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Making Dramatic Literature More Accessible and Relevant to High School Students

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Making Dramatic Literature More Accessible and Relevant to High School Students

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Research Question

*How can I make **dramatic literature** more **accessible** and **relevant** to students of different backgrounds?*

Literature Review

- Gorlewski and Shoemaker (2013) found that students best understood and were most engaged by works of dramatic literature when they viewed film adaptations.
- Haughey (2012) determined that incorporating movement in performance-based instruction activated the student imagination, gave students an avenue to express themselves, and made the material more pleasurable.
- Audiobooks as a mode of aural content delivery is beneficial to students tackling complex texts like dramatic works because they improve fluency and expand student vocabulary.
- Young and Ortlieb (2018) discovered that Readers' Theater's focus on recitation and close reading helped students with comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary.
- Fang and Pace (2013) concluded that analyzing language structures as a close reading strategy promoted reading competency and supported interpretation of dramatic literature.

Methodology

- The participants were sixteen students in a standard English II class in ninth and tenth grade.
- A unit on Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth* was designed using Kress' (2010) *theory of multimodality* as a framework.
- I analyzed field notes, an informal survey, lesson plans, and student work samples and categorized them by mode of content delivery—textual, visual, aural, kinesthetic, and/or verbal. These modes were then isolated and investigated further to determine which mode, if any, promoted reading comprehension.

Results and Data Analysis

- Standards-based grading data shows that in order for textual modes of content delivery to be successful in promoting reading comprehension, it is important to consistently review key literary terms with the class as a whole throughout the unit.
- Field notes revealed my students' varying learning styles and how they responded to verbal, kinesthetic, aural, and visual modes of content delivery.
- Informal survey responses gave insight into what students identified as the most helpful mode of content delivery for themselves.

Conclusion

- Teachers can utilize this research to inform their unit planning to appeal to the different types of learners within the classroom community.
- Teacher education programs should familiarize themselves with this research in order to help future educators increase student connection and understanding of dramatic literature.
- More research should be conducted to observe how a larger pool of students across grade levels with differing racial/ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds respond to the different modalities used in this study.

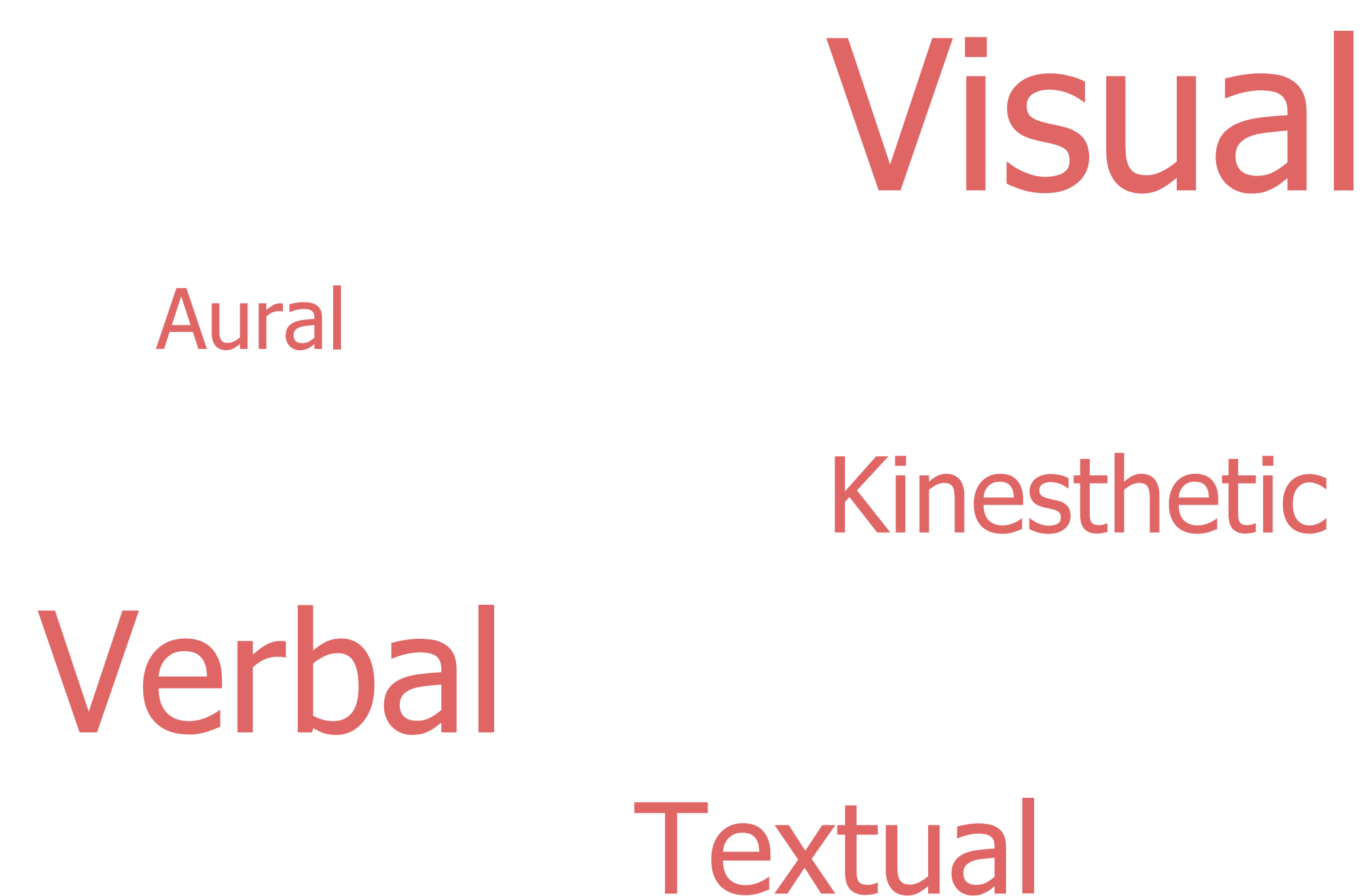


Fig 1. Shown are the five modalities incorporated in my unit planning. The more times a specific modality was used in instruction, the larger the font is in the word cloud. This visually shows how frequently a certain modality was used.