

Scaffolding through questioning

Breaking down content to build pupil understanding

Teacher: **When do we first find evidence of Macbeth's dark or evil thoughts?** [Pause] Nathan?

Pupil 1: When... I don't... what do you mean?

Teacher: As in, **in which scene do we first hear Macbeth saying he has a dark side he's hiding?**

Pupil 1: Oh! Um. Act 1, Scene 3 or um 4. Is that right?

Teacher: Absolutely, I'd agree, it's basically right from when he first appears, isn't it. But pushing that a bit, **can you think of a phrase or line in which we can find evidence to back that up?** [Pause] Jess?

Pupil 2: When he... when he says about his 'black and deep desires'?

Teacher: ...'let not light see my black and deep desires', exactly. It just works, doesn't it? **So what could Macbeth mean by that image of the 'black and deep desires', do you think?**

Pupil 2: That he, you know, he's got dark thoughts he wants to hide.

Teacher: The 'black and deep desires', sure, especially in terms of the company he's keeping here – the public thing with this aside. **Do you agree with that, Jack? What do you think about these 'black and deep desires'?**

Pupil 3: To the quotation? Um. I agree, I think, but I think it's important that he's... he's keeping them deep, hiding them away. You know, in the dark.

Teacher: **In the dark?**

Pupil 3: Because he's um linked to darkness – they're bad things, so they're black and shameful, and he wants to hide them from the... from the light because...

Teacher: **...because...**

Pupil 3: Because um the light is like positive? It's got hope and heaven linked to it, and it's also like he's hiding from his from his fate which is the stars.

Teacher: I love that, yeah, the idea of control and directing himself. Irony! **So the stars are a symbol of fate? Why?**

Pupil 3: Yeah because for the audience... for the Jacobean... they believed their um fate was in the stars?

Teacher: I like the idea – that link to the modern horoscope thing, destiny, God writing in the stars... Nathan, what would you ask about that, though? In terms of applying to Macbeth's actions?

Pupil 1: ...about...?

Teacher: About Jack's comment... about the stars and fate.

Pupil1: Oh, well... well, why is he hiding from fate if he's... well, doing fate?

Teacher: Go on, turn that into a question for the rest of the class. **Why...**

Pupil 1: Right... why is Macbeth trying to hide from his fate if it's his fate to do it?

