her. She calls the world murky but in the next scene she says hell is murky.

Student U

Night

Lady Macbeth:

“Why must my husband act like this in front of guests? I told him that he was too full of the milk of human kindness – maybe I was right. Maybe he can’t handle being king. Maybe you should step in.”

Seyton:

“You forget, my lady, that I am but a newcomer in the court. I only – why do you make that face, my lady?”

LM:

“Who blew out the lantern?”

Seyton:

“The lantern still burns brightly, my lady.”

The corpse of LM’s long dead child appears, its brains dashed out

LM: “

Student V

Lady Macbeth, asleep in castle: her candle goes out

LADY MACBETH:

Who has struck out the candle?

Where is he?

The banquet has filled me with uncertainty and

Now I fear he has descended into the darkness,

Too far beyond my saving.

The fields are barren, the harvests poor and

The eagle lies in the red snow,

Struck down by the minion of midnight.

Oh, how did I lose him?

Like the fine sands of Egypt, he did

Slip through my cursed fingers

[*pacing around room*]

I am a fool! I should have known that this

Deal with the peculiar sisters

Would not serve this kingdom well.

But now, the blood in these veins

Is foreign and white, as the Evil promised me

And I fear, my time is made of sand and

So I will be with him soon,

Down below,

Where he deserves to be.

Explanation:

'He' could be interpreted as two different characters: Macbeth or Banquo

4/5 -> the darkness is either death or inescapable damnation -> LM suggesting she is less damned than M

6/7 -> Describing Scotland or Banquo's death: Banquo was referred to as a plant by KD in 1:4, so poor harvest = his death. The eagle also suggest Banquo (red = blood) as he is a noble person BUT Macbeth was originally the eagle (so red = Hell)

Minion of midnight = Owl (Macbeth), Devil

'Fine sands of Egypt' similar to Neptune's oceans

Explicitly admits that she is cursed in some way.

'Deal with sisters' could be M or B's interaction w/ witches

Foreign/white → not her (blood of others) and white is fear

'Deserves to be' → Banquo's burial (deserved) or with Macbeth in hell

Either fearing for Macbeth's sanity, OR guilty about Banquo's death

Student W

(LM is in a graveyard at night.)

LM:

Why has my partner's deeds lack me?

I keep looking and looking yet why cannot I find

them. Banquo, Duncan, where are you??

(Finds the grave of Banquo. Someone is sitting next to it.)

LM:

Alas!! There you are. The guilt is not disappearing.

I must ask you, to relieve me of my fears.

(Talking to person next to the grave)

Excuse me sir, how do you know this hastily abrupted soul.

(Person does not acknowledge LM)

Look at me when I speak! I shall lock you up. I shall keep you in a kennel, for you are about to witness my might.

(Person turns around. It is the ghost of Banquo.)

Oh the Gods! Who is doing this! Why am I seeing your innocent yet eerie shadow! Is this my partner's guilt? Thy glory cannot lack me! How is this, did he (*referring to M*) hurt you much?

What must I do for you to return to the shadows!

Banquo:

Take care of my little flame (*refers to Fleance*)

Explanation:

LM is riddled with guilt for the things she and M have done. She visits Banquo's grave to see what happened to him

Student X

LM: Hell is murky. Must have a taper. More light. More light. Blood. Blood everywhere. Must wash. Where is Neptune. I must be cleansed of this filth. O' father.

Maniacal shrieking and crying

O' my dearest Macbeth, where are thou when I need thou.

Explanation:

I was trying to portray LM as unstable (mood swings) and paranoid.

Student Y

Context: Lady Macbeth calls the murderers to her to talk about what happened to Banquo.

Lady Macbeth:

“Murderers, speak to me, is it true that my lord

Had called upon you to slay Banquo that fateful night?

Is it possible that my lord has taken action without

The consultation of me, his dearest love and mastermind

Behind his leadership as king? He has become a distant

Man to me, and yet is still the one I stand by

In this murky life of mine. When his light of

Life goes out, so will the warmth and brightness

Of mine. The secrets my lord

May keep from me eat away at my mind but I

Still long to be by his side till the end of our time.”

Explanation:

In this monologue, I portrayed Lady Macbeth as someone who is starting to feel the guilt of her actions and her longing to be with Macbeth, even though she feels the distance between them. To show this, she calls Macbeth 'my lord' rather than his name to show a sense of formality and therefore a feeling of distance after Macbeth has Banquo killed without telling her.

Student Z

Walking to her bedroom carrying a candle up extremely long stairs losing her balance

I need to get something from downstairs. There would be no point going back now. I have ascended to another level where it is useless to try to go back. I might as well go all the way. The further I go up, the harder it is to take another step. I feel more weight as I ascend. I nearly fell a few times but the consequences of going down would be worse. Further and further. It gets darker as I go, I have this candle to light the way but it struggles to fight the ever growing darkness.

Explanation:

She is struggling to go up the stairs, losing her balance. Darkness growing, light not having an effect as much anymore

Appendix 7 – Coding Instances

Appendix 7 Contents:

7.1 – Questionnaire 1 – Codes by Question

7.2 – Questionnaire 1 – All Codes Compared

7.3 – Pastiches – All Codes Compared

7.4 – Pastiches – By Student

7.5 – Discussion – All Codes

7.6 – Questionnaire 2 – Compared to Year 10 Questionnaire 1

7.7 – Questionnaire 2 vs. 1 by Student

7.8 – Reflection Codes

7.9 – Interview Codes

7.10 – Focused Comparisons

7.1 – Questionnaire 1 – Codes by Question

		Q1 Total	Q2 Total	Q3 Total	Y10 Totals	Y11 Totals	Diff.	TOTALS
Efferent-Aesthetic Ratings	Efferent-clear	5	0	0	2	3	1	5
	Mixed	45	46	44	36	27	-9	135
	Aesthetic-clear	1	5	7	8	5	-3	13
Judgment Type	judgment-positive	25	26	6	32	25	-7	57
	judgment-neutral-balanced	12	2	1	9	6	-3	15
	judgment-negative	14	7	2	11	12	1	23
Feelings	enjoyment-interest-positive	29	16	6	28	23	-5	51
	enjoyment-interest-neutral-balanced	10	1	0	6	5	-1	11
	enjoyment-interest-negative	19	7	4	11	19	8	30
Feelings Degree	emotion-strong	8	4	3	6	9	3	15
	emotion-moderate	29	19	6	29	25	-4	54
	emotion-weak	14	1	1	8	8	0	16
Efferent Features	exam-mention	3	0	0	2	1	-1	3
	exam-technique	13	1	1	4	11	7	15
	factual-story	4	4	9	11	6	-5	17
	quotes	5	3	8	7	9	2	16
	terminology	29	12	6	22	25	3	47

	themes-motifs	8	3	9	5	15	10	20
Empathic Concern	concern-clear	0	6	1	2	5	3	7
	concern-somewhat	0	6	11	13	4	-9	17
Theory of Mind	interpretation-affective-nuanced	0	5	15	10	10	0	20
	interpretation-affective-simple	6	11	31	28	20	-8	48
	interpretation-cognitive-nuanced	0	2	14	8	8	0	16
	interpretation-cognitive-simple	2	33	46	41	40	-1	81
	interpretation-confused	0	7	1	7	1	-6	8
Lady Macbeth Characterisation	evil	0	24	31	31	24	-7	55
	neutral-mixed	0	20	19	24	15	-9	39
	sympathetic-good	0	4	3	3	4	1	7
Stereotypes	stereotype-language-totals	4	47	93	76	68	-8	144
	power-focus	3	15	40	32	26	-6	58
	puppet-master	1	32	53	44	42	-2	86
Self-Relevance	connection-context	2	2	0	1	3	2	4
	connection-self	0	1	0	1	0	-1	1
	disconnection-context	13	1	0	8	6	-2	14
	disconnection-language	16	0	0	6	10	4	16
	disconnection-self	2	1	0	2	1	-1	3

7.2 – Questionnaire 1 – All Codes Compared

	emotion-moderate	emotion-strong	emotion-weak	enjoyment-interest-negative	enjoyment-interest-neutral-	enjoyment-interest-positive	judgment-negative	judgment-neutral-balanced	judgment-positive	exam-mention	exam-technique	factual-story	quotes	terminology	themes-motifs	concern-clear	concern-somewhat
emotion-moderate	54	0	0	16	3	40	9	3	28	0	5	4	4	17	6	2	3
emotion-strong	0	15	0	11	1	4	8	0	4	1	3	2	0	3	0	0	0
emotion-weak	0	0	16	3	7	7	1	7	6	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
enjoyment-interest-negative	16	11	3	30	1	0	17	5	1	1	5	4	0	4	0	0	1
enjoyment-interest-neutral	3	1	7	1	11	2	0	4	1	2	1	0	0	2	0	1	0
enjoyment-interest-positive	40	4	7	0	2	51	1	2	36	0	3	2	4	16	7	1	2
judgment-negative	9	8	1	17	0	1	23	2	0	1	2	0	0	4	0	0	0
judgment-neutral	3	0	7	5	4	2	2	15	2	1	2	1	2	1	0	0	2
judgment-positive	28	4	6	1	1	36	0	2	57	0	2	3	3	24	4	1	4
exam-mention	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

exam-technique	5	3	1	5	1	3	2	2	2	0	15	0	0	2	0	0	0
factual-story	4	2	0	4	0	2	0	1	3	0	0	17	0	0	3	0	1
quotes	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	3	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0
terminol-ogy	17	3	1	4	2	16	4	1	24	0	2	0	0	47	0	0	0
themes-motifs	6	0	1	0	0	7	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	20	0	0
concern-clear	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0
concern-somewhat	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	17
ToM-affective-nuanced	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
ToM-affective-simple	7	5	0	3	0	7	2	0	6	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	5
ToM-cognitive-nuanced	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
ToM-cognitive-simple	11	6	0	11	1	5	10	0	6	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
ToM-confused	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
evil	6	7	0	10	0	3	8	2	5	0	0	3	1	7	6	0	2
neutral-mixed	14	0	2	0	1	15	0	1	17	0	0	5	1	5	2	2	12
sympathe-tic-good	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	1	1	5	0	4	1
stereotype-language	17	3	0	10	1	9	7	4	15	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1
power-focus	6	0	0	2	0	4	1	1	7	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1

puppet-master	11	3	0	8	1	5	6	3	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
connection-context	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
connection-self	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
disconnect-context	5	3	2	6	1	3	6	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
disconnect-language	7	3	2	7	5	1	7	4	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
disconnect-self	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	ToM-affective-nuanced	ToM-affective-simple	ToM-cognitive-nuanced	ToM-cognitive-simple	ToM-confused	evil	neutral-mixed	sympathetic-good	stereotype-language	power-focus	puppet-master	connection-context	connection-self	disconnection-context	disconnection-language	disconnection-self
emotion-moderate	4	7	0	11	0	6	14	2	17	6	11	1	0	5	7	0
emotion-strong	0	5	0	6	0	7	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	3	3	1
emotion-weak	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1
enjoyment-interest-negative	0	3	0	11	0	10	0	0	10	2	8	0	0	6	7	1
enjoyment-interest-neutral	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	5	1

enjoyment-interest-positive	4	7	0	5	0	3	15	2	9	4	5	1	0	3	1	0
judgment-negative	0	2	0	10	3	8	0	0	7	1	6	0	0	6	7	2
judgment-neutral	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	4	1	3	0	1	1	4	2
judgment-positive	1	6	1	6	0	5	17	3	15	7	8	3	1	3	1	0
exam-mention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
exam-technique	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
factual-story	0	0	0	2	0	3	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
quotes	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
terminol-ogy	0	0	0	0	0	7	5	5	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	0
themes-motifs	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
concern-clear	5	1	0	0	0	0	2	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
concern-somewhat	5	5	1	2	0	2	12	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
ToM-affective-nuanced	20	1	1	0	0	1	13	6	8	5	3	0	0	0	0	0
ToM-affective-simple	1	48	1	1	1	22	12	2	9	6	3	1	0	0	0	0
ToM-cognitive-nuanced	1	1	16	0	0	4	7	4	13	4	9	0	0	0	0	0
ToM-cognitive-simple	0	1	0	81	0	53	17	1	53	9	44	0	0	0	0	0
ToM-confused	0	1	0	0	8	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

evil	1	22	4	53	3	55	2	0	75	23	52	1	0	1	0	1
neutral-mixed	13	12	7	17	2	2	39	1	33	17	16	0	1	0	0	0
sympathe-tic-good	6	2	4	1	0	0	1	7	21	9	12	1	0	0	0	0
stereotype-language	8	9	13	53	0	75	33	21	145	59	86	1	0	0	0	0
power-focus	5	6	4	9	0	23	17	9	59	59	0	0	0	0	0	0
puppet-master	3	3	9	44	0	52	16	12	86	0	86	1	0	0	0	0
connection-context	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	0
connection-self	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
disconnect-context	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0
disconnect-language	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0
disconnect-self	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

7.3 – Pastiches – All Codes Compared

		Explanations						Character				Scene POV		
		connection-technique	no-explanation	technique-effect	technique-no-effect	ToM - affective	ToM - cognitive	evil	neutral-mixed	sympathetic-good	suffering	interaction	interiority + interaction	interiority-full
Explanations	connection-techni-que	23	0	5	2	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	no-explanation	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0
	techni-que-effect	5	0	10	0	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	technique-no-effect	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ToM – affect-tive	6	0	7	0	30	6	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
	ToM – cogni-tive	1	0	3	0	6	34	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Character	evil	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	1
	neutral-mixed	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	17	0	12	4	5	7
	sympathetic-good	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	4	2
	suffer-ing	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	12	6	20	3	7	8
POV	interaction	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	3	6	0	0
	interiority-and-interaction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	7	0	9	0
	interiority-full	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	2	8	0	0	11
Techn.	quote-direct	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	10	1	5	4	3	5

	quote-partial	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	17	5	13	8	7	9
	quote-paraphrased	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	3	9	0	6	8
	shakespearism	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	12	7	12	2	9	9
	repeti-tion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	2	6	0	8	5
	rhyme-or-other-techni-que	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	1	3	0
	imagery-copying-motif	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	23	11	22	7	13	20
	imagery-echoing-motif	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	13	19	2	17	14
	imagery-original-fully	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	0	3	3

		Techniques Used								
		quote-direct	quote-partial	quote-paraphrased	shakespearism	repetition	rhyme-or-other-technique	imagery-copying-motif	imagery-echoing-motif	imagery-original-fully
Explanations	connection-techni-que	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	no-explanation	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
	techni-que-effect	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	technique-no-effect	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	ToM – affect-tive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ToM – cogni-tive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Character	evil	1	2	1	1	0	0	4	0	0
	neutral-mixed	10	17	10	12	11	3	23	18	3
	sympathetic-good	1	5	3	7	2	1	11	13	3
	suffer-ing	5	13	9	12	6	2	22	19	1
POV	interaction	4	8	0	2	0	1	7	2	0
	interiority-and-interaction	3	7	6	9	8	3	13	17	3
	interiority-full	5	9	8	9	5	0	20	14	3
Techniques Used	quote-direct	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	quote-partial	0	24	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
	quote-paraphrased	0	0	14	1	0	1	2	0	0
	shakespearism	0	0	1	20	0	0	1	0	0
	repeti-tion	0	1	0	0	13	0	4	1	0
	rhyme-or-other-techni-que	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	0	1
	imagery-copying-motif	0	1	2	1	4	1	40	2	1
	imagery-echoing-motif	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	33	0
	imagery-original-fully	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	6

7.4 – Pastiches – By Student

	Characterisation				Scene POV			Explanations of Pastiches					
	evil	neutral-mixed	sympathetic-good	suffering	interaction-dialogue	interiority- interaction	interiority-full	connection-technique	no-explanation	technique-effect	technique-no-effect	ToM - affective	ToM - cognitive
Student A	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1
Student B	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1
Student C	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Student D	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
Student E	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Student F	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	3
Student G	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Student H	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Student I	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Student J	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Student K	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1
Student L	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1
Student M	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	2
Student N	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1
Student O	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	2
Student P	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Student Q	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	3	2
Student R	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	5
Student S	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	1	2
Student T	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	1
Student U	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Student V	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	3
Student W	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Student X	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Student Y	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0
Student Z	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Totals:	3	17	6	20	6	9	11	23	2	10	3	30	34

7.5 – Discussion – All Codes

	Techniques in Pastiches								
	quote-direct	quote-partial	quote-paraphrased	Shakespearism	repetition	rhyme-or-other-technique	imagery-copying-motif	imagery-original-echoing-motif	imagery-original-fully
Student A	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
Student B	1	1	1	3	0	1	4	2	0
Student C	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student D	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0
Student E	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Student F	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	2	0
Student G	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	0
Student H	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
Student I	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Student J	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0
Student K	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Student L	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Student M	3	1	1	1	0	0	2	3	0
Student N	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Student O	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Student P	2	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	0
Student Q	1	4	2	1	1	0	3	2	0
Student R	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0
Student S	0	1	0	2	2	0	1	3	2
Student T	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Student U	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Student V	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	4	0
Student W	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	3	0
Student X	1	2	1	3	1	0	3	0	0
Student Y	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Student Z	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	1	2
Totals:	12	24	14	20	13	4	40	33	6

7.6 – Questionnaire 2 – Compared to Year 10 Questionnaire 1

Code Names and Categories		Questionnaire First Totals	Questionnaire Second Totals	Difference
Efferent-Aesthetic Scale	EA1	2	2	0
	EA2	8	2	-6
	EA3	23	34	11
	EA4	36	25	-11
	EA5	8	7	-1
Narrative schema	complexity-interpretations	7	23	16
	change-arc	31	29	-2
Judgment Type	judgment-positive	32	40	8
	judgment-neutral-balanced	9	6	-3
	judgment-negative	11	2	-9
Preference Detail	preference-simple	28	22	-6
	preference-nuance	12	20	8
Feelings	enjoyment-interest-positive	28	37	9
	enjoyment-interest-neutral-balanced	6	5	-1
	enjoyment-interest-negative	11	3	-8
Feelings Degree	emotion-strong	6	9	3
	emotion-moderate	29	31	2
	emotion-weak	8	2	-6
Efferent Features	exam-mention	2	0	-2
	exam-technique	4	4	0
	factual-story	11	0	-11
	quotes	7	0	-7
	terminology	22	22	0
	themes-motifs	5	9	4
Empathic Concern	concern-clear	2	6	4
	concern-somewhat	13	12	-1
Theory of Mind	interpretation-affective-nuanced	10	15	5
	interpretation-affective-simple	28	15	-13
	interpretation-cognitive-nuanced	8	15	7
	interpretation-cognitive-simple	41	23	-18
	interpretation-confused	7	2	-5
Characterisation of Lady Macbeth	evil	31	8	-23
	neutral-mixed	24	30	6
	sympathetic-good	3	6	3

Stereotypes	stereotype-language-totals	76	39	-37
	power-focus	32	18	-14
	puppet-master	44	21	-23
Self-Relevance	connection-context	1	1	0
	connection-self	1	0	-1
	disconnection-context	8	1	-7
	disconnection-language	6	3	-3
	disconnection-self	2	0	-2

7.7 – Questionnaire 2 vs. 1 by Student

	evil	difference from Q1	neutral-mixed	difference from Q1	sympathetic-good	difference from Q1	stereotype-language	difference from Q1	enjoyment- negative	difference from Q1	enjoyment- neutral	difference from Q1	enjoyment- positive	difference from Q1
Student A	0	0	1	-1	1	1	0	-3	0	0	0	0	2	0
Student B	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	-1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Student C	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	-1	0	-1	0	0	1	1
Student D	0	-4	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	-1	0	0	1	1
Student E	1	1	1	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Student F	0	-1	2	0	0	-1	0	-4	0	0	0	-2	3	2
Student G	0	-2	1	1	0	0	0	-4	0	-1	0	0	2	1
Student H	0	-1	2	1	0	0	0	-2	0	0	1	1	0	-2
Student I	1	0	1	-2	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
Student J	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	-2	0	0	0	0	1	-2
Student K	0	-1	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Student L	0	-1	1	1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	2	1
Student M	0	-2	2	0	0	0	2	-3	0	-1	0	-1	2	1
Student N	0	-1	0	0	2	2	0	-3	1	1	1	0	2	2
Student O	0	-2	0	0	2	2	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Student P	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	-1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Student Q	2	0	0	-1	0	0	2	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student R	0	-2	2	1	0	0	4	1	0	-1	0	0	2	1
Student S	0	0	2	2	0	-2	1	-1	0	-1	0	0	1	-1
Student T	1	-1	1	1	0	0	3	3	0	-2	0	0	1	1
Student U	0	-1	1	1	1	1	2	-2	0	0	0	-1	3	3
Student V	0	-1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	-3
Student W	0	-2	1	1	0	0	3	-3	1	0	0	0	1	1
Student X	0	0	0	-2	0	0	0	-4	0	-1	0	0	0	0
Student Y	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Student Z	0	-1	2	2	0	0	0	-4	0	0	0	0	2	2
Totals:	8	-23	30	6	6	3	42	-34	3	-8	5	-1	37	9

	judgment-negative	difference from Q1	judgment-neutral-balanced	difference from Q1	judgment-positive	difference from Q1	change-arc	difference from Q1	complexity-interpretations	difference from Q1	exam-technique	difference from Q1
Student A	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	-1	0	0	0	0
Student B	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	-2	1	0	0	0
Student C	0	-1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student D	0	0	0	-1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Student E	0	0	1	1	1	-1	2	1	0	-1	1	1
Student F	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	2	2	0	0
Student G	0	-1	0	-2	1	-1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Student H	0	-1	3	3	0	-1	0	0	2	2	0	-1
Student I	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	-2	0	0	0	0
Student J	0	0	0	0	1	-1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Student K	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Student L	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	2	0	0
Student M	0	-1	1	0	2	0	4	1	0	0	1	1
Student N	1	0	1	0	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Student O	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	-1
Student P	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student Q	0	-1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Student R	0	-1	0	0	2	1	2	1	2	2	0	0
Student S	0	0	0	-1	2	0	0	0	3	3	0	0
Student T	0	-2	0	0	1	1	0	-1	1	1	0	0
Student U	0	0	0	-2	3	2	3	2	2	1	0	0
Student V	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	-3	1	-1	0	0
Student W	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
Student X	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	-1	0	0
Student Y	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	2	0	0
Student Z	0	0	0	-1	1	1	0	-1	1	1	0	0
Totals:	2	-9	6	-3	40	8	29	-2	23	16	4	0

	quotes	difference from Q1	terminology	difference from Q1	themes-motifs	difference from Q1	concern-clear	difference from Q1	concern-somewhat	difference from Q1	affective-nuanced	difference from Q1	affective-simple	difference from Q1
Student A	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student B	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	-2	0	0	0	-1
Student C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1
Student D	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	2	3	3
Student E	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	-1	1	1
Student F	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0
Student G	0	0	5	5	2	2	1	1	0	0	2	2	0	-1
Student H	0	-1	0	-4	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	-1
Student I	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-3
Student J	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student K	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0
Student L	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student M	0	-2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	-2	1	0	3	0
Student N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	-1
Student O	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
Student P	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student Q	0	-3	2	-3	0	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-1
Student R	0	0	0	-3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Student S	0	0	1	-2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Student T	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	3	1	0
Student U	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	-1	1	0	0	-1
Student V	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	-1	3	1	0	-5
Student W	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student X	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	-2	0	-3	0	0
Student Y	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	-2
Student Z	0	0	0	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-1
Totals:	0	-7	22	0	9	4	6	4	12	-1	15	5	15	-13

	cognitive-nuanced	difference from Q1	cognitive-simple	difference from Q1	interpretation-confused	difference from Q1	connection-context	difference from Q1	connection-self	difference from Q1	disconnection-context	difference from Q1	disconnection-language	difference from Q1	disconnection-self	difference from Q1
Student A	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student B	0	0	1	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student C	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Student D	0	0	0	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0
Student E	0	-1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Student F	0	0	0	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student G	1	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0
Student H	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student I	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student J	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student K	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student L	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student M	0	-1	1	1	0	-1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	-1	0	-1
Student N	1	1	2	-6	0	-3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Student O	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-1	0	0	0	0
Student P	0	-1	2	-1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student Q	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0
Student R	0	0	2	1	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0
Student S	1	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student T	3	3	0	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-2	0	0	0	0
Student U	1	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1
Student V	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student W	3	3	0	-3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0
Student X	0	-2	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0
Student Y	1	1	1	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Student Z	1	1	1	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals:	15	7	23	-18	2	-5	1	0	0	-1	1	-7	3	-3	0	-2

7.8 – Reflection Coding Instances – Questionnaire 2 Question 4

Code	**Instances**
Creativity-writing	9
Depth	4
Enjoyment-interest-positive	26
Enjoyment-interest-negative	1
Expansion	12
Social	8

7.9 – Interview Codes

Coding instances by question before and after the intervention.

		Before - Question 1	After - Question 1	Difference	Before - Question 2	After - Question 2	Difference	Before - Question 3	After - Question 3	Difference	Question 3.5	Before - Question 4	After - Question 4	Difference	Totals Before	Totals After	Difference
Reading experience (Q1-Q3)	aesthetic-over-efferent	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	3	3	0				1	6	5
	change	1	0	-1	0	0	0	3	2	-1	2				4	4	0
	theme-message	0	1	1	2	4	2	0	0	0	1				2	6	4
	emotional-contagion	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0	1	1
	imagination-image	1	0	-1	0	3	3	0	1	1	2				1	6	5
	immersion-references	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0	4	4
	interpretations	0	2	2	0	3	3	1	4	3	8				1	17	16
	perspective-taking	3	1	-2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0				3	2	-1
	ToM-reference	2	1	-1	2	0	-2	3	5	2	0				7	6	-1
	world-reference	2	1	-1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0				3	3	0
Self-Relevance (Q1-Q3)	agency-ownership	0	0	0	1	6	5	0	0	0	5				1	11	10
	connection-context	0	0	0	4	0	-4	2	0	-2	0				6	0	-6
	connection-self	5	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	-1	0				6	5	-1
	connection-social	0	1	1	2	3	1	0	2	2	5				2	11	9
	disconnection-context	1	0	-1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0				2	1	-1

	disconnection-language	0	0	0	2	1	-1	1	0	-1	1				3	2	-1
	disconnection-self	0	0	0	1	0	-1	2	1	-1	0				3	1	-2
Connection (Q2-Q3)	int-connection-no				2	0	-2	7	0	-7	0				9	0	-9
	int-connection-mixed				1	4	3	6	5	-1	0				7	9	2
	int-connection-yes				5	7	2	0	4	4	0				5	11	6
Feelings (Q2-Q3)	emotion-moderate				7	5	-2	3	2	-1	2				10	9	-1
	emotion-strong				1	1	0	1	0	-1	3				2	4	2
	emotion-weak				0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0	0	0
	enjoyment-interest-negative				0	1	1	1	1	0	0				1	2	1
	enjoyment-interest-neutral				0	0	0	1	0	-1	0				1	0	-1
	enjoyment-interest-positive				8	5	-3	2	1	-1	5				10	11	1
	preference-nuance				6	4	-2	2	1	-1	3				8	8	0
	preference-simple				2	3	1	2	1	-1	2				4	6	2
Empathic concern (Q2-Q3)	concern-clear				0	1	1	0	1	1	2				0	4	4
	concern-somewhat				0	0	0	2	0	-2	0				2	0	-2
Characterisation (Q3)	evil				0	0	0	4	3	-1	0				4	3	-1
	neutral-mixed				0	1	1	3	3	0	2				3	6	3
	sympathetic-good				0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0	0	0
Efferent features (Q2-Q4)	atomisation-ref				0	1	1	3	0	-3	0	0	0	0	3	1	-2
	authority				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	-4	5	1	-4

	exam-mention				0	0	0	1	0	-1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
	exam-technique				1	3	2	5	0	-5	1	31	14	-17	37	18	-19
	factual-story				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	6	-15	21	6	-15
	quotes				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	22	-10	32	22	-10
	terminology				1	2	1	0	2	2	0	16	4	-12	17	8	-9
	themes-motifs				0	2	2	0	1	1	0	10	1	-9	10	4	-6
Theory of Mind (Q2-Q4)	affective-nuanced				0	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	10	8	3	12	9
	affective-simple				0	0	0	1	0	-1	0	3	5	2	4	5	1
	cognitive-nuanced				1	1	0	1	1	0	0	7	28	21	9	30	21
	cognitive-simple				1	0	-1	3	0	-3	0	10	3	-7	14	3	-11
	confused				0	0	0	2	0	-2	0	8	0	-8	10	0	-10
Interiority - Q4	first-person-translating				1	0	-1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	2	0
	translating											0	12	12	0	12	12
Exam Marking Codes (Q4)	CONT-context											1	0	-1	1	0	-1
	DET-quote											33	23	-10	33	23	-10
	DEV-development-nuance											1	9	8	1	9	8
	LNK-link											10	9	-1	10	9	-1
	EFF-effect-language-structure											5	16	11	5	16	11
	CLAIM-answer-to-question											9	14	5	9	14	5
	TECH-terminology-technique											13	5	-8	13	5	-8

7.10 – Focused Comparisons

7.10.1 – Questionnaire 1 coding instances for “feelings” and “judgment”

Codes		Q1	Q2	Q3	Totals
Feelings	positive	29	16	6	51
	neutral	10	1	0	11
	negative	19	7	4	30
Judgment	positive	25	26	6	57
	neutral	12	2	1	15
	negative	14	7	2	23

7.10.2 - Coding instances for strength of feeling, Questionnaire 1.

Codes		Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Strength of feeling	strong	8	4	4
	moderate	29	19	6
	weak	14	1	1

7.10.3 - Theory of mind coding instances, Questionnaire 1.

affective - nuanced	20
affective - simple	48
cognitive - nuanced	16
cognitive - simple	81
confused	8

7.10.4 - Overlaps of coding instances for theory of mind, Questionnaire 1.

		Student Feelings			Characterisation		
		negative	neutral	positive	evil	mixed	good
Theory of Mind	affective-nuanced	0	0	4	1	13	6
	affective-simple	3	0	7	22	12	2
	cognitive-nuanced	0	0	0	4	7	4
	cognitive-simple	11	1	5	53	17	1
	confused	0	0	0	3	2	0

7.10.5 - Responses flagged as aligning with misogynistic tropes, quoted from Appendix 2.

Student	Excerpted comment
R1	LM must be beautiful as she is foul and it Shakepseare wouldnot make her ugly both in and out
T1	-she doesn't want to be a women and wants a male child but throughout the play she seems to show signs that she wouldn't be a good mum -she dies at the end (kind of wish it happened earlier)
W1	She married Macbeth for the power and the wealth and ruins Macbeth's life and mind through her manipulation.
T	Lady Macbeth is a evil character. Oh she a gold digger because she treats Macbeth as someone to climb higher and preassures him to kill
V1	she is very representative of the females of this generation, she is manipulator, she is a liar, and marries for wealth and power.

7.10.6 – Questionnaire 2 personal sentiment coding compared to Questionnaire 1

Questionnaire:		First	Second	Difference
Judgment	positive	32	40	8
	neutral	9	6	-3
	negative	11	2	-9
Feelings	positive	28	37	9
	neutral	6	5	-1
	negative	11	3	-8

7.10.7 – Interviews – Explicit connection instances

Response:	text			character		
	before	after	difference	before	after	difference
no	2	0	-2	7	0	-7
mixed	1	4	3	6	5	-1
yes	5	7	2	0	4	4

Appendix 8 - Code Book

8.1 – Code Distribution

Which groups of data were coded with which groups of codes:

Data Category	**Codes used and relevant sub-section number (see brackets) within Appendix 8**
Questionnaires: Questions 1-3	Aesthetic Features (8.2), Efferent Features (8.3), Empathy Features (8.4), Lady Macbeth Characterisation (8.5), Self-Relevance Features (8.6)
Questionnaire 2: Question 4	Questionnaire Reflection Codes (8.7)
Discussion Observation Notes	Discussion Codes (8.8)
Student-Written Pastiches	Pastiche Codes (8.9)
Interviews: all questions	Aesthetic Features (8.2), Efferent Features (8.3), Empathy Features (8.4), Lady Macbeth Characterisation (8.5), Self-Relevance Features (8.6), Reading Experience (8.10)
Interviews: think-out-loud planning (Question 4)	Efferent Features (8.3), Empathy Features (8.5), Exam Marking Codes (8.11)

8.2 - Aesthetic Features

Student expressions of emotion (affective experience) in discussing their reading

Code	**Explanation**	**Indicative examples**	**Related sources** (if applicable for deductive coding)
Feelings*	Students' personal feelings of enjoyment or of dislike.		Wording in the efferent-aesthetic scale used by Cox and Many (1992) and adapted for example by Vijayarajoo and Samuel (2013), and broad reference to Rosenblatt's (1995) and Atherton's (2024) discussions of an aesthetic reading stance.
- - positive		"I enjoy Macbeth as a play as it's interesting" (V, Appendix 3)	
- - neutral-balanced		"I feel pretty indifferent to the play as a whole" (U, Appendix 2)	
- - negative		"she sucks" (H1, Appendix 2)	
Judgment*	Students' personal evaluation of		
- - positive		"it has great writing and use of	

	quality – i.e. whether the text or character is well-made in their view.	language" (M, Appendix 2)	
- - neutral-balanced		"its not a bad play with some good character development, however it is a bit dull" (R1, Appendix 2)	
- - negative		"Macbeth is an initially confusing play, with its old English seemingly being difficult to understand" (Q, Appendix 2)	
*While "feelings" and "judgment" often overlapped, as in B's description of *Macbeth* as having "a magnificent story" (Appendix 2), some cases were clearly separable as one or the other, as when K distinguished his view of quality from his feelings: "Macbeth is a masterpiece. […] Nevertheless, I don't feel any particular way about the play […] Although it doesn't thrill me, I don't mind it" (Appendix 2).			
Level of emotion			
- - strong	How strongly students expressed a sentiment, whether positive or negative.	"annoying as hell" (N1, Appendix 2)	
- - moderate		"I enjoyed Macbeth as a play" (V, Appendix 2)	
- - weak		"I feel that its a bit boring" (X, Appendix 2)	

8.3 - Efferent Features

Code	**Explanation**	**Indicative examples**	**Related sources** (if applicable for deductive coding)
exam-mention	Explicit mention of the exam	"its on my gcse" (C1, Appendix 2)	Wording in the efferent-aesthetic scale used by Cox and Many (1992) and adapted for example by
exam-technique	References to strategies or techniques taught for the exam	"we have had to hunt for themes and motifs in it and memorise	

		quotes" (M1, Appendix 2)	Vijayarajoo and Samuel (2013), and broad reference to Rosenblatt's (1995) and Atherton's (2024) discussions of an efferent reading stance
factual-story	Emotionless explanation of plot or timeline	"the main story is about a thane called Macbeth who killed the king Duncan" (E1, Appendix 2)	
quotes	Direct quotation from the play	"such as Banquo's murder - 'Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck'" (M, Appendix 2)	
terminology	Use of technical subject terminology, such as "metaphor" or "motif"	"we have had to hunt for themes and motifs in it and memorise quotes" (M, Appendix 2)	
themes-motifs	Reference to specific named themes and motifs studied in lessons	"blood and heaven and hell and equivocation" (P1, Appendix 2)	
atomisation-ref	Reference to breaking the play into small or excessively small units	"since it's like quote-centric, and like language and structure, you don't get like an overall—you don't think of like an overall arc" (S3, Appendix 4.1B)	An aspect of scientism as discussed by Eaglestone (2021)

8.4 - Empathy Features

Code	**Explanation**	**Indicative examples**	**Related sources** (if applicable for deductive coding)
Empathic Concern	Sympathy for what Lady		Affective and empathic concern

- somewhat	Macbeth experiences, divided into qualified and implied sympathy (“somewhat”) and unqualified sympathetic statements (“clear”).	“she shows a more vulnerable side” (U, Appendix 2)	(Keen, 2022; Burke et al., 2016)
- clear		“she was not truly evil but simply wanted Macbeth to kill Duncan to further the little influence she had” (M1, Appendix 2)	
Interpretation - Theory of Mind	Interpretations of Lady Macbeth’s thoughts (cognitive) and feelings (affective), including interpretations of her meaning when speaking.		Theory of mind as discussed in Wells et al. (2021), Burke et al. (2016), Kidd and Castano (2013), and Keen (2022)
- cognitive-simple		“is hiding stuff throughout the play” (P, Appendix 2)	
- cognitive-nuanced		“she hides her true feelings from Duncan and even Macbeth when motivating him to kill Duncan despite her not wanting to herself” (M1, Appendix 2)	
- affective-simple		“she feels quite guilty closer to her death” (Y, Appendix 2)	
- affective-nuanced		“begins to build a nagging guilt that builds up into an unbearable depression” (F, Appendix 2)	
- confused	References to having difficulty understanding Lady Macbeth’s	“I did not understand when she was remind[ed of] her father by King Duncan” (Z, Appendix 2)	

	thoughts or meaning.		
Interior Perspective*	Students translating Lady Macbeth's meaning from her perspective, sometimes to the point of using first person.		Caracciolo (2014) on first-person perspective in simulations; Keen (2022) on perspective-taking
- translating*		"she's saying, she's also got blood on her hands, but she's not as cowardly as Macbeth" (S1, 4.2A)	
- first-person*		"the rugged Russian bear, like, I'll take on any animal" (S3, 4.2B)	

* these codes were applied throughout but instances were only found in interview data

8.5 - Lady Macbeth Characterisation - Inductive coding

Code	**Explanation**	**Indicative examples**
evil	Every description characterising Lady Macbeth was rated as one of these 3 categories. "Evil" required an absence of good traits, praise, or sympathy, while "sympathetic-good" required some praise or justification of her and no criticism.	"She is treacherous and against God. She is also controlling" (D, Appendix 2)
neutral-mixed		"at first she is manipulative towards Macbeth but the tables turn and he starts hiding things" (B, Appendix 2)
sympathetic-good		"she is a woman trying to carve her path in a world where it is hard for women to do so […] on the inside, she seems much more unsure and less confident" (G1, Appendix 2)
Stereotypical language	Coding instances generated through a word frequency search.	
- power-focus		"power," "ambition," "domination" and other grammatical forms of these words
- puppet-master		"control," "cunning," "influence," and "manipulate," and other grammatical forms of these words

8.6 - Self-Relevance Features

Code	**Explanation**	**Indicative examples**	**Related sources** (if applicable for deductive coding)
connection-self	References to feeling connected (relatedness and self-relevance) or disconnected on the basis of self, context, or language.	"more relatable when M isn't telling her things" (Student M, Appendix 2)	Relatedness questionnaire item wording from Van der Kaap-Deeder et al. (2020); Ryan & Deci (2017); Vansteenkiste et al. (2018)
disconnection-self		"it is hard to relate to any of the characters" (Student U, Appendix 2)	
connection-context		"relevance today with character archetypes in modern literature and films" (Appendix 2, Sutdent Q1)	
disconnection-context		"was written for a Jacobean audience (I'm not Jacobean)" (Student D, Appendix 2)	
disconnection-language		"it's written in old English which at times makes it a bit difficult to understand" (Student C1, Appendix 2)	
Interview-only connection codes:			
connection-yes	Students' explicit statements in the interviews about whether they connected with the text or character.	"Yeah. I feel like I connected because we got to do the acting out" (S8, Appendix 4.1D)	
connection-mixed		"I feel like I haven't really	

		connected to any of the characters. But the kind of setting, and like premises of the play, and then like the themes of the play are interesting, and I've kind of connected more to that." (S5, Appendix 4.1C)	
connection-no		"I feel like what we do for the exam makes us less connected to characters in general, like, not just Lady Macbeth." (S3, Appendix 4.1B)	
connection-social	Students expressing feeling close to or enjoying the contributions of others	"interesting to see […] what everyone thought of Lady Macbeth and how they interpreted her" (S1, Appendix 4.2A)	The social aspect of dialogic learning in English (Elliott, 2021)
agency-ownership	Students expressing a feeling of ownership or agency in their writing	"I liked how we added to the world of Macbeth with our own writing" (S4, Appendix 4.2B)	Writer-response as conceived of by McCallum (2012)

8.7 - Questionnaire Reflection Codes

Code	**Explanation**	**Indicative examples**	**Related sources** (if applicable for deductive coding)
enjoyment-interest-positive	Explicit approval or enjoyment of the intervention	"I enjoyed creating an Act4 scene […] it was very interesting" (Student K, Appendix 3)	
enjoyment-interest-negative	Explicit negative feeling towards the intervention	"too many questions" (Student A, Appendix 3)	
creativity-ideas	Statements appreciating creativity or the profusion of ideas	"allowed my creative juices to flow" (Student K, Appendix 3)	
social	Social focus: appreciating or describing in detail others' ideas and interaction with others	getting to "see how people have written their LMs" (Student V, Appendix 3)	Relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2017)
depth	Language related to depth for student thinking or of characterisation	"it pushed me to go deeper in her character and get in her mindset" (Student W, Appendix 3)	Narrative schemas, not from Text World Theory but from cognitive linguistics (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015)
expansion	Language related to expansion of student thinking or of characterisation	"It forced us to think about her as a character in whole and not too zoomed in" (Student Z, Appendix 3)	
world-images	Wording related to mental imagery – mentally envisioning or depicting characters	"opened my eyes to more views" (Student G, Appendix 3)	Text-worlds as a "mental picture" (Gavins, 2007, p. 2)

8.8 - Discussion Codes – Inductive coding

Code	**Explanation**	**Indicative examples**
connection-text	Connections made between the pastiches and the play.	“theme of harvest” (Appendix 5)
quantity-detail	References to how long or detailed the monologues were.	“longest speech” (Appendix 5)
technique	Named techniques.	“animal imagery motif” (Appendix 5)
technique-with-effect	Explanation connecting a technique to an effect.	“the repetition in one spot ‘shows how desperate she is’” (Appendix 5)
Affective-ToM	See 8.4 – same standards applied.	
Cognitive-ToM		

8.9 - Pastiche Codes

Code	**Explanation**	**Indicative examples**	**Related sources** (if applicable for deductive coding)
Scene Type			Caracciolo (2014) on first-person “simulation,” and Keen (2022) on perspective-taking
- interaction-dialogue	Purely external perspective on Lady Macbeth as she interacts with someone	Student T, Appendix 6	
- interaction-and-interiority	Some of Lady Macbeth’s speech is directed at others, and some expresses her inner thoughts	Student B, Appendix 6	
- interiority-full	Purely internal thoughts (soliloquy) from Lady Macbeth	Student D, Appendix 6	
Lady Macbeth Characterisation			
- evil	See 8.5 – the same standards were applied as in the questionnaires.		
- neutral-mixed			
- sympathetic-good			

- suffering	Characterisation including some focus on Lady Macbeth suffering emotionally.	"*LM breaks down in tears*" (Student F, Appendix 6)	
Writing Techniques			
- quote-direct	Direct quotes or quote fragments from *Macbeth*.	"Infirm of purpose!" (Student H, Appendix 6)	
- quote-partial		"I sleep no more" (Student T, Appendix 6)	
- quote-paraphrased	Closely paraphrased quotes from *Macbeth*.	"Where is this knocking!?" (Student R, Appendix 6)	
- imagery-copying-motif	Direct copying of imagery from the play.	"Macbeth hath dealt with darkness" (Student P, Appendix 6)	Mental imagery in text-world theory (Giovanelli & Mason, 2015; Gavins, 2007) and transportation (Johnson et al., 2013)
- imagery-original-echoing-motif	Original imagery that clearly echoes an existing motif in the play.	"lone wolf" (Student S, Appendix 6)	
- imagery-original-fully	Original imagery that does not clearly echo any specific motif.	"his steady stream of reason reduced to a mist" (Student H, Appendix 6)	
- repetition	Repeated wording.	"See! See! The light is in the palm of my hand / The light… The… The light shines bright, I shine bright!" (Student F, Appendix 6)	Writer-response as explained by McCallum (2012)
- rhyme-or-other-technique	Clear literary techniques such as	"spitting, sobbing and	

	rhyme or alliteration.	screaming at the void" (Student H, Appendix 6)	
- Shakespearism	Echoes of old-fashioned "Shakespearian" language, such as "thee" and "O!"	"Ay, my good wife" (Student B, Appendix 6)	
Explanation			
- no-explanation	No explanation of the pastiche.		
- connection-technique	Connections of students' own techniques to the play text.	"I used blood imagery" (Student L, Appendix 6)	
- technique-no-effect	Technique mentioned without connecting it to an effect.	"heaven motif" (Student F, Appendix 6)	
- technique-effect	Technique explained as causing an effect.	"she calls Macbeth 'my lord' rather than his name to show a sense of formality and therefore a feeling of distance after Macbeth has Banquo killed without telling her" (Student Y, Appendix 6).	
- Theory-of-Mind-cognitive	See 8.4 – same standards applied.		
- Theory-of-Mind-affective			

8.10 – Reading Experience

Code	**Explanation**	**Indicative examples**	**Related sources** (deductive coding)

aesthetic-over-efferent	Students' description of an experiential or emotionally involved reading experience	"seeing how they change […] it makes them feel more like a person and less like [...] an archetype" (S2, Appendix 4.1A)	Aesthetic reading (Rosenblatt, 1995)
immersion	Descriptions of immersive reading or language of immersion	"you can also put yourself into the book" (S2, Appendix 4.2A)	Immersive reading in Text World Theory (Gavins, 2007), and transportation as a cognitive linguistics concept (Mason & Giovanelli, 2021)
perspective-taking	References to taking on the perspective of a character	"you can put yourself in the shoes of the character […] think like, what would they be thinking" (S1, Appendix 4.1A)	Perspective-taking as associated with narrative empathy (Keen, 2022; Burke et al., 2016)
theory-of-mind	Descriptions of theory of mind (conceptual descriptions of ToM itself, not explanations of a character's thoughts)	"enough detail about a character that you kind of know how they think" (S1, Appendix 4.1A)	Theory of mind as discussed in Wells et al. (2021), Burke et al. (2016), Kidd and Castano (2013), and Keen (2022)
interpretations	References to varying interpretations or others' views of Lady Macbeth	"obviously the thing I wrote and the thing S4 wrote weren't the same, you can see like different interpretations"	

		(S3, Appendix 4.2B)	
world-image		"everyone had built up a pretty strong image of the character in their mind" (S1, Appendix 4.2A)	Mental imagery as described within Text World Theory (Gavins, 2007)

8.11 - Exam Marking Codes

Code	**Explanation**	**Indicative examples**	**Related sources** (deductive coding)
CLAIM-answer-to-question	Claims or argument points responding to the overall extract question	"a point about her being a powerful character—is how she seems to keep her cool in this, after they've killed Duncan" (S6, Appendix 4.2C)	Conceptually adapted from department practice with reference to OCR's (2022) specification
DET-detail-evidence	Textual details as evidence – quotes or sometimes paraphrased quotes	"how easy it were then" (S5, Appendix 4.2C)	
TECH-terminology-technique	Named technical features of language or structure	"rhyming" (Appendix 4.1D)	
EFF-effect-of-language-structure	Described or explained effect of a language or structure feature	"shows that he's getting evil like the witches" (S6, Appendix 4.1C)	
DEV-development-nuance	Extending of a line of argument to a further conclusion or to include another layer or fact	"as well as scolding him, she's also, like, insulting him" (S5, Appendix 4.2C)	

Appendix 9: Suspected ChatGPT Instances

My generated ChatGPT descriptions:

Lady Macbeth is a central character in Shakespeare's "Macbeth," known for her ambition and ruthless pursuit of power. She manipulates her husband, Macbeth, into murdering King Duncan to seize the throne but later suffers from intense guilt and psychological deterioration. Her descent into madness and eventual suicide highlight the destructive consequences of unchecked ambition.

Lady Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's most complex and intriguing characters, known for her fierce ambition and manipulation. She is instrumental in convincing her husband to murder King Duncan, showcasing her ruthless determination to achieve power. Initially, she appears strong and unyielding, but as the play progresses, the weight of their crimes leads her to intense guilt and psychological unraveling. Her descent into madness, marked by sleepwalking and hallucinations, ultimately results in her tragic demise, illustrating the destructive consequences of unchecked ambition and moral corruption.

Lady Macbeth is a central character in Shakespeare's "Macbeth," marked by her intense ambition and ruthless drive for power. She manipulates her husband, Macbeth, to murder King Duncan, demonstrating her determination to achieve their shared aspirations. Despite her initial strength and resolve, she becomes consumed by guilt, leading to sleepwalking and hallucinations. Ultimately, her overwhelming remorse and psychological decline result in her tragic demise.

The coded instances (which turned out to be the same two students in both questionnaires, confirming the suspicion):

Lady Macbeth, driven by ambition, spurs her husband to commit regicide in Shakespeare's "Macbeth." As guilt overtakes her, her sleepwalking reveals the psychological toll. She stands as a symbol of the destructive impact of unchecked ambition.

Lady Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's most complex and intriguing characters, embodying ambition, manipulation, and the consequences of unchecked ambition. However, her guilt and descent into madness highlight the tragic consequences of her actions, showcasing the psychological toll of ambition unrestrained by morality.

Lady Macbeth's unbridled ambition propels her husband towards regicide in Shakespeare's "Macbeth." Consumed by guilt, her sleepwalking exposes the psychological toll of their actions. She becomes emblematic of the destructive consequences of uncontrolled ambition.

Lady Macbeth is a complex character in Shakespeare's play "Macbeth," known for her ambition and manipulation. She is driven by her desire for power and control, pushing her husband to commit murder to fulfill their ambitions.

Appendix 10 – Extract Questions Used in Interviews

First Interviews - Before the Intervention

Explore the extent to which Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a powerful character.

LADY MACBETH

Come on;

Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;

Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.

MACBETH

So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:

Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;

Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:

Unsafe the while, that we

Must lave our honours in these flattering streams,

And make our faces vizards to our hearts,

Disguising what they are.

LADY MACBETH

You must leave this.

MACBETH

O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!

Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

LADY MACBETH

But in them nature's copy's not eterne.

MACBETH

There's comfort yet; they are assailable;

Then be thou jocund: ere the bat hath flown

His cloister'd flight, ere to black Hecate's summons

The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums

Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done

A deed of dreadful note.

LADY MACBETH

What's to be done?

MACBETH

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,

Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,

Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day;

And with thy bloody and invisible hand

Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond

Which keeps me pale! Light thickens; and the crow

Makes wing to the rooky wood:

Good things of day begin to droop and drowse;

While night's black agents to their preys do rouse.

Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still;

Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.

Second Interviews - After the Intervention

Explore the extent to which Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a powerful character.

MACBETH

Still it cried 'Sleep no more!' to all the house:

'Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor

Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more.'

LADY MACBETH

Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,

You do unbend your noble strength, to think

So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,

And wash this filthy witness from your hand.

Why did you bring these daggers from the place?

They must lie there: go carry them; and smear

The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH

I'll go no more:

I am afraid to think what I have done;

Look on't again I dare not.

LADY MACBETH

Infirm of purpose!

Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead

Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood

That fears a painted devil.

If he do bleed,

I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;

For it must seem their guilt.

Exit. Knocking within.

MACBETH

Whence is that knocking?

How is't with me, when every noise appals me?

What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes.

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood

Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather

The multitudinous seas in incarnadine,

Making the green one red.

Re-enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH

My hands are of your colour; but I shame

To wear a heart so white.

Knocking within

I hear a knocking

At the south entry: retire we to our chamber;

A little water clears us of this deed:

How easy is it, then!