



Techniques of Teaching Metaphors in Class

Tursunov Mirzo Makhmudovich

Senior teacher (PhD) English linguistics department, Bukhara State University

Figurative language is a way to say one thing while meaning something entirely different. It is often used in poetry and includes forms of speech such as apostrophe, alliteration, hyperbole, idiom, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification, simile, and understatement. Teaching figurative language should begin with learning how and when each device is used in context.

At present time, metaphor has become one of the most essential stylistic devices widely used in formal and informal speeches. Metaphors play crucial role in explaining this or that idea in every day speech of any language user and in any language. People use a number of metaphors unwillingly, probably naturally, as our brains have already got used to having tendency to implement powerful comparisons in speech as they assist in making the language more beautiful, speech more persuasive. Metaphors have already become active and usual lexical forms that should be explained, taught to the language learners. Effective methods, techniques, activities should be used to teach metaphors in class [3, 2277].

A metaphor is using two seemingly unrelated objects to draw a comparison or to point out a similarity. For example: He has the heart of a lion. She has the energy of a bunny. The canvas of life is colorful.

All of these sentences take ideas that cannot literally be true and use them to convey meaning in an interesting way. You cannot literally have a lion heart instead of a human heart, but describing someone as having a lion's heart is a more eloquent way of saying that he is brave.

Getting metaphors into writing is another important issue that should be taken into consideration. Before you attempt getting your students to use more vibrant language in their writing, it's important to try to get them to recognize a metaphor and how it benefits a passage. Recognition of the use of metaphors is crucial in order for your student to weave the use of metaphors naturally into his own writing.

Poetry is filled with metaphorical language. The study of poetry is a great way to help your student find and dissect metaphorical language. Whether you're reading Shakespeare or Poe, it's rare that you will pick up a piece of poetry and not find a metaphor. In fact, teaching metaphors and poetry in the same unit alongside each other is a great way to cover both concepts [4, 29]. When you're choosing poetry to cover, try choosing things that have obvious metaphors. If it's not obvious to you, it probably isn't going to be obvious to your student. Likewise, encouraging your student to write poems is a great way to encourage the use of metaphors.

There are more than a few books that use metaphor as a literary device and chances are that anything you pick up will have some examples that you can pull out/1/.

Teaching metaphors should be looked at as a process rather than a one time unit. It is a concept that can be taught as early as fourth grade (or when the student is capable of writing fluently), but should be revisited each year. Each time you teach metaphors and similar types of syntax, you should delve a little more deeply, encouraging the student to explore on their own [7, 34].

Younger children may have a harder time with some of the many complicated types of figurative language, so you may wish to start with just explaining the two most common types: metaphors and similes. The worksheet provided below defines metaphor and simile and offers children an



opportunity to work with these two pieces of speech [6, 65]. Print the worksheet and have your child determine whether each example uses a metaphor or a simile, or both.

Great is the sun, and wide he goes
Through empty heaven with repose;
And in the blue and glowing days
Thicker than rain he showers his rays.
Though closer still the blinds we pull
To keep the shady parlor cool,
Yet he will find a chink or two
To slip his golden fingers through.
The dusty attic spider-clad
He, through the keyhole, maketh glad;
And through the broken edge of tiles
Into the laddered hay-loft smiles.
Meantime his golden face around
He bares to all the garden ground,
And sheds a warm and glittering look
Among the ivy's inmost nook.
Above the hills, along the blue,
Round the bright air with footing true,
To please the child, to paint the rose,
The gardener of the World, he goes.
(Robert Louis Stevenson)

The activity presented above can assist in raising language learners awareness and in increasing their world outlook, that is to say, they can create new images, new models of the language ideas/3/.

All learning happens through connection. We make sense of new information by forging connections to something we already know. For example, early automobiles made sense to people because they were described as “horseless carriages.” When connections are unusual or unexpected, they can lead to creative insights that result in new ideas [9, 28]. For example, William Harvey compared the heart to a pump, which paved the way for his discovery that blood circulates. Understanding existing ideas and creating new ones rely on recognizing and comparing similarities and differences across concepts—in other words, on making connections. Three forms of figurative language are most often used for this purpose:

Metaphor—this word from old Greek literally means “to carry” or transfer ideas from one set of concepts to another/2/. Example: The cell is a factory.

Enliven your teaching and help your students perceive the world in new ways by trying any of the following: post in each corner of the room a picture of something that can serve as a metaphor for a concept you are teaching. Ask students to go to the metaphor that best matches their thinking



and to discuss with the other students in that corner why they chose that metaphor. Each group then summarizes their thinking for the class. Tip: Use images that involve action. Action images, such as putting out a fire, lead to richer metaphors.

Take students on a 20-minute walk, looking for objects and situations that make interesting metaphors for concepts you are studying. Students can take photographs or make lists [8, 58]. When they return to the classroom, have them choose one image or list item and fully develop it as a metaphor. Share results in a gallery walk.

Have students create collages using magazine images that metaphorically represent a concept or some aspect of it. They can label each image with a word or phrase and then complete the sentence

“My concept is a lot like ____ because it...”

Check out *The Private Eye*. You will find lesson plans that make use of a jeweller’s loupe (a magnification tool), and great questions to help your students make creative and often profound connections between the natural world and the concepts you are teaching.

When you have a minute, please share a metaphor, simile or analogy developed by a student. Here’s one to kick start our list: “School is like a toaster. You put something in and it comes out better than it was before.”

Teachers are at the center of pupils’ attentions. A teacher can ask students to use metaphors to describe themselves. The following metaphors to describe teachers are the popular metaphorical descriptions of teachers’ roles in classroom [4, 29].

1. A teacher is a gardener.

Friedrich Froebel developed this metaphor to explain the role of the teacher, student and environment in early childhood education.

Froebel believed that the ideal learning environment for children is in a private natural setting away from the corruption of the adult world beyond. He saw schools as gardens (hence: kindergarten, German for children’s garden).

The children would be flowers, naturally growing and blooming into something beautiful.

Teachers, therefore, were gardeners: gently tending to the children’s needs. Teachers should nourish and nurture children, ensuring they have the perfect environment for their development in the garden.

2. A teacher is a coach.

A teacher who is a coach is different to a teacher who is a gardener. When we think of coaches, we think of tough love. The coach pushes us to go beyond our limits. When we’re hurting, the coach tells us: “just a little more”.

Of course, teachers aren’t coaches in quite the same way as sports coaches, but there are many overlaps that make this metaphor relevant and useful for reflecting on the role of an educator in the 21st Century.

3. A teacher is a juggler.

Any teacher would agree with this one! Teaching requires multiprocessing. A class full of 20 to 30 students is hard to manage at the best of times. Add to this that different children have different abilities, learning styles and needs, and you can see why this metaphor works.

Here’s just a few of the things a teacher might need to keep in their mind at any point in time:



The needs of children with learning disabilities

The fact that a few students will fly ahead of the class and finish work super early

A few students won't be able to understand the topic and will need additional support

One or two students don't get along and need to be kept in separate spaces in the classroom

A child needs to have his medications at an exact point part way through the lesson.

Metaphor is one of the strongest pointers to the type and presence of world views and philosophical assumptions implicitly assumed or explicitly acknowledged in the theories as basis of the curriculum and pedagogy. It is important to note that "world view" in this context means the "scientific" world view of these two dimensions of education. It sets the boundaries for the permissible metaphors and analogies that are basic to a disciplinary paradigm [5, 119]. A number of other assumptions are basic to education in the comprehensive sense of the term. They include: the nature of humankind, of knowledge, of the school, of teaching and learning and the assumptions present in the subject matter of the theories being taught. There is a clear relationship between the metaphorical premises chosen to portray the nature of a school and those at the basis of the choice of a curriculum. For example: If one sees the school as a "factory", then it is just a small step to thinking about the curriculum as guideline for "production", the student as "raw material" and an even smaller step to visualize teaching and learning as processes that are aimed at some form of efficient production, rational control and testable outcomes.

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