
Teaching Using Metaphors: The Sherlock Holmes Way

Created for PICNet Education Conference 2016, using a real example from Island Health

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What is a Metaphor

- An expression of one concept in terms of another. (Elements of a concept are represented by elements in seemingly unrelated concept).



Why Use Metaphors in Teaching?

- Allow learners to interact with content
 - Simulate real scenarios, or fantasy ones
 - Promote reflection
 - Encourage meaning making of information
 - Stimulate both sides of the brain (creativity and logic)
 - Research has shown learners have a greater understanding of concepts, particularly abstract ones
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Examples of Metaphors

- Terminology in computer software programs such as windows, desktop, breadcrumbs
 - Short prose/music lines such as “Love is a rose”
 - Scenarios acting out metaphors, such as mock disasters
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When to Use a Metaphor While Teaching

- Can use a metaphor when describing a concept or practice
 - Remember that a Metaphor is different from an analogy
 - Or use a metaphor as an active activity (Mock Disaster)
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Example 1: Mentorship Tree Metaphor

- The tree represents the relationship between a mentor and protégé (learner)
- The trunk and root system is the mentor who has a solid and established body of knowledge



Mentorship Tree cont'd

- The branches represent the learning and knowledge exchange that occurs
- The surrounding environment represents the workplace
- The leaves or needles are the learner



What is the significance of this?

- Just as the tree needs to be nurtured by its environment, so does a mentoring relationship



The Right Conditions for Learning

- Without adequate water, sun and a route to receive the nourishment, the leaves dry and fall off (connection is: when a mentor is not adequately supported, they cannot pass on their knowledge nor can the learner receive it)



Example 2: Teaching Infection Control Concepts

- At Island Health we had three major organisms that the basics needed to be taught to staff (RNs, LPNs, HCAs, Students)
 - MRSA, Cdiff and CPO
 - Created Sherlock Holmes activity
 - Subsequent sessions included dieticians, pharmacy, physio.
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Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Missing Microbes

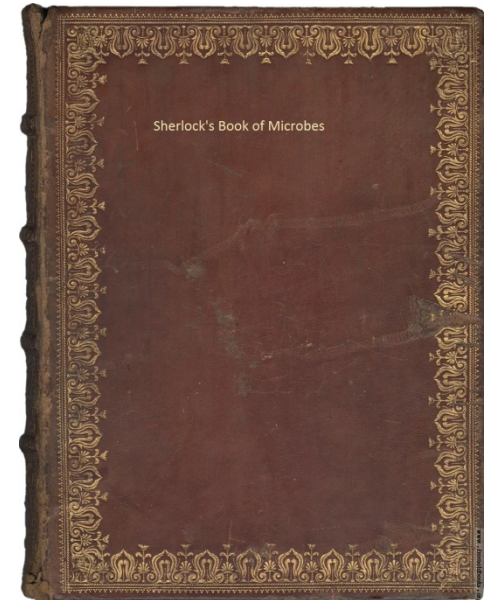
- Used Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's characters
 - Sherlock represents the IPAC program
 - Dr. Watson, Mrs Hudson, Mycroft Holmes, and Inspector LeStrade all represent ICPs
 - Sherlock's apartment represents a hospital unit
 - Recruited detectives (our target audience) represent frontline staff needing the education
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The Idea Was...

- That each learner would go through 3 education stations to learn about each microbe, in particular how they are transmitted and why the learner needs to know about the microbes
 - To get to each station the learners had to solve clues about the microbes
 - They would be learning while having fun
 - They would “see” where microbes hide
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We booked a meeting room

- And turned it into Sherlock's apartment



The Room Had Antique Pictures on the Wall, and

- A commode representing a toilet,
- Dining room table complete with table cloth, placemat, metal bowl and mug.
- We tested paper plates & plastic cutlery but it didn't hold the glowgerm



We Also had...

- A stretcher with a body outline on the sheet (representing a hospital bed with patient in)
- Books on a shelf (binders disguised as antique books)
- Wash basin for a sink
- Goodies for the Detectives!



Next We Added Characters to Teach

- ICPs and Hand Hygiene Auditors dressed up in clothes resembling the late 1800s period
- One character per station to teach the participants



Our Characters Included:

- Sherlock Holmes, Mycroft Holmes, Dr. Watson, & Mrs Hudson



Next We Invited Learners

WANTED URGENTLY:

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Health Care workers (any discipline) to assist
Sherlock Holmes in solving the Case of the Missing Microbes
on Friday October 24th 1884 (2014 by your calendar) in
VGH Cafeteria Room 1814.

Drop In between 1000 and 1300 hours.

This task should take you approximately 15 minutes of fun!

And they came!



They Needed Instructions

- Each Detective (Learner) was given a letter, which included instructions for participating

24 October 1884



Dear Colleague,

Thank you ever so kindly for agreeing to help us. Detective Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard has hired myself, Sherlock Holmes, to solve the Case of the Missing Microbes. However, I require all the help available to be able to solve this case. Hence, your involvement has become most imperative to Dr. Watson and myself being able to solve this case.

Background

The case we are working on is called "the Case of the Missing Microbes." My arch nemesis Professor Moriarty has developed a plan to use germ warfare to take over Scotland Yard. He has most of the microbes he needs to do this, but is missing three sets. Myself, Dr. Watson, and you are tasked with finding the missing microbes before Moriarty does. It is believed that all the microbes are in my flat at 221B Baker Street.

Plan

Go directly to 221B Baker Street. Sign in at the door with Inspector Lestrade. He will give you an instruction sheet and a microbe seeking flashlight. You will get clue #1 from Mycroft Holmes. Be careful though as my older brother he is known to partake in sibling rivalry antics, so make sure you get the clue you need. Find the microbe in three places inside my flat and write the areas down. To find the microbe look in spots you think will they be most likely found based on the clue, and shine your flashlight on it. If there is a microbe present, the area will glow under the flashlight. Remember, all the microbes will glow the same, so use your clue to pinpoint the location and you will be able to find the microbe you are looking for in more than 3 areas (an advantage in solving the case). Take your clue to the next character to verify locations and obtain your next clue card. Clue #2 will come from Mrs. Hudson, my landlady and housekeeper, and #3 from Dr. Watson, my able bodied assistant. You must do the clues in order of numbering. After you finish clue #3 please find me to hand in your flashlight and I will give you a small reward.

The Game is afoot,

Sherlock Holmes

Next We Gave Them Clues

- There were 3 clues
- Each from a different character

Clue Card #1

This microbe might be normal flora present on people's skin. Please list the 3 spots you found this microbe inside Sherlock Holmes' flat.

#1

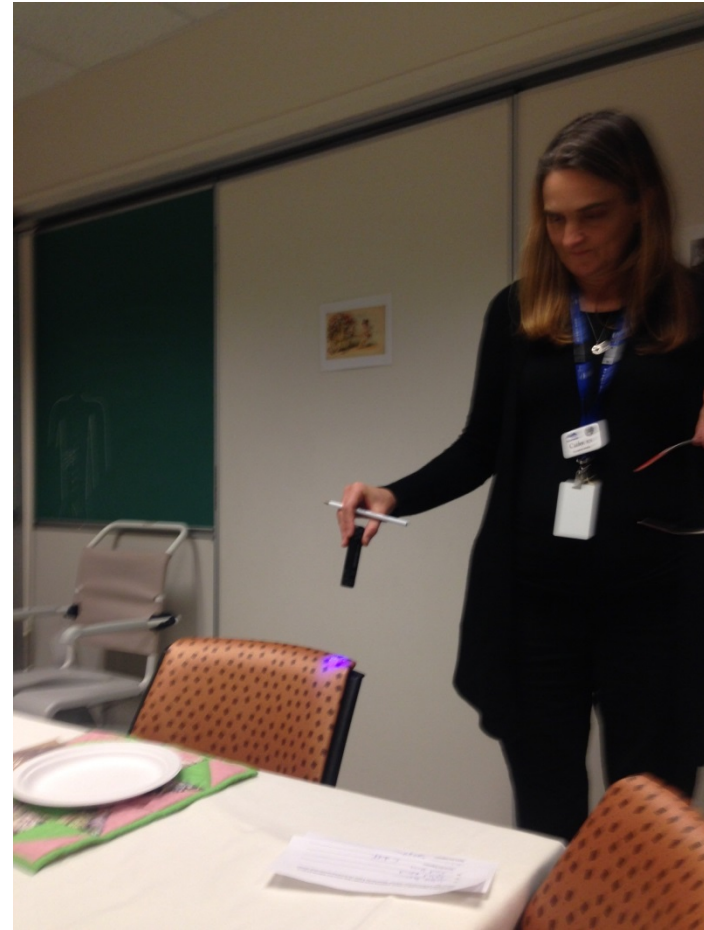
#2

#3

Name the Organism:

And the Learners Explored the Apartment

- They used little UV flashlights to find where the microbes may be hiding



Everyone Had Fun!

- Well, maybe not Mycroft
- He was arrested for having dirty hands



After Finding All 3 Microbes

- Each Detective (Learner) received a certificate



Why We Liked It

- The complete activity took 5-15 minutes for each learner to complete
 - Other than the costumes, easy to set up and can be taken to the units or held in a central room
 - Participants frequently said it was fun.
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Questions Anyone?

