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'Material Culture': exploring a range of strategies that seek to enhance Year 7 students' intercultural awareness through the communicative lens of Textile Design

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Abstract

'Material Culture' encapsulates a classroom-based action research study, which aims to enhance Year 7 students' understandings of cultural identity and migration, in order to encourage a heightened 'intercultural awareness'. Ultimately, this research intends to engender tolerance amongst participants, and to aid 'BAME' inclusion, by providing an insight into cross-cultural issues. This study simultaneously seeks to challenge students' preconceptions of Textile Design (hence the wordplay for its title); advocating this as a communicative medium, employing both narrative and metaphor, and as a means of exploring important sociocultural concepts. The classroom intervention discussed in this paper was implemented in a Design & Technology classroom within a state-funded secondary school, situated in a semi-rural area of the United Kingdom.

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Introduction

“Regardless of where they live, young people today are likely to spend their lives in contexts that are shaped … by historical and contemporary forces of migration and the interchange of ideas … [and] cultures …” (Dawes-Duraisingh, Sheya, & Kane, 2018, p.213). This classroom-based research seeks to enhance Year 7 students’ understandings of cultural identity and migration, to encourage a heightened “intercultural awareness” (Arizpe, Bagelman, Devlin, Farrell, & McAdam, 2014, p.306), ultimately aiming to inspire tolerance. This appears especially important at a time when xenophobia, connected to recent migration, appears to be on the increase (McAdam, 2019, p.293), despite the fact that “migration is an age-old phenomenon and an inherent part of what it means to be human” (Dawes-Duraisingh et al., 2018, p.212). This project responds to a report, emphasising the importance of teaching ‘Migration, Belonging and Empire’ (MB&E) at compulsory Key Stage 3 (KS3) level, to ensure that all students understand “how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world” (McIntosh, Todd, & Das, 2019, p.3). The report explicitly discusses History and English education, but suggests that this topic should be implemented across different disciplines (ibid., p.12), if to effectively inspire Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) inclusion. Therefore, I chose to research these issues within a Design & Technology (D&T) classroom, using the communicative medium of textiles (Andrew, 2008), implementing the combined lens of narrative and metaphor (Hanne & Kaal, 2019). It is important to note that the ‘BAME’ descriptor is all-encompassing, and I would argue is consequently homogenising in itself. I would further argue that this label may actually serve to downplay the distinct issues experienced by heterogeneous groups of individuals, who represent diverse ethnic minority communities. However, I purposefully use this acronym within this particular paper, firstly because it is the widely accepted term in current usage, and secondly to highlight ongoing intercultural issues that are thought to be shared by all ethnic minority groups.

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It is suggested that "human beings are cultural beings … and human identity itself needs to be understood in a culturally mediated manner" (Parekh, cited in Osler, 2015, p.18). Therefore, my research explores cultural identity through the creation of "cultural output" (Sovran, 2013, p.149). The communication-based textiles focus within this project simultaneously aims to challenge students' preconceptions of Textile Design, advocating this as a means of exploring important sociocultural concepts. Coincidentally, the intertwining themes of narrative, metaphor and society would appear inextricable with textiles, when considering established linguistic metaphors, such as 'social fabric', and the 'weaving' of stories, or 'yarns'. Textiles-based metaphors are even used to describe identity construction, as Gómez-Estern & Benítez (2013) employ 'interweaving', to discuss migrants' cultural identities.

Literature Review

Figure 1: Diagram illustrating the interconnecting themes explored and synthesised within this literature review

This literature review encompasses various (and perhaps seemingly discrete) themes: migration, cultural identity, material culture, "communicative textiles" (Andrew, 2008), in addition to narrative

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and metaphor (N&M). Therefore, Figure 1, which I have conceived and drawn for this paper, offers a diagrammatic representation to illustrate the way in which I aim to synthesise these themes within this review, with reference to existing literature from the four key perspectives of MB&E, Textile Design, N&M and Education. The intersections within this diagram serve to communicate how I envisage the convergence of these four broader themes, and to denote key sub-themes explored.

The importance of teaching 'Migration, Belonging and Empire' (MB&E)

McIntosh et al. (2019) advocate teaching MB&E at compulsory KS3 level, as opposed to at a later, optional stage, to guarantee that all students are aware of these issues. This argument is reminiscent of the recent debate in higher education, to 'decolonise the curriculum' (Bhambra et al., cited in McIntosh et al., 2019, p.5). The authors highlight that these topics "must be understood as integral both to our history and to the richness of British culture", to encourage all students to become tolerant citizens (McIntosh et al., 2019, p.4), in the pursuit of equality within the United Kingdom's (UK) diverse society. This report represents a collaborative effort between the Runnymede Trust, an independent think-tank on race relations and equality in the UK, and 'Travel, Transculturality, and Identity in England' (TIDE), a research project funded by the European Research Council, and based at the University of Liverpool (from 2016 until 2021). The authors state: "a curriculum that takes little account of the long-standing presence of minorities in Britain and why they moved here … will do little to end the stereotyping and racist attitudes that continue to hinder the life chances of B[A]ME adults" (ibid., p.5). The report suggests this is now particularly urgent, as the European Referendum in 2016 "brought our relationship with migration, belonging, and empire to the fore", in addition to the Windrush scandal in 2018, which "laid bare the dearth of understanding of successive British governments about the 'winding up' of the Empire" (ibid., p.3). The latter appears especially pertinent to my research, as it encapsulates migration, empire, and prejudice towards BAME groups.

McIntosh et al. (2019) identify that "cross-cultural contact" resulting from centuries of empire have "shaped our perceptions of identity and belonging" (p.3). This echoes another ongoing debate, surrounding whether the British Empire should be included in the History curriculum (Burns, 2014; 2016). Burns indicates that whilst some commentators believe that a critical focus on imperialism is vital for students to understand our present-day multicultural society, others "see its inclusion in the curriculum as an attempt to celebrate or glorify Britain's imperial past" (2014, p.109), in order to "create conservative nationalists of the future" (2016, p.94). As a result, critics are said to be divided

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on whether “a renewed focus on imperial history helps to create a cohesive identity … or exacerbates feelings of difference” (Burns, 2014, p.109). However, McIntosh et al. support the perspective that a *critical* and “‘*honest* evaluation’ of imperialism” (Cole, cited in Burns, 2014, p.116) should be taught, “not to propagate misconceptions and nationalism but to challenge them” (Burns, 2016, p.94), and to “celebrate cultural pluralism” (Haydn et al., cited in Burns, 2014, p.115). Furthermore, I would argue that to exclude such topics is representative of “the predominant colour-blind approach” (Andreouli, Howarth, & Sonn, 2014, p.18). Although Andreouli et al. specifically discuss this strategy in the context of American schools here, it is also acknowledged to exist within the UK school system elsewhere (Andreouli et al., 2014; Andreouli, Greenland & Howarth, 2016; Pearce & Lewis, 2019). This “erasure of race” (Pearce & Lewis, 2019, p.3), is perhaps thought to aid inclusion of ethnic minority groups. However, I would argue that this approach instead has the opposite effect, as it serves to deny that issues surrounding ‘race’ remain in our society (I acknowledge that the concept of ‘race’ is a social construct, although further discussion of this particular issue is beyond the scope of this paper). Therefore, the ‘colour-blind’ approach often “tends to reinforce intergroup disparities” (Andreouli et al., 2014, p.18), as also argued by Pearce & Lewis (2019, p.3). It is important to note that whilst McIntosh et al. emphasise a KS3 focus, Burns’s empirical school-based research (2016) concentrates on A Level History students, who are likely to have a more sophisticated understanding of their chosen subject than my KS3 participants. Although my intervention does not overtly focus on teaching the history surrounding the British Empire, it does allude to colonialism, as migrants from former British colonies (such as Windrush migrants) are discussed.

Cultural Identity within Interculturalism

Regarding intercultural awareness, the “post-multicultural landscape” (McAdam, 2019, p.294) must be addressed, as the term ‘multiculturalism’ now appears to be outdated in education (Osler, 2015; Arizpe et al., 2014). Multicultural discourse is thought to celebrate “isolated differences but does not seek integration”, failing to recognise migration’s potential to create “new interrelated cultures”, leading many scholars to “reject the concept of multiculturalism altogether” (Arizpe et al., 2014, p.308). Therefore, the authors indicate that their preferred alternative, ‘interculturalism’ or “intercultural understanding”, is thought to engender a “new understanding about cultural perspectives and global issues” (Short, cited in Arizpe et al., 2014, p.309). Interculturalism is favoured regarding migrants, who are “constructing complex identities based on their position within new contexts, reconstructing themselves and reconstructing culture as a fluid and, in a sense, hybrid

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entity" (Arizpe et al., 2014, p.308). This reflects the preferred perspective of identity, "as fluid, multiple and complex" (McAdam, 2019, p.300), contrasting with reified or "traditional positivist outlooks", which "see identity as a neatly packed item carried in the head of passive individuals, somewhat fixed and isolated …" (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2011, p.216). Furthermore, 'multicultural' educational discourse primarily appears to consider "ethnically diverse" classrooms, whereas my intervention occurs in a "more demographically homogenous setting" (Dawes-Duraisingh et al., 2018, p.218), perhaps necessitating an alternative approach.

"All students, irrespective of background, need to understand Britain's long history of contact with other cultures … as a site of … cross-cultural engagement" (McIntosh et al., 2019, p.11). Although teaching MB&E is thought to be beneficial for BAME inclusion, to develop "self-worth and pride" (ibid.), it also offers *all* students "the opportunity to better understand the dynamic world they inhabit", and "the varied and wide-ranging cultural inputs that have contributed to the making of Britain" (ibid., p.5). This sentiment is echoed elsewhere, as it is suggested that "… youth of all backgrounds need opportunities to learn about migration …" (Dawes-Duraisingh et al., 2018, p.211). This is crucial to my intervention, set in semi-rural East Anglia, with a class predominantly comprised of White British (WBRI) students. According to national statistics (GOV.UK, 2019), the population of the East of England is 85.3% White British, and the largest ethnic minority group is 'White Other', at 5.5% (however, this statistic is likely to be skewed by the inclusion of university cities such as Cambridge, which are suspected to be much more diverse than the surrounding rural areas). The literature claims that "all children … need to feel a sense of belonging, and understand their identities" (McIntosh et al., 2019, p.4), indicating that a particular focus on identity is also beneficial. Discussing 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C), Cam (2014) suggests that our personal and cultural identities "so deeply inform life and society, it is important for students to develop their understanding of them" (p.1207). The established pedagogical method of P4C will not be explored further within this paper, although a more "informal" philosophical discussion (Doddington, 2014, p.1259) is relevant to the teaching intervention.

How does 'Migration, Belonging and Empire' relate to D&T?

McIntosh et al. (2019) cite the Department for Education's (DfE) controversially named 'fundamental British values' agenda (a detailed discussion of the ways in which this label is controversial is beyond the scope of this paper), as it requires "young people to understand their own and others' cultures 'as

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an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain', in which 'they understand … and celebrate diversity'" (DfE, cited p.4). Similarly, the current D&T curriculum advocates consideration of others' values, and becoming "capable citizens", by developing a "critical understanding" of D&T's impact on society and the "wider world" (DfE, 2013). It also suggests that "the study of different cultures" may be relevant (ibid., p.2), although not compulsory. Therefore, my research would appear to encapsulate many aspects of this remit. However, the previous iteration of the curriculum explicitly specified "cultural understanding" as a key focus, referencing "beliefs, ethics and values", in addition to the "social dimension" of D&T, to inspire students to become "responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society" (QCA, 2007). This version also encouraged students to "make links between [D&T] and other subjects …", which is another crucial aspect of my research. Ultimately, a discussion of curriculum embodies ongoing debates surrounding the underlying purpose of education, as epitomised by Biesta (2015), further discussion of which is beyond the scope of this paper.

McIntosh et al. (2019) state that teaching MB&E "across disciplines is desperately needed" (p.12), but only specify History and English, perhaps owing to their own expertise (as although McIntosh's specialism is equality and diversity, Todd is PGCE History tutor at the University of Oxford, and Das is Professor of English Literature at the University of Liverpool). Therefore, one might question why this topic is relevant to D&T. However, Dewey argues that "understanding across the curriculum is acquired 'under conditions where … social significance is realised' … in ways that 'feed moral interest and develop moral insight'" (Dewey, cited in Doddington, 2014, p.1267), supporting the notion that MB&E may be better understood if taught within various subjects. As observed during my school placements, the current focus in D&T appears to be functionality. Dillon and Howe (2003) acknowledge function as an essential aspect of design, but not its sole purpose. They suggest that "the complex of other factors that influence the human response to the design object should not be overlooked", alluding to initiatives that "incorporate the 'values' dimension" (ibid., p.290). A narrative approach is proposed, to provide "a more holistic interpretation of design as a human enterprise", acknowledging that designed objects "are expressions of human constructs, beliefs and values" (ibid.). Similarly, in an examination of poetry, Sovran (2013) suggests that imbuing human values is subconscious, as "cultural output … express people's norms, values, and identities that they themselves may sometimes fail to recognize" (p.149). Therefore, perhaps the values dimension surrounding all products of culture should be deconstructed in education. Furthermore, Hanley (2013) acknowledges skills acquired in the arts that go beyond technical proficiency, which are

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"… sometimes not recognized, such as the knowledge that you are a subject in the world …" (p.6). This is reminiscent of an ongoing debate surrounding whether D&T should simply teach technical skills, or if it should extend beyond this. Lastly, in linking social justice to the subject of Design, one could even suggest that students are the future designers of society, as is implied by Bekerman & Zembylas (2011) in the context of Peace Education: "we need to teach our students to … have the knowledge and skills to envision an alternative 'design' of this society" (p.220).

It is proposed that students should "study problems, not periods" (Collingwood, cited in Van Straaten, Wilschut, & Oostdam, 2016, p.484), to ensure that History remains relevant. This is thought to reflect a constructivist approach to education, as opposed to "knowledge of facts as an aim in itself" (Van Straaten et al., 2016, p.484). This suggestion is reminiscent of the D&T curriculum, as students are required to identify, reformulate, or solve problems (DfE, 2013). Therefore, perhaps MB&E should be considered a 'problem' within, and therefore relevant to, D&T. Furthermore, 'agency' in social justice education is defined as "thinking for oneself in a problem-solving and decision-making context …" (Bruner, cited in Hanley, 2013, p.3), further connecting the problem-solving requirement specified within the D&T curriculum to social justice.

KS3 D&T students are required to develop "critical understanding" (DfE, 2013). As part of their empirical research project, Arizpe et al. discuss critical pedagogy. It has been suggested that "critical pedagogy and 'visual culture' … are dialogical partners", considered alongside Freire's influential concept of 'critical consciousness' (Tavin, cited in Arizpe et al., 2014, p.315). Boal advocated "visual methods for transformative learning" (Arizpe et al., 2014, p.306) regarding social justice, suggesting that participating in the creative process is also a crucial way of processing knowledge. In addition, he suggested that "'making culture' is not just a symbolic or figurative concept, but one that involves representing ourselves aesthetically, or making images …" (Boal, cited in Arizpe et al., 2014, p.319). Therefore, the process of creating images itself is thought to be an important way to construct knowledge, which is relevant to the creation of motifs within Textile Design. Furthermore, for students who "struggle to express themselves through words", image creation can be "a form of expression that sidesteps language barriers …" (Arizpe et al., 2014, p.306), and is therefore perhaps more inclusive for all learners.

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Narrative and Metaphor (N&M) in Education

"Human beings rely equally on narrative (or storytelling) and metaphor (or analogy) for making sense of the world" (Hanne & Kaal, 2019, p.2). N&M is advocated to "generate new ways of thinking" (ibid., p.6) across all subjects, as both are thought to be intrinsic to human understanding. Egan (2019), author of 'Teaching as Storytelling', suggests that stories are an "important component in making things meaningful" (p.24), and because children process their experiences as stories, this should be "… at the heart of … teaching" (Bruner; Egan, cited in Hanne & Kaal, 2019, p.7). Similarly, the way we "think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (Lakoff & Johnson, cited in Hanne & Kaal, 2019, p.3). Metaphor is recognised as important in engaging learners of all ages, enabling them "to manage new information or experiences (by analogy) and to envisage abstractions" (Hanne & Kaal, 2019, p.7). Analogical reasoning is also acknowledged as an effective means of motivating learning and enhancing critical thinking (Van Straaten et al., 2016, p.494; 495). Therefore, both N&M appear pertinent in teaching children about the world. N&M have generally been dealt with separately in educational literature, but as they are "intimately related" (Hanne & Kaal, 2019, p.3), it is suggested that they should be deployed "in combination" (ibid., p.4). Narratives also "enable us to envisage and comprehend … the experience and aspirations of people very different from ourselves" (Nussbaum, cited in Hanne & Kaal, 2019, p.11). Therefore, N&M are pivotal in enhancing children's intercultural awareness, as to be empathetic, "we must be able to 'stand in someone else's shoes' …" (Hanne & Kaal, 2019, p.12).

Metaphor is vital in order to think conceptually, to understand complex or abstract phenomena (Hanne & Kaal, 2019, p.5; 9), and the ability to think metaphorically "lies at the heart of human intellectual inventiveness, creativity, and imagination" (Egan, 2019, p.26). As argued by Welling (2007), analogy is also considered important in generating creative thought. Therefore, perhaps metaphor is especially significant in D&T, as it may synchronously enhance students' creativity. I would argue that metaphor is also highly relevant to surface design, as symbolism essentially acts as a visual metaphor. Similarly, McAdam (2019) suggests that stories can be "communicated multimodally" (p.295), and are therefore not solely represented by traditional oral or written narratives, a perspective that facilitates my own textile-based approach.

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Narrative, Metaphor and Cultural Identity

Narrative is arguably central to identity, as "we construct, maintain and modify our sense of self in narrative terms" (Hanne & Kaal, 2019, p.5). Although 'narrative inquiry' is not a methodology examined within my research, these storytelling methods are key in critical race theory (Osler, 2015, p.18) and "narratives of migration" (Gómez-Estern & Benítez, 2013). Perhaps this is because "stories provide safe ways to engage in intercultural dialogue" (McAdam, 2019, p.299). Similarly, it is suggested that "our sense of our collective identity (ethnic, national, local, religious) is largely constructed of the narratives we share …" (Hanne & Kaal, 2019, p.5), indicating that a cultural identity focus necessitates discussion of narrative. Furthermore, Hanley (2013) suggests that culture itself is formed of "signs, symbols and meaning spun to explain ourselves to each other …" (p.4), implying that symbols are also ingrained within culture. Likewise, Sovran (2013) suggests that metaphors "… depict shifts and tendencies in the collective cultural products of a people …", as she analyses "the emotionally loaded symbol of 'home'" (p.149), within her discussion of Israel. This literature review fortuitously coincided with a P4C-based teachers' event, focusing on the concept of 'homeland' (Kettle's Yard, 2020), which inspired a focus on the symbol of 'home' within the intervention, as a metaphor for migration and cultural identity.

The Communicative Potential of Textiles: Semiotics and Narrative

Textile Design's communicative dimension, is epitomised by Andrew (2008), as she acknowledges "textiles as 'cultural signifiers', … suggesting communication as a paradigm in which textiles can be critically located and discussed" (p.33). Textiles representing "cultural signifiers" further demonstrates how my research's intertwining elements are inextricably linked. Andrew coins "textile semantics", describing "… the communicative qualities in textiles which inform the generation and exchange of meaning" (ibid.). Within this overarching concept, Andrew embraces semiotics as a means of deconstructing the "visual signifiers" depicted in textiles (ibid., p.34), and this focus reveals "meaning through shared cultural agreement" (ibid., p.37). She also acknowledges the "social and symbolic uses of motifs and patterns and their cultural associations" (ibid.). It is this concept of "shared cultural agreement" that symbols, and perhaps textiles themselves (as part of material culture, as discussed later in this paper), have in common with metaphors. This is relevant to my intervention, as I introduce symbolism to students, to synthesise narrative, metaphor and Textile Design with culture. Similarly, Arizpe et al. (2014) describe the "'excavation' of meaning through the visual

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image" (p.313), utilising an extended archaeological metaphor, and therefore effectively conveying an intrinsic anthropological focus.

As a surface design practitioner, a textiles specialism rooted in illustration, it is motifs that I intend to focus on. I have chosen to examine Andrew's text for the purposes of this paper, not only because it appears to be the most comprehensive of its kind (discussing the communicative function of textiles motifs specifically, as opposed to other aspects of textile culture), but also because a more detailed review of the textiles literature is beyond the scope of this particular study. Andrew (2008) defines six communication-based textile categories, but the most relevant are "contains imagery that creates a visual narrative" and "contains symbols, images or decorative motifs that have a specific meaning …" (p.34). Throughout history, textiles have been created "with specific communication intentions" (ibid., p.47). Tapestries are perhaps the most obvious European example of narrative textiles (Millar, cited in Andrew, 2008, p.55). However, Andrew also mentions Toiles de Jouy (monochromatic printed fabrics, which originated in eighteenth century France, and famously portrayed idyllic bucolic scenes), which often had an allegorical function (Eykelbosch, cited in Andrew, 2008, p.51), and have previously been a research interest of mine. Mavrogordato suggests that "tapestries operate as mirrors of history … time capsules offering a complex system of pictograms and symbolic imagery to tell stories within stories" (cited in Andrew, 2008, p.54), demonstrating the link between historical narratives, symbolism and Textile Design. Andrew identifies that modern interpretations "provoke cultural discourse by combining a social and political issue into a decorative design …" (ibid., p.57), arguably as did their historical counterparts. It is this eliciting "cultural discourse", by examining social issues through surface design, which is key within my research.

Material Culture and Narrative Objects

The concept of "textile semantics" is rooted in the established theories of material culture and product semantics (Andrew, 2008, p.42). Whilst 'product semantics' implies consumerism, material culture represents an anthropological perspective, concerning the "relationships between people and the role that objects play in those relationships" (Jackson, cited in Andrew, 2008, p.44). Andrew acknowledges that in both disciplines, "cultural influences inform the viewer's aesthetic perceptions" (ibid., p.43), reminiscent of the informing influences described in sociocultural creativity and education theories (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Vygotsky, cited in Pollard, 2014).

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McAdam (2019) discusses "cultural archiving", described as a valued discipline within diasporic studies (p.295), thus linking material culture to migration. She acknowledges that artefacts "evoke memories, and telling the stories of these memories is an active process by which meaning is made" (ibid., p.298). Artefacts are also thought to "ease the pain of … transition" for migrants (ibid.). Similarly, Andrew links textiles with the psychotherapeutic theory of transitional objects, as "our first encounter with non-human surfaces is almost always with cloth" (Brett, cited in Andrew, 2008, p.41). Transitional objects were also discussed at the 'Travelling Companions' seminar (CRASSH, 2020). Although migration was not discussed here, it was suggested that objects represent "embodiments of culture" (Pickman, at CRASSH, 2020). A connection with identity was also proposed, as "objects represent us …" (Miller, cited by Ballard, at ibid.), and they are "how people construct their identity and concept of home" (Spankie, at ibid.). Similarly, McAdam (2019) acknowledges that objects signify "… artefacts of continuity around which our multiple identities change, develop and grow" (p.300). Textiles are connected with national identity, as a space "through which the homeland is gendered" (Sherwell, cited in Andrew, 2008, p.44), which further suggests that textiles are an apt medium through which to introduce the underlying themes of my research.

"One way of evoking personal stories connected to significant moments … is through … everyday cultural objects" (McAdam, 2019, p.295). Material culture is, therefore, perhaps inseparable from narrative, as objects represent human stories. The concept of material culture is invoked in 'Design as Narrative', as it is discussed that the designed object "… can in effect tell a story" (Dillon & Howe, 2003, p.292). However, unlike the overt pictorial narratives of illustrative textiles discussed previously, this refers to a subliminal backstory deciphered through purposeful analysis, suggesting that objects "… give back echoes of their past" (ibid., p.289). A narrative approach evokes studies of human culture, linking Design to "… major intellectual debates in other disciplines concerned with material culture, notably archaeology, history, anthropology and sociology" (ibid., p.294). The authors acknowledge that this "object-based epistemology" is already widely employed within museum education (ibid., p.291). Similarly, the English department at my second Professional Placement school run a Year 7 project, employing archaeological artefacts to inspire creative writing, therefore embracing narrative's connection with material culture, albeit in the traditional story-based context of the English classroom.

In discussing narrative artefacts, material culture and migration within education, McAdam's empirical research (2019) is especially relevant. She examines a community of primary school

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teachers in Scotland (therefore responding to a different curriculum), inspiring them to “re-imagine their classrooms as spaces to welcome refugee and new-arrival children”, in response to children’s literature (ibid., p.293). McAdam’s research differs from mine, firstly because she approaches narrative from the traditional literature perspective, and secondly because I focus on secondary D&T students themselves, predominantly of the host community, as opposed to specifically targeting “new arrivals” through teachers. McAdam’s chosen stories also appear to focus on recent forced migration, contrasting with the historical migration that I focus on. McAdam discusses a classroom intervention of one “teacher inquirer”, who creates a “cultural suitcase” (ibid., p.301). This metaphorical strategy is said to enable children to empathise with asylum-seekers; drawing on their own lived experiences (such as moving house), in imagining the characters’ thoughts. McAdam suggests that identifying with migrants’ experiences is important, because it is through “the act of caring for oneself that one can begin to imagine what it thinks and feels to be someone other than yourself” (ibid., p.303), reminiscent of the connection between narrative, metaphor and empathy highlighted previously (Hanne & Kaal, 2019, p.12).

Methodology

This research comprised a teaching intervention, performed in a D&T classroom; preceded and succeeded by data collection. The classroom intervention took place in March 2020, in the weeks before all UK schools were closed, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Data Collection
• Rushed design of final questionnaire • Early distribution of questionnaire (inserted prematurely at end of fourth lesson, therefore questions limited to lessons completed) • Absence of concluding interviews • Changed data set for final questionnaire (due to high number of Covid-19 related absences) • 2/7 interview participants amongst those absent for final questionnaire
Teaching Intervention
• Reduced from 6 consecutive lessons, to 4 consecutive lessons • Lesson 4 also foreshortened, to accommodate completion of final questionnaire • Unconventional sharing of classrooms between year groups during Lesson 4, impacting on teaching and final data collection (associated implications are detailed in discussion section) • Key group members absent, impacting on quality of discursive classroom environment • Heightened anxiety amongst participants

Table 1: Implications of Covid-19 for this research

Because of this unforeseen closure, the intervention was unavoidably curtailed. The main implications for this research are listed in Table 1, both in terms of final data collection and the

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teaching intervention, each consequently affecting the other. Whilst the completed intervention was not as originally intended, it was still possible to address my research questions (presented in Table 2).

Question 1
What are Year 7 students' current understandings surrounding cultural identity and migration, as an indication of their wider intercultural awareness, and the nature of Textile Design as a communicative medium?
Question 2
To what extent can a range of strategies (such as narrative and metaphor) enhance students' perceptions of cultural identity and migration, and thus their intercultural awareness, simultaneously challenging their preconceptions of what Textile Design can be?

Table 2: Research Questions

Table 3 (below & next page) summarises the lessons that were ultimately fulfilled as a result of this curtailment, specifying the teaching aims and strategies that were implemented. Within this table, the 'Key References' column indicates the literature that inspired each lesson's methodology in general terms, whereas any citations listed in the 'Strategies Implemented' column serve to identify specific texts that were referred to as part of the lesson itself.

Lesson Title	Lesson Aim	Strategies Implemented	Key References
Lesson 1: Concept of Home	Metaphor/symbol of 'home' as a means of introducing the topics of cultural identity and migration	• Dialogic/philosophical discussion • Short written exercises • Short drawing excercises • Video • Student presentations	(Sovran, 2013); (Hanne & Kaal, 2019); (Kettle's Yard, 2020)
Lesson 2: Metaphor & Symbolism	Explicit discussion of visual metaphors used to explain abstract concepts (including key examples of symbolism from Art History and Printed Textile Design)	• Class discussion of existing illustrations and designs • Deconstructing metaphors exercise • Constructing new symbols (drawing exercise), in relation to key concepts defined by class in previous lesson ***Homework:*** Compilation of a mood board, to demonstrate an abstract concept surrounding the topic of 'home', representing one of the themes discussed in class	(Hanne & Kaal, 2019); (Andrew, 2008)
Lesson 3: Storytelling Textiles	Explicit discussion of how Printed Textile Design can be communicative in the depiction of stories, often communicating historical events and using symbolism	• Class discussion of narrative textile examples • Drawing activity (start of students' own symbolic print design), using mood board • Student presentations	(Andrew, 2008)

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Lesson Title	Lesson Aim	Strategies Implemented	Key References
Lesson 4: Migration	Linking ideas within material culture and the significance of objects to the concept of migration, as a means of developing a greater understanding of other people's cultural identity (in order to develop a more empathetic awareness)	• Class discussion, inspired by Rosen & Young (2016); The British Council (2013) • Short written exercises • Videos • Windrush poem (Lavery, cited in The British Council, 2013) • Deconstruction of semantics surrounding key vocabulary • 'We Refugees' poem (Zephaniah, cited in Rosen & Young, 2016) • 'Desert Island Discs'-style exercise, inspired by idea of "cultural suitcase" (McAdam, 2019)	(McIntosh et al., 2019); (McAdam, 2019)

Table 3: Summary of Teaching Intervention

Action Research (AR)

AR is often "a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the 'real' world and a systematic … review of the effects … combining action and reflection to improve practice" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p.441). My research encapsulates a small-scale teaching intervention, performed with the intention of developing practice, and encompasses many of the other key principles that are identified as characteristic of AR, which are highlighted in Table 4.

Action Research
• "enhances the competencies of participants" • "is undertaken directly in situ" • "uses feedback from data in an ongoing cyclical process" • "seeks to understand particular complex social situations" • "seeks to understand the processes of change within social systems" • "is undertaken within an agreed framework of ethics" (see paragraph of this paper focusing on ethical considerations) • "seeks to improve the quality of human actions" • "includes evaluation and reflection" • "is dialogical and celebrates discourse"

Table 4: Examples from 'Principles and characteristics of action research' key to my own research methodology (as defined in Cohen et al., 2018, p.443)

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AR is "'hands on' research" (Denscombe, cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p.441), "designed to bridge the gap between research and practice"' (Cohen et al., 2018, p.442), and is therefore perhaps the most appropriate methodology for classroom-based research. AR "requires systematic planning, acting, observing and reflecting in a manner that is more demanding and rigorous than in the everyday course of life" (Kemmis & McTaggart, cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p.442). Therefore, the meticulous lesson planning and subsequent reflections of my teaching episodes should also be considered as part of the AR process. Because of its situation-specific nature, an AR sample inevitably only includes participants within the institution that the study occurs, and is not representative of the wider population (Cohen et al., 2018, p.443). The primary limitation of AR may be that findings cannot be generalised, and it is therefore only "of practical rather than theoretical significance" (ibid.). However, unlike other forms of research, in which generalisability is actively sought (ibid.), AR purposefully seeks to be context-specific.

AR utilises feedback from data "in an ongoing cyclical process" (Cohen et al., 2018, p.443), reminiscent of the "feedforward" process in 'Assessment for Learning' (Broadfoot et al, 1999, p.3). This is especially relevant in D&T, as the iterative design process itself is considered as AR (Swann, 2002, p.53), owing to its reflective and cyclical nature. My entire intervention may only be considered as the first cycle of an AR process, during which each phase occurred once. To be truly reflective of AR, subsequent cycles would need to be executed, so that learnings could be applied. However, perhaps the continual reflection "on action" (Schön, cited in Swann, 2002, p.50) and "feedforward" process implemented throughout teaching could be considered as smaller cycles within the overarching research cycle, reminiscent of the interpretation of AR "as meta-research", conceptualised as "cycles within cycles …" (Dick, 2002, p.5).

Data Collection

Data was collected before the intervention, using a questionnaire (all students) and semi-structured individual interviews (smaller group). Burns (2016) explains that his questionnaires were self-administered in students' regular classroom time, "allowing for easy distribution, explanation of purpose, identification and correction of misunderstanding, and more control over completion" (p.96). These precautions were also taken when conducting my own questionnaire. This proved valuable because many students required clarification of certain questions, and an unsubstantiated explanation from another adult may have distorted the data. Burns states that the regular teacher

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remained present, in order to "bring an air of familiarity to proceedings" (ibid.), which I also ensured. A second questionnaire was distributed during the final lesson, to ascertain how students' perceptions had changed in response to the intervention. As detailed in Table 2, a significant number of students were absent for this questionnaire, representing a changed data set. Responses throughout the intervention, such as verbalisations and classwork, should also be considered data. The use of multiple data collection methods represents triangulation, a mixed method approach combining qualitative and quantitative practices, widely used in the social sciences as a means of studying "the richness and complexity of human behaviour" (Cohen et al., 2018, p.265), therefore essential in the analysis of learning.

Questionnaires predominantly comprised closed questions, answerable through a five-part Likert scale. Rating scales are said to be practical for researchers, as "they build in a degree of sensitivity and differentiation of response whilst still generating numbers" (Cohen et al., 2018, p.480), perhaps suggesting a quantitative approach. Questionnaires are described as "a method more often seen as most suitable for collecting positivist data" (Burns, 2016, p.96), but the benefits for classroom research, such as standardised questions, are acknowledged (ibid.). I decided to include a 'neither agree nor disagree' category, because I anticipated that students were unlikely to have prior understanding of certain topics. Therefore, this option enabled them to communicate any gaps in their knowledge. However, a respondent may select this category for other reasons, including "… self-protection, ambivalence and problems in understanding the question or how to respond", and therefore the quality of data may be jeopardised, especially if sensitive questions are asked (Krosnick & Presser; Champagne, cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p.481). Therefore, whilst this category may be useful to highlight areas that may need to be taught in more detail, it may simply signify a wasted response for data collection. This is pertinent regarding my final questionnaire, as participants' selection of this category prevented me from fully determining the extent to which the individual had understood respective topics. Furthermore, although rating scales are constructive in gathering comparable data (Cohen et al., 2018, p.479), they are not entirely accurate in the comparison of respondents' true perceptions. This is because different individuals are likely to variously interpret the scale itself, as it is suggested that "one respondent's 'agree' may be another's 'strongly agree'" (ibid., p.480). This varying interpretation perhaps accounts for the few contradictions that appeared to arise between the same student's questionnaire and interview responses, although this may simply reflect some other situational explanation, such as the participant's change in mood, or a heightened understanding of the question itself.

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Closed questions limit responses, only allowing for direct answers to the exact questions posed. Therefore, a few open-ended questions were also included, moving towards a more interpretive approach. Cohen et al. (2018) discuss the advantages and limitations of open-ended questions (pp.475-476). Additionally, it is argued that if "one tries to convert opinions into numbers … – quantitizing qualitative data – then maybe the questionnaire should have used rating scales in the first place" (Cohen et al., 2018, p.475). Because of these limitations, open-ended questions were kept in the minority.

Interviews seemed especially relevant to this research, as it is suggested they are "… a particular medium for enacting or displaying people's knowledge of cultural forms … indicating how people make sense of their social world and of each other" (Barker & Johnson, cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p.507). Therefore, interviews enabled me to understand participants' perceptions in a more nuanced way than questionnaires. I chose to conduct individual interviews, because I wanted to understand each interviewee's perspective of sensitive issues, such as their identity. It is suggested that interviews "enable participants … to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view" (Cohen et al., 2018, p.506). Therefore, I did not want interviewees' opinions overshadowed by the social implications of an unprecedented group dynamic. Furthermore, I hoped that a semi-structured framework would allow for some degree of spontaneity (ibid.), whilst enabling me to collect comparable data. However, the incidence of inductive themes (examined later) is likely to have been influenced by this semi-structured nature, owing to my selection of questions, as participants are only able to respond to the specific questions asked, as discussed in relation to closed questions. Therefore, interview questions are another aspect that could be improved by further AR cycles. All interviews were audio-recorded, and later transcribed, in order to analyse and triangulate the data. It is suggested that a drawback of analysing transcriptions is that data becomes "decontextualized", because it is already interpreted by the transcriber (ibid., p.523). However, as I transcribed the interviews myself, these transcriptions are perhaps more reliable (or at least less processed) than if another individual or software, extraneous to the interview process, had transcribed the audio, as is likely within larger studies.

Interviews were conducted with seven students. Four males and four females were initially selected, although only three males were ultimately interviewed, due to time constraints. I had intended to maintain an even gender split, but as this research is not gender-specific, it did not seem necessary to disregard the final interview to keep numbers equal. However, a clear indication of each interview

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participant's gender remains outlined in the resulting transcripts. Interviewees were purposefully selected, partly based on questionnaire responses, having broached ideas that I hoped to expand on in more detail, as "the interview can do what surveys cannot …" (Hochschild, cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p.506). Therefore, it is perhaps inevitable that certain interviewees continued to demonstrate interesting ideas throughout the intervention. Some participants were also selected in response to reviewing the school's demographic data, as only 4/22 were listed as ethnic minority, although the only groups represented in this particular class were 'White Other' (WOTH) and 'Mixed White/Asian' (MWAS). However, I have reason to believe that one of the 'MWAS' codes may have been assigned to the student incorrectly, after conducting the interview, during which it became apparent that the child's parents were both of Asian origin. The remaining 18/22 students were listed as WBRI. This information was purposefully gathered, as one of my predictions was that ethnic minority students may have a heightened understanding of cultural identity and migration issues. Therefore, I intended to interview a disproportionately diverse group of students, knowing that this sample was not representative of the whole class.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was implemented, using a combination of predetermined (deductive) and emergent (inductive) themes (Evans, 2013, p.163). Evans suggests that, although these approaches may often be seen as contradictory (perhaps alluding to a wider debate surrounding research paradigms), there is value in both methods (Huberman & Miles, cited in Evans, 2013, p.163), and educational researchers working with qualitative data customarily employ both in combination (Evans, 2013, p.163). A hybrid approach also appeared the most intuitive within my research, given the triangulated nature of data, and because much of it was based on students' interpretations of proposed themes. As questionnaire items were already grouped into deductive themes, it was predominantly the interviews that were analysed according to both approaches. This is illustrated in Figure 2 (next page), which specifies the deductive and inductive themes employed, and generated by, the analysis of interview data. Furthermore, this thematic analysis was performed in response to the original themes explored within my literature review, and grouped according to the four main spheres identified and portrayed earlier in Figure 1. Quantifiable questionnaire responses were also analysed numerically (numerical values were assigned to each student's level of agreement, and this was multiplied by the frequency of students who held this opinion. The values assigned to level of agreement were: Strongly Agree = 2, Agree = 1, Neither Agree nor Disagree = 0, Disagree = -1, Strongly Disagree = -2). However, these

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were only calculated according to key themes, to generate tangible data that could be visualised, thus aiding my own understanding of the extent to which perceptions had changed.

Figure 2: Diagram illustrating thematic analysis of interview responses

Ethical Considerations

It is suggested that there are ethical implications where the researcher is the teacher in compulsory education, as this implies an "automatic right" to conduct research on students (Cohen et al., 2018, p.454). However, my research was only conducted following a review of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines. Firstly, the school's own ethical and safeguarding

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procedures were observed (BERA, 2018, p.10), and decisions were made “commensurate with [participants’] age and maturity” (ibid., p.15). All participants have been anonymised in the reporting of data, and were explicitly advised of their right to anonymity (ibid., p.17) before participating in interviews. Appropriate guidance was also provided before the distribution of questionnaires. As part of this anonymisation, each interview participant was assigned an alphabetical letter, which also enabled interview data to be further triangulated with other data collection exercises, as part of a more holistic understanding of those particular students’ developing perceptions. Interviewees were made aware of their right to withdraw from interviews (ibid., p.18), and in the interest of transparency (ibid., p.16), were informed about its purpose and what resulting information would be used for. I endeavoured to keep interviews relatively short, so that young interviewees would not become overwhelmed or fatigued, as specified by Cohen et al. (2018, p.506). Research was conducted during timetabled D&T lessons, and the only homework issued replaced participants’ routine D&T homework, therefore eliminating any increased workload generated by AR (ibid., p.454). This is with the exception of one interview, as the student volunteered to participate during the first ten minutes of the lunch hour (following the lesson), despite being advised that she was not required to do so. After first verifying that this would not impact on her ability to eat and have a break, the decision was made to conduct the interview (with the permission of the regular class teacher). This was because the student appeared especially keen to be included in the process, and it was felt that it was in her best interest to proceed with the interview, so that she did not feel excluded. BERA (2018) advises that “researchers may make different decisions as they deem appropriate for children and young people of different ages and capacities … the best interests of the child are the primary consideration” (p.14-15). Throughout the entire process, I made every effort to “put participants at their ease” (BERA, 2018, p.19). This seemed especially relevant during interviews, as I anticipated that this was likely to be the most unusual experience for participants. Therefore, Morrison suggests that it is interviewer’s duty to “make the strange familiar”, as a reversal of Blumer’s well-known aphorism (Cohen et al., 2018, p.528).

Findings

This research yielded a rich set of data. However, the findings presented in this paper only respond directly to the outlined research questions, according to two main themes. Firstly, the communicative potential of textiles (Table 5; Figure 3) and secondly, a focus on cultural identity and migration, as a

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means of enhancing intercultural awareness (Table 6; Figure 4). As previously highlighted, the data set changed between initial data collection and the final questionnaire. Therefore, in the interest of clarity, findings are presented in two formats: numerical data obtained through relevant Likert scale questions (Tables 5 and 6), and illustrations in the form of line graphs that enable a more intuitive visual comparison (Figures 3 and 4).

Accompanying interview data is presented in the discussion, so that interpretations may be offered simultaneously. However, due to the absence of final interviews, it is primarily final questionnaire data (in addition to verbalisations during class) that enables a discussion of changed perceptions. Because of the changing data set, the findings below are discussed in a granular fashion, to ensure transparency. Both Figures 3 and 4 present questionnaire responses, with each figure intended to communicate students' altered perceptions, by overlapping data from the initial and final questionnaire (in other words, before and after the intervention took place). However, owing to the reduced data set for the final questionnaire, Figures 3 and 4 present data from the first questionnaire as two separate lines, in order to distinguish between findings gathered from all participants that were present during the exercise, and only those that were also present for final data collection. Despite the changing data set, these diagrams indicate a positive change in students' perceptions, both surrounding the communicative potential of textiles (Figure 3) and intercultural awareness (Figure 4).

Discussion of Findings

Theme 1: The Communicative Potential of Textiles

Before data collection, it was hypothesised that students would have no prior awareness of the communicative potential of textiles, believing that Textile Design only involves sewing, specifically making clothes (a common misconception). In the preliminary questionnaire, many respondents appear unsure of the nature of textiles, abstaining from providing definitive responses. Surprisingly, it appeared that not all students were convinced that textiles solely concerns sewing, as only 7/22 respondents actively agreed with this statement. However, it became apparent that most interviewees associated textiles with making clothes, as indicated by Student M, who thought Textile Design was about *"sewing ... mostly"* and *"clothing"*.

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THEME 1: THE COMMUNICATIVE POTENTIAL OF TEXTILES	*"I think Textile Design is all about sewing"*	*"I think people who work as Textile Designers make clothes"*	*"I think textile items can tell stories"*	*"I think textile items can tell us about history"*	*"I think textile items can communicate important issues"*
Before Intervention: Full Class of 22 Students					
Strongly Agree	0/22	1/22	3/22	1/22	1/22
Agree	7/22	6/22	3/22	7/22	4/22
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	6/22	11/22	9/22	9/22	11/22
Disagree	8/22	3/22	5/22	4/22	6/22
Strongly Disagree	1/22	0/22	2/22	1/22	0/22
No Answer (Left Blank)		1/22			
After Intervention: Incomplete Class of 13 Students (due to high occurrence of Covid-19 absences)					
Strongly Agree	0/13	0/13	2/13	0/13	1/13
Agree	0/13	1/13	7/13	11/13	7/13
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	1/13	6/13	3/13	2/13	3/13
Disagree	10/13	4/13	1/13	0/13	2/13
Strongly Disagree	2/13	2/13	0/13	0/13	0/13

Table 5: Examples of responses from preliminary and final questionnaires

Figure 3: Line graphs illustrating questionnaire responses in Table 5

Although questionnaire respondents acknowledged a connection between history and textiles before the intervention, interviewees elaborated that they believed this link to be historical dress, therefore clothing, as explicitly specified by 4/7 participants. For example, *"yeah I think it does because people … in history wore very different clothes to what we wear now"* (Student B), and *"… yeah 'cause there's somebody who could do like mediaeval dress"* (Student L). It was also predicted that students would have no prior awareness of textiles' narrative dimension, but in the initial questionnaire, 3/22

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students strongly agreed that textiles have the capacity to tell stories. However, one of these respondents reasoned *"because use puppets"*, indicating a concrete interpretation of storytelling in the context of traditional oral narratives, as opposed to the narrative pictorial-based textiles discussed. Unexpectedly, one of these 3/22 respondents, when interviewed, demonstrated an unusually sophisticated understanding of relevant narrative textiles, in part owing to the seemingly unconventional textiles education at her previous school. This student also independently identified narrative as a connection between textiles and history: *"I'm pretty sure textiles were used in the past to tell stories …"* (Student J). She was also the only questionnaire respondent to strongly agree that textiles have the capacity to communicate important issues. In addition, one of the 3/22 students that initially agreed that textiles "can tell stories" demonstrated an advanced awareness of the 'design as narrative' approach (Dillon & Howe, 2003): *"because I can find out where it comes from and why it was invented"*. However, this does not demonstrate a semiotic interpretation (Andrew, 2008) of pictorial textiles. Finally, one of the 9/22 questionnaire respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed that textiles "can tell stories" provided an explanation that indicated a metaphorical understanding of fabric 'journeys' (a concept that was originally intended for a subsequent lesson, as a metaphor for human migration, before the intervention was curtailed): *"there is a journey of makeing [sic] the cloths [sic] starting from a peace [sic] of cloth to a finished product"*. However, this still indicates that she considered textiles to specifically signify clothes, as elucidated in the same student's subsequent interview: *"like from a little bit of cloth to a … t-shirt"* (Student E).

However, following the intervention, the majority of students disagree that Textile Design signifies sewing (10/13 disagreed, 2/13 strongly disagreed) and clothing, and agree that textiles have the capacity to tell stories (only 1/13 disagreed), in addition to having a historical function (11/13 agreed). One of these 11/13 also demonstrated a heightened awareness surrounding material culture, a concept intended to be covered more thoroughly in future lessons, suggesting that *"an artifact [sic] can talk its history"*. A greater proportion of students also agreed that textiles have the capacity to communicate important issues (1/13 strongly agreed, 7/13 agreed), despite the fact that the lesson intended to make specific links between textiles and social issues (such as migration) was never delivered. This suggests that, although the teaching intervention was prematurely curtailed by a third, students still acquired an enhanced understanding of the communicative potential of textiles, as illustrated above (Figure 3).

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Theme 2: Cultural Identity and Migration (Intercultural Awareness)

Students' perceptions of cultural identity and migration were analysed, as an indication of their wider intercultural awareness.

THEME 2: CULTURAL IDENTITY & MIGRATION (AS AN INDICATION OF INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS)	Thinking about one's own cultural identity	Have begun to think more about other people's cultural identity, following the intervention	Perceive migration as a recent phenomenon	Considered reasons behind why people migrate
Before Intervention: Full Class of 22 Students				
Strongly Agree	0/22	Question not asked before intervention	1/22	2/22
Agree	11/22		4/22	9/22
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	9/22		8/22	6/22
Disagree	2/22		7/22	5/22
Strongly Disagree	0/22		2/22	0/22
After Intervention: Incomplete Class of 13 Students (due to high occurrence of Covid-19 absences)				
Strongly Agree	1/13	0/13	0/13	2/13
Agree	9/13	10/13	0/13	8/13
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	3/13	2/13	0/13	1/13
Disagree	0/13	1/13	6/13	2/13
Strongly Disagree	0/13	0/13	7/13	0/13

Table 6: Examples of responses from preliminary and final questionnaires

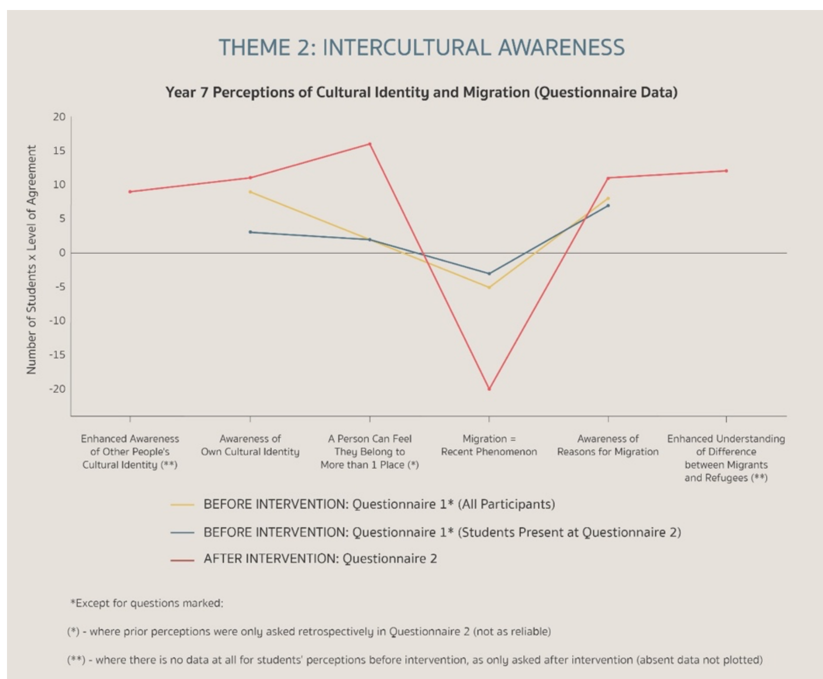

Figure 4: Line graphs illustrating questionnaire responses in Table 6

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It was predicted that students would perceive migration as a recent phenomenon, disproportionately considering the present-day movement of refugees, due to current media attention and its "preoccupation with 'extraordinary stories of adversity'" (Marlowe, cited in Dawes-Duraisingh et al., 2018, p.213). This was implied during interviews, as 2/7 articulated war as a reason for migration, for example: *"... they might have like a problem in their country or something, ... if there's like a war [...], it's not like safe environment for them to live in ..."* (Student E). Similarly, 13/22 preliminary questionnaire respondents offered *"war"* as a reason for migration. However, perhaps students mentioned war in another context, such as the second world war, as *"evacuation"* was also included in 2/22 responses. Nonetheless, forced migration was alluded to in other ways, such as concepts of safety and *"freedom"*, and one respondent explicitly suggesting *"forced into it"* and *"seeking refuge"* (Student M).

It was also hypothesised that students' preconceptions of migration would be informed by discussions at home. Due to the predominantly WBRI demographic and the semi-rural setting, in which EU migrants represent the largest ethnic minority group (GOV.UK, 2019), it was predicted that some WBRI students may have encountered negative portrayals of migrants at home (although such questions were not asked during data collection, in the interest of ethics). However, such a perspective was only articulated by one student, who volunteered her mother's negative perception of *"people from different countries in England"* during the interview (Student L). This student also suggested in the first questionnaire, in listing reasons for migration, that *"Government pays them not to work"*, which perhaps further reflects her family's opinions. She also initially speculated that migration was a recent phenomenon, occurring since *"1970 because of brexit [sic] and war"*.

Before the intervention, 7/22 disagreed that migration was recent, but appeared unsure of the timescale. Whilst a small number of students acknowledged that migration was long-standing, only 2/22 prior to the intervention (interestingly both first-generation immigrants themselves) identified that migration had occurred *"all the time"* (Student M). Amongst these 7/22 included the suggestion it had been *"... ever since aeroplanes were invented"*, and another respondent suggested *"since around 1900ish"*, citing the Titanic as evidence. However, such answers may simply be influenced by students' understandings of transport history, as one student suggested that migration had occurred *"since we have had boats + other transport ..."*, but hazarding that this was only in the last *"(70 years???)"*. Responses are perhaps even affected by students' perception of time itself, as one respondent who disagreed that migration was recent suggested that it had been happening for *"200*

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years", whereas another student who had strongly agreed suggested that it was *"2,000 years ago"*. This perhaps also exemplifies different perceptions of the Likert scale (Cohen et al., 2018, p.480). The final questionnaire indicates that, following the intervention, *all* students disagreed that migration is only a recent phenomenon (6/13 disagreed, 7/13 strongly disagreed), the majority indicating that this had been happening *"forever!"*, as discussed in the lesson. Respondents also agreed that the intervention had caused them to think more about the reasons behind migration, enabling them to better understand the difference between migrants and refugees (4/13 strongly agreed, 6/13 agreed). This shift in students' perceptions is illustrated above (Figure 4).

It was also predicted that ethnic minority students would have a more developed understanding of issues surrounding cultural identity than their WBRI peers. Although inconclusive, and perhaps requiring further research, this theory was supported by the data in some respects. For example, an interviewee of Polish origin, who stated that he had thought about belonging *"many times before"* (Student M), and another stating *"I am from Lithuania and that's … the place that I feel like I belong"* (Student J). This contrasted with a WBRI interviewee, who stated *"I haven't really thought whether I belong"* (Student B). However, another WBRI interviewee demonstrated a more nuanced understanding, suggesting culture is *"… something that's inside everyone, but not … the same thing inside everyone"* (Student T), indicating varying preconceptions amongst the WBRI cohort. Nonetheless, when T was asked if he had previously thought about belonging to a culture himself, he acknowledged *"I haven't really thought about it that much"*. It became apparent during interviews that students had already been introduced to the concept of 'identity' during Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). However, on further investigation, it appeared that PSHE had presented a more generalised (except for a specific focus on gender identity issues, a lesson alluded to by two interviewees), and arguably reductive interpretation, during which cultural identity had not been examined. Whilst pertinent, further discussion of these implications is beyond this paper's scope. Although 11/22 students agreed that they had previously considered their own cultural identity, the final questionnaire revealed that the intervention caused most students to *further* contemplate cultural identity, both their own and others'. Responses also indicated that the intervention enabled students to consider whether a person "can feel as if they belong to more than one place", suggesting a heightened awareness of cultural identity as "fluid, multiple and complex" (McAdam, 2019, p.300).

The concept of 'home' was discussed throughout, as a means of interpreting (and enhancing), students' perceptions of cultural identity. It was initially predicted that most students would

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understand the word ‘home’ as synonymous with ‘house’, as discussed in Sovran (2013), and have little understanding of home’s metaphorical dimension, especially in the context of cultural identity. However, 6/7 interviewees demonstrated a more nuanced interpretation, with many indicating a metaphorical understanding. Only Student B articulated a purely literal response, indicating that ‘home’ only signified *“my house”*. As discussed in the previous paragraph, B had also not previously considered her own cultural identity. However, during the preliminary questionnaire, she implied a metaphorical understanding of ‘home’, suggesting that one might migrate *“to be somewhere you feel at home”*. The only interviewee who articulated a prior understanding of ‘home’ in relation to cultural identity was Student J, who perceived ‘home’ as *“when I’m at my home country”*, in addition to her house. However, Student T also acknowledged ‘home’ in the wider sense of identity: *“I think it means, it doesn’t matter where you are, how rich or poor you are ... I think it means where ... you ... think ... you belong”*.

Nevertheless, when the class were asked to draw their ‘home’ during the first starter activity, 20/21 students drew a simplistic representation of a house, as predicted. Whilst many students articulated a metaphorical understanding of ‘home’ during the lesson, they appeared less able to draw a symbolic interpretation, requiring further scaffolding in constructing visual metaphors. It appeared that all students found it difficult to depict abstract concepts using only images, although a few employed text. However, the lesson on symbolism had not yet been delivered, and it is likely that students had not encountered this topic previously. Students demonstrated a prior understanding of linguistic metaphors, undoubtedly from English education, but it seemed that they had not previously addressed analogy through drawing. As I discussed in the literature review, devising new analogies aids creative thought generation (Welling, 2007), and creating images is thought to aid transformative learning (Boal, cited in Arizpe et al., p 306). Therefore, this intervention appeared to provide students with new opportunities to develop their creativity in the construction of transformative knowledge, using symbolism. Students demonstrated a good understanding of symbolism during subsequent lessons, and *all* respondents evidenced that the intervention provided them with a better understanding of metaphor and symbolism in the final questionnaire.

Lastly, verbalisations during the final lesson suggested that many students had an enhanced intercultural awareness at the end of the intervention. Ideas such as *“we’re all connected”* and *“need things from each other”* were articulated by two students in response to a video, notably including Student L, who had previously acknowledged her mother’s negative perception of migrants.

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Responding to a clip about refugees, she also volunteered *"for people who might be racist ... don't judge people until you know your own history"*. Another student also articulated an enhanced understanding of Caribbean Windrush migrants' British identity, and thus MB&E. Therefore, although students are perhaps less able to assess their own enhanced perceptions in the completion of a questionnaire, they were able to articulate a heightened awareness during class.

Discussion of Research Limitations

A definition of 'cultural identity' was provided on the first questionnaire, to enable respondents to answer questions. The questionnaire was conducted before interviews, and it was clear that this had already impacted on interviewees' interpretation of culture. Therefore, the interview data surrounding this subject may not be considered as unadulterated, as it is not necessarily an accurate reflection of interviewee's prior understandings, as they had already been exposed to new information. However, it was necessary to conduct the questionnaire first, so that I could select appropriate interviewees. As I was aware of these implications, I framed interview questions so that I could still gather useful data. Limitations of open-ended questions, as identifed by Cohen et al. (2018, pp.475-476), were also apparent in responses to my questionnaires. Firstly, some students left many open-ended questions blank, presumably because they were unsure how to respond. Secondly, in the final questionnaire, some students seemed to misconstrue the information sought in the concluding question (even using this as an opportunity to comment on classroom logistics beyond my control), whereas I had intended for them to comment on lesson content. Therefore, if I were to conduct this questionnaire again during a second AR cycle, I would perhaps include "a sentence-completion item", recommended as "a useful adjunct to an open-ended question" (Oppenheim, cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p.475), so that the required response would not be ambiguous in any way. Furthermore, as respondents knew me as their class teacher, I was no longer regarded as an objective researcher, as perhaps during preliminary data collection. Therefore, the teacher-student relationship perhaps presents additional implications for research, as it may have impacted further on whether respondents' true perceptions were revealed. Consequently, perhaps classroom-based AR poses an augmentation of the established implications surrounding an involved researcher, as customary for ethnographic research. However, as a teacher-researcher, my involvement in this AR was inevitable and purposefully not avoided, as perhaps would be the case in more positivist studies.

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The Covid-19 crisis variously affected findings, but perhaps the most pertinent is the altered atmosphere during the final lesson. This is particularly significant, not only because this was when the final questionnaire was conducted, but notably because this was the lesson in which migration was explicitly discussed, thus requiring an element of sensitivity. I had purposefully endeavoured to build a rapport with participants over a number of lessons, in order to engender a discursive environment in which to discuss controversial issues (Hand & Levinson, 2012). As suggested by Cohen et al. (2018), an interviewer should establish a rapport to obtain reliable data (p.507), but such trust is presumably also essential in faciltating a philosophical classroom discussion of sensitive issues. Firstly, nine students were absent, including Students M and E, with whom I had developed a rapport during interviews, and consequently were more forthcoming in lessons. Secondly, because GCSE students were instructed to complete their coursework before the imminent school closure, the classroom was filled with Year 11 pupils, in addition to the intervention group. This had both practical and social implications, as there was an unusually high level of noise, and Year 7 research participants appeared more reticent in engaging in class discussion, the dynamic affected by the presence of much older students. Therefore, different data may have been obtained if the classroom atmosphere had not been disturbed, but also if the intervention had spanned the intended timeframe, as the additional lessons would likely have enabled a greater rapport to be established.

Conclusion

In conclusion, findings would suggest that the intervention enhanced Year 7 students' perceptions of cultural identity and migration, as a means of heightening their wider intercultural awareness. As intertwining concepts were explored through the communicative medium of textiles, the intervention simultaneously challenged students' preconceptions of Textile Design, through a discussion of narrative textiles and their inherent symbolism (as a visual representation of N&M). As this research follows an AR framework, further cycles would enable improvements. If additional cycles were performed, I would ensure that final interviews were also conducted, to better understand students' subsequent perceptions, and to enable more rigorous triangulation. Further cycles would also enable other learnings to be applied, such as amendments to questions asked during data collection. Additionally, another cycle of AR would enable missing lesson content (from the prematurely terminated intervention) to be realised, so that underlying topics could be taught more effectually. This would also enable any potential student misunderstandings to be addressed in future lessons,

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through a "feedforward" process (Broadfoot et al, 1999, p.3). This intervention emphasised how situational events can impact on context-specific AR, as various students responded to the pandemic, both in their questionnaire responses (alluding to widespread illness as a reason for migration) and during the intervention itself (the concept of 'safety' appeared to adopt new meaning, as some students explored this through symbolism of health-related personal protective equipment). Therefore, following the events of Covid-19, it would perhaps be important to conduct further research into whether students' perceptions of migration have been affected by the pandemic, and whether this has further impacted on their intercultural tolerance.

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