

TEACHING & LEARNING JOURNAL - EDITION 13

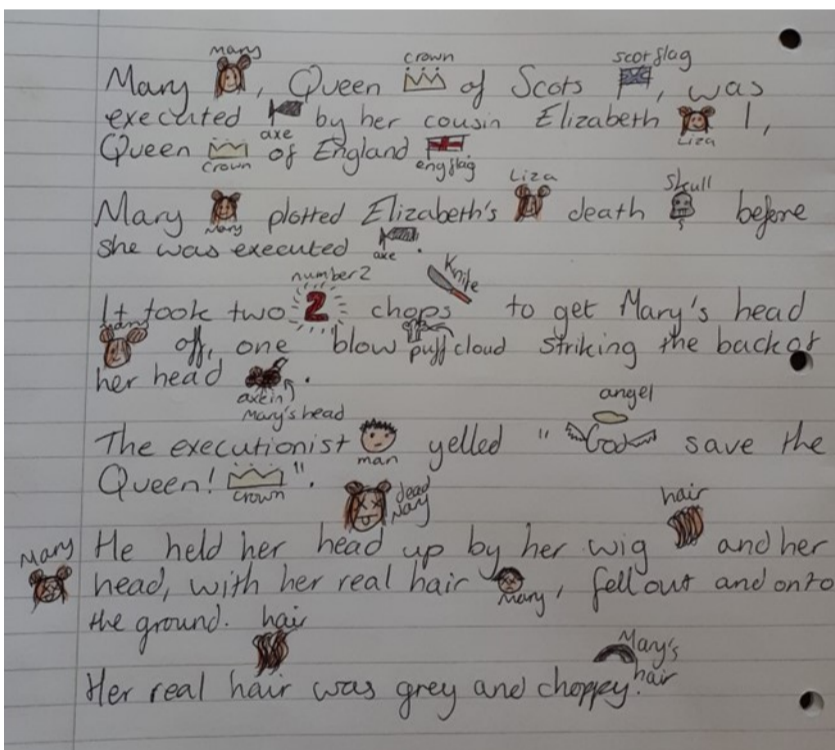
## Dual Coding

*Anthony Archer, History Teacher*

This year I have undertaken a study of dual coding as part of the metacognition training. The theory of dual coding comes from Allan Paivio who in 1972 published his first paper on the subject. He theorised that “there are two cognitive subsystems, one specialized for the representation and processing of nonverbal objects/events (i.e., imagery), and the other specialized for dealing with language”. Dual coding is the idea that just writing information does not lead to high levels of retention. However, by writing and then drawing as well, the retention level is much higher. Your brain then codes the information (memorises it) in two forms rather than one. It should also prove to make heavily written pieces of work by making the work engaging which will further help with learning.

I have often set tasks such as mindmaps and timelines for revision activities at GCSE and encouraged drawing alongside it. Older students are very resistant to doing the drawings, even though I make it clear that stickmen or equivalent are fine, that it is more about the act than the quality of artwork. This has at times led to GCSE students ‘running down the clock’ to avoid having to draw or simply refusing. The best work around I found for this was giant mind maps, a tool I have used for several years where students use board pens on tables to make huge detailed mind maps in groups. Then students lose some of their inhibitions and can rub out mistakes and take photos of their work afterwards.

During the lockdown I took the opportunity to try an idea with Year 7 called ‘sketch-notes’. The idea being to write and draw pictures as you go in the style of a decorated paragraph. The instruction I gave Year 7 was: Summarise today’s lesson using six sentences and each one must have a cartoon/stickman drawing with it. I received the below from one student in 7E and look forward to trying the idea with older students in the future.



Basic on dual coding theory.

<https://www.instructionaldesign.org/theories/dual-coding/>

Sketchnotes and lots of other practical ideas.

<https://lovetoteach87.com/2019/05/02/examples-of-dual-coding-in-the-classroom/>

