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A critical investigation, using approaches from action research, into how far using multimodal approaches to teach Shakespeare can support differing levels of cultural capital within a class

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Abstract

Secondary schools widely divide students into levels of ability for their English lessons. From the creation of the National Curriculum, teaching Shakespeare has been compulsory, and this has been re-emphasized as part of recent reforms. This small-scale research project investigated the role of cultural capital in determining students' apparent ability levels within English, and the potential of multimodal approaches to enhance and equalize the teaching of Shakespeare. Findings suggest that the distinction between high-attaining and low-attaining sets for English may be differing levels of cultural capital, and use of film, drama and graphic novel versions has the potential to increase student understanding, engagement and examination skill success in the study of Shakespeare.

A critical investigation, using approaches from action research, into how far using multimodal approaches to teach Shakespeare can support differing levels of cultural capital within a class

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Introduction

This research project seeks to investigate whether using the multimodal approaches of film, drama and graphic novels can enhance the teaching of Shakespeare. Its particular focus is on students' levels of cultural capital as a potential barrier in studying Shakespeare, and whether multimodal approaches can address that barrier. Its starting point was the conclusion of a previous research project addressing the question 'who should decide the curriculum': I became concerned the education system inculcates inequality by privileging types of knowledge more accessible to students from more privileged backgrounds. English is particularly implicated in this, because it involves selection of cultural artefacts as objects of study and measures of attainment. At the same time as a previous research project on who should decide the curriculum focused my attention on this issue, in university sessions focused on English teaching, I was looking at 'active approaches' to teaching Shakespeare. Separately, I was also exploring the place of multimodal texts within the curriculum, including graphic novels. I wondered whether research literature advocating approaches to teaching Shakespeare accounted for differing levels of cultural capital among students, and whether cultural capital was something I could account for in my teaching. The question of whether Shakespeare's plays should have the central role they do within the curriculum is outside my control and beyond the scope of this project. Within both my control and the scope of this project is the question of how I implement the requirement to teach three Shakespeare plays across key stages 3 and 4. My aim is to identify approaches that are not only accessible, but accessible to students bringing less privileged forms of cultural capital to the classroom.

Context

As I was embarking on this project, I started teaching two Year 9 classes *Macbeth* – one a higher-attaining set, the other a lower-attaining one. I suspected privileged forms of cultural capital would be more limited within a lower-attaining set; to test this rather than proceeding on that assumption, I devised a questionnaire aimed at measuring cultural capital, administering it to both classes. I found cultural capital levels did seem to be more limited within the lower-attaining set, so selected it for the investigation.

There are thirteen students in the class; three are pupil premium, seven on the SEN register and six EAL. The six EAL students are all at least ‘D’ on the EAL assessment framework for schools (The Bell Foundation, 2016). Ten of the thirteen students are boys and three girls. The school is a co-educational comprehensive academy in Cambridgeshire. Students study a Shakespeare play in each year of key stage 3. I was teaching two of three lessons a week. I started the research sequence of lessons after teaching seven lessons. They had seen some of the 1971 Polanski film version of *Macbeth* and done some drama, but not seen the 2010 Goold film version or a graphic novel version, and film and drama had not been a main teaching tool within their study of *Macbeth*.

Research Questions

Because the different teaching tools I investigated all fall within the scope of an overall approach of bringing multimodal approaches into the classroom, I have incorporated them into one Research Question (RQ), with others focused on cultural capital and links between cultural capital and approaches to Shakespeare teaching:

RQ1: How far are students’ levels of cultural capital measurable?

RQ2: Are differing levels of cultural capital accounted for in literature recommending approaches to Shakespeare teaching?

RQ3: Can multimodal approaches support student learning on Shakespeare in ways that increase their understanding, engagement and examination skill success?

RQ4: Do students’ cultural capital levels interact with the success of different approaches to teaching Shakespeare?

As my literature review is part of the answer to RQs 1 and 2, I have placed it after these RQs and the outline of my research approach, and before the outline of the teaching sequence that I used to investigate RQs 3 and 4.

Research Approach

The research methodology used for this investigation was drawn from action research. Denscombe (2017) describes action research as an extension of the processes of reflective practice to “...using research techniques to enhance and systematise that reflection” (p.129). It augmented my teaching to adopt the approach of action research of identifying problems and using “...a rigorous evidential trail of data and research...” (p.441) to improve practice; this is in line with BERA (2018) guidelines of aiming to “maximise benefit and minimise harm” (p.4). If used judiciously, identifying what is generalizable from particulars and “mak[ing] the inference” to other contexts (Simons, 2014, p.22), findings from this study could also benefit future classes.

RQs 1 and 2 were addressed through my literature review. For RQs 1 and 4, I built on this by devising a questionnaire to measure students’ cultural capital. As Taber (2007) cautions, this could only give me students’ *accounts* of aspects of their family lives identified as relevant to gauging cultural capital levels, but it was unrealistic for me to seek to measure levels of cultural capital via visiting students’ homes or observing their family lives directly, or to triangulate their accounts with other family members’. While a questionnaire does not allow follow-up questions (Denscombe, 2017 and Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018), it is an efficient way of surveying larger numbers of research participants, to which the aim of developing an overview of the two different groups lent itself. By being present when students completed the questionnaire, I could address uncertainties and queries (Cohen et al, 2018), but I made it clear completion and identifying themselves were optional – two students chose not to complete the questionnaire, and some not to identify themselves, suggesting I had successfully provided a meaningful opportunity to opt out. This became a limitation when analysing students’ classwork as a source of data, as I could not always link it to cultural capital levels, but I think it was right to provide separate opportunities to opt out at each stage of the research.

In line with BERA (2018), I was transparent about the questionnaire being for a research project as part of my teacher training. I summarised its focus as looking at what students bring from their

home lives to their studies at school, rather than expecting students to understand the concept of cultural capital in full. The data pertained to students' home lives but was fully anonymised and derived from students old enough to give informed consent – only requiring consent from students themselves was in line with the policy of my PP2 school. Investigating cultural capital is inherently sensitive and somewhat intrusive, as it relates to congruence between students' home lives and types of knowledge valued within the education system, but there is a social benefit to being able to investigate it. It is not unusual to have encouraged students to recount aspects of their home lives for their schoolwork, for example in a scheme of work on autobiography.

Students lacking in privileged forms of cultural capital were likely already aware of incongruence between school and their home lives, so the questionnaire did not risk harming them by drawing it out. To redress the balance from focusing on deficits to strengths and breakdown the notion they do not read or bring anything to studying Shakespeare, I followed a suggestion from my mentor of using the 'rivers of reading' method of data collection with my lower-attaining set (Cliff Hodges, 2018). This provided students with an opportunity to chart their reading history and reflect on reading in their lives and was an accessible and creative way of fleshing out quantitative and written data from the questionnaire.

Taber (2007) cautions against relying too heavily on our own subjective evaluations of our teaching as research evidence, but advocates using focused feedback from mentors "...alongside other 'slices of data'" (p.154). As my focus was student learning and engagement, I opted to use my evaluations, my mentor's observations and analysis of work produced by students in the sequence of lessons to address RQ3, linking them back to the cultural capital questionnaires as far as possible for RQ4. To triangulate my own and my mentor's judgements against students' perception of what supported their learning best, I devised a simple rating questionnaire, providing a further opportunity for students to reflect on their learning.

Both my own and my mentor's observations were inherently limited, as we were operating in dual roles, with a focus on developing my teaching practice alongside the research. It is the nature of action research that it needs to be absorbable into a practitioner's normal workload (Cohen et al., 2018), and the research process complemented the teacher training, usefully bringing to the fore focus on the impact of different teaching tools.

Literature Review

Measuring Cultural Capital

Bourdieu developed the concept of cultural capital, explaining higher educational attainment through better-off parents' greater freedom to invest, culturally as well as materially, in getting children ahead (Bourdieu, 1997). He provided a theoretical framework, but was vague about defining and measuring cultural capital (Gaddis, 2013). Tan (2017) provides an overview of variables that have been used to measure cultural capital, linking them to different dimensions from Bourdieu's framework:

“(a) home educational and cultural resources (objectified form); (b) cultural participation, parental involvement in their children's education, reading habits, parent-child discussion about cultural and school issues, and child or parental expectations for their children (embodied form); and (c) parental educational attainment (institutionalized form).”

(Tan 2017, p.603)

More concretely, Gaddis (2013) identifies “high-arts participation (such as museum visits and play attendance) and time spent reading” (p.2) as dominant empirical measures of cultural capital. He advocates combining this with Bourdieu's concept of habitus, quantifying it as self-belief in educational success and belief in the value of education. Through careful statistical analysis of pre-existing data for a convenient and large, if slightly outdated, sample of young people, he finds cultural capital effects are “fully mediated by habitus” (p.9). Despite this, I focused on cultural capital, seeking to measure dominant empirical measures identified by Gaddis (2013) rather than student attitudes: even if measures of cultural capital were likely mediated by habitus, cultural capital was the variable I wanted to measure and account for. Coles (2013), the article which sparked this project, focused on the advantages of Shakespeare forming part of students' cultural capital, so I included questions about experience of Shakespeare outside school. To link with the different media I was investigating, I asked about: TV and cinema outings; what students enjoy reading; video games; and hobbies or activities outside the house. This provided opportunities for students to mention graphic novels and drama. I included video games on the basis that their graphics are analogous to those of graphic novels. My focus in gathering data was on activities that students shared with their families, treating this as a measure of cultural investment by parents. For a copy of the blank questionnaire in full, see Appendix 1.

The answer to RQ1, then, is that there is no objective, agreed measure of students' cultural capital levels, but there are aspects accepted as relevant. Cliff Hodges' 'rivers of reading' research methodology was developed to access habitual young adult readers' reading lives – she does not mention cultural capital theory, but was seeking to gain a rounded insight into young people's reading lives, with “an integrated focus on social, cultural, historical and spatial aspects of their reading” (Cliff Hodges, 2018, p.56). This yielded results such as mention of the importance of being read to at home, which links to cultural capital. Having concluded from the questionnaire that overall my lower-attaining set lacked cultural capital, 'rivers of reading' provided a useful mechanism for fleshing out the reading aspect of their cultural lives and reminding them of the capital they *had* accumulated by charting reading they *had* done.

Cultural Capital and Recommended Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare

Purewal (2017) provides a helpful overview of a debate over whether Shakespeare is inherently alienating to students from whose home life his works are removed, or their relatability and meaningfulness comes down to teaching methods employed. She concludes forcefully that, effectively taught, Shakespeare is relevant and meaningful to all students. This is based mainly on pitting Powell (2010)'s account of using drama successfully to teach Shakespeare to students “over 70% [of whom] ... are Latino and on a free and reduced lunch program” (p.6) against Dusbiber (2015), who blogged in the Washington Post that Shakespeare should not be prioritised over other authors more relevant to their backgrounds and lives. Purewal infers that Powell's account of success engaging students with Shakespeare must mean Dusbiber's objections to teaching Shakespeare arise from using contrasting, less effective teaching methods, but the Dusbiber article offers no insight into her teaching methods. The dichotomy Purewal posits, between uncreative, alienating “traditional” (p.30) teaching methods and “innovative” (p.31) ones which successfully engage, is not substantiated by evidence of the former occurring or its scale. Teaching methods involving performance are the only alternatives she considers, without acknowledging film or graphic novels as possibilities.

Initially, the Powell (2010) article implicitly acknowledges cultural capital: she sets her case study up as countering a belief among colleagues that “...students from a low income, urban, Latino background cannot relate to Shakespeare's works because they are 'outdated' and 'irrelevant' to their lives” (p.6). She goes on, however, to claim success for her teaching methods for 'students'

generally, seemingly across more than one cohort – the boundaries of her sample are unclear, and she does not hone in on particular students, their backgrounds or their responses to her teaching methods. She does consider the culture of ‘today’s youth’ as a whole, suggesting they benefit from ‘kinaesthetic’ approaches due to video game and computer use (Powell, 2010, p.8). She does not consider other possible implications of this culture such as benefits to using film or graphic novels, or substantiate the claim with evidence of her students’ habits or a preference stated by them – she infers from an assumption combined with perceived success of her approaches. An overall impression of students excited to be studying Shakespeare is inspiring, and I drew on her ideas for helping students understand subtext. It is unclear, however, how she bridges from drama activities to more formal analysis, or how using drama impacts examination skill success; we also have a duty to our students to be ensuring examination success. The lessons in my teaching sequence culminated in plenary activities geared towards the kind of thinking and writing about the text students need for GCSE examination success, and I was left mapping drama activities suggested onto other types of lesson that had worked well – I did not find the research literature I read offered guidance on this. For examination skill success in GCSE English Literature, students across examination boards need to be able to fulfil the Assessment Objectives (AO) set out in Table 1.

AO1	Read, understand and respond to texts Students should be able to: ♣ maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response. ♣ use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate
AO3	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written
AO4	Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation

Table 1: Assessment Objectives (Department of Education, 2013)

It is mainly AO2 and AO3 that work produced in the teaching sequence for this research project provides a measure for.

Irish (2011) uses a more focused case study of a particular class of year 10s to advocate using collaborative rehearsal techniques in the classroom, and mentions essay writing as a marker of success, although it is again unclear whether and how the teacher whose practice the case study

describes (Karen) bridged between drama activities and essay-writing. Additionally, Karen worked in a school engaged in a three-year-long partnership with the RSC, and undertook a postgraduate certificate in these approaches to teaching Shakespeare. By contrast, the couple of days spent in subject studies sessions on using drama to teach Shakespeare is all the training in drama or drama teaching I have had. While the potential gains of trying out drama techniques were outweighed by these limitations, Irish does not address them – her article seems aimed more at promoting the programme to Heads of Department than at empowering individual teachers to use the techniques. She also does not address the issue of differing levels of cultural capital among students, again talking about them as a group. She quotes from the work of a student previously resistant to studying Shakespeare who developed confidence, without exploring how her home life interacted with Shakespeare or the teaching methods employed.

Again, Irish (2011) posits a dichotomy between drama-based approaches and a “reactionary, monological” (p.7) approach, without providing evidence of what the latter looks like or where it is taking place, or considering alternatives other than drama. Schupak (2018) helpfully acknowledges potential drawbacks and limitations of performance-based techniques, advising English teachers lacking a confident drama background to “...engage in those aspects of performance methodology closer to the sensibility side of the scale and to utilise other methods concurrently” (p.176) – I found this notion of a scale, from ‘actual performance’ to a ‘performance sensibility’ (p.168), helpful. Like Powell, Schupak is drawing on her own years of experience teaching Shakespeare, but integrates this with wide-ranging critical analysis of theoretical debate. She acknowledges her practice has developed over years, and performance-based techniques can have varying degrees of success and be integrated into an array of techniques and approaches. This allowance for complexity invests her article with a sense of trustworthiness, and more realistically suggests to teachers possibilities afforded by performance-based pedagogy. She does not address the issue of varying levels of cultural capital, however, again talking about students as a single, undifferentiated entity.

A possibility Schupak (2018) allows for is using film rather than getting students themselves performing. She acknowledges concerns the film will shut down creativity in interpretation, but suggests use of film in the classroom can be as active as use of drama, and cites research showing watching a performance of a play can facilitate understanding more readily than reading it. In the literature on approaches to teaching Shakespeare, there is a general prejudice against guiding or

aiding students' understanding: Coles (2014), Irish (2017) and Schupak (2018) all argue for approaches aimed at facilitating students arriving at their own interpretation rather than the teacher offering them one. In Irish (2017)'s account of Karen's teaching, there is an interesting moment where her approach of sitting in a circle with students imagining themselves as a drama ensemble working with a script for performance has not yielded understanding, and she is at a loss as to how to avoid resorting to directing it. Eventually, she finds a way of reading the text that makes it clear, and this is lauded as sticking with active approaches. Yet the facilitative role she serves as teacher in this moment reads no differently to me to contrasting lessons I have observed as a trainee teacher and previously a Teaching Assistant (TA): activities used by teachers are geared towards facilitating understanding, whether they are starter questions leading into the text, questions about the text, reading the text through together, using questioning to direct students towards understanding, or drama. The question of how best to facilitate and balance reading, understanding and interpreting Shakespeare in students for whom relevant cultural capital is limited has underpinned this project.

Coles (2014) draws on the same research as the article highlighting differing levels of cultural capital in Shakespeare teaching (Coles, 2013) to analyse observations of four different teachers within two different London comprehensives using film to teach Shakespeare, and subsequent interviews with them. She denigrates simply using film to aid understanding, arguing instead for critical, exploratory and interpretative approaches. Coles (2014) suggests that instances she observed and classed as effective of use of improvisation, role-play and film enabled students to draw on their own cultural background to create meaning, citing one example. She does not refer back to the issue of differing levels of cultural capital, however. Through attempting to do it, I realised that incorporating critical analysis of film into the already challenging process of studying Shakespeare is potentially problematic; I later incorporated film more successfully in precisely the way Coles (2014) denigrates: as simply a tool to aid understanding and bring greater familiarity with film as a medium into the classroom. While it is true we can reasonably expect students to be comfortable *watching* film, this is not the same as being well-versed in *critiquing* film.

For this initial lesson using film, I had an idea based on one that I had assisted in as a TA, in which students rate Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's efforts to seem innocent after Duncan's murder is discovered. Based on Durran and Morrison (2004), I made a conscious effort to integrate analysis of the film scene as a film, although I did not attempt to teach the technical media vocabulary they incorporate. Durran and Morrison (2004) again do not mention cultural capital, instead speaking of

students with differing levels of ‘ability’ – from the quotations from student work they offer, it is clear that understanding accessed by their lower-attaining students was far more basic than higher-attaining, and this is with film analysis more embedded in the curriculum. My cultural capital questionnaire did not include a means of gauging how far students’ home lives encourage them to *analyse* film – in classrooms where film is taught in the same technical, analytic way as literature, this becomes cultural capital, and would be a useful area for future research.

The idea of using drama to support Shakespeare teaching arose from subject studies sessions and is widely promoted in the literature (Schupak 2018). As we have seen, Coles (2014) frowns upon her observations of film used without promoting media studies skills. The teachers she interviewed viewed their habit of showing the film as primarily about supporting understanding however, and it is acknowledged by Schupak (2018) as within the scope of performance-based approaches. By contrast, graphic novels were taught separately to Shakespeare teaching in subject studies sessions, and were not mentioned in Purewal (2017)’s overview of competing approaches to Shakespeare or Schupak (2018)’s overview of the benefits and drawbacks of performance-based approaches; I had to actively seek out literature advocating connecting the two, and did not find much. An article by Schwarz (2006) advocating graphic novels for promoting “both traditional, alphabetic literacy and literacies such as information, visual and media literacy” (p.59) briefly mentions a teacher using *creation* of a graphic novel to support Shakespeare teaching, but makes no mention of *reading* graphic novels of Shakespeare plays, and links with Shakespeare are not her focus. She suggests graphic novels will appeal to “diverse students” (p.63), but speaks in terms of “reluctant readers” (p.63) rather than students lacking in cultural capital.

McNicol (2014) does advocate *reading* graphic novel versions to support teaching Shakespeare. Similarly to Coles (2014) in relation to film, she is sceptical of using graphic novels simply to support understanding. She takes the marketing of graphic novel adaptations towards “less able, or less engaged, students” (p.147) as devaluation and downgrading. Drawing on literary theory, she demonstrates that engaging with the multimodal medium of graphic novels is *more* demanding than unimodal media, not less. Through analysis of extracts from different graphic novel versions of the same scene within *Romeo and Juliet*, she demonstrates a complex, sophisticated level of analysis to which graphic novel adaptations lend themselves. Her assumption seems to be that this complexity will be the reserve of “more experienced students” (p.148), identified as more able. The phrase ‘more experienced’ hints at greater levels of cultural capital, but McNicol does not address this.

Having set her article up as in opposition to the idea that graphic novel versions should simply be used as an aid to understanding rather than analysed in their own right, McNicol (2014) later suggests they can help make clear to students emotions not obvious from the text alone. I focused the lesson using the graphic novel on analysing emotion, attempting to both use it to aid understanding and encourage graphic novel analysis.

Both McNicol (2014) and Durran and Morrison (2004) dichotomise complexity and what they identify as ‘low ability’, without linking this to cultural capital. With students struggling with the language of Shakespeare, there is a dilemma between competing goals: finding a way to achieve basic understanding, and offering them more than that. Within a limited sequence of lessons trying out three different types of media, scope for doing the work suggested in the literature of providing a vocabulary for analysing those media was limited. The diversity of the media did, however, avoid the pitfall warned against of one version of the text realised as performance or graphic novel dominating (Durran & Morrison, 2004; Coles, 2014; McNicol, 2014; Schupak, 2018).

Teaching Sequence

I began by considering which scenes the class was coming up to lent themselves to which medium. For Act 2, Scene 3, I drew on Powell (2010)’s ideas for using drama to help students understand subtext; when Duncan’s murder is discovered, what Macbeth and Lady Macbeth say has an underlying aim of asserting their innocence. I used film to build on this with the same scene: having explored subtext, the learning objective was to analyse how convincingly Macbeth and Lady Macbeth act innocent, but I took seriously Coles (2014) and Schupak (2018)’s prohibition against using film simply to aid understanding, seeking to include analysis of film itself. I drew on Durran and Morrison (2004) but, rather than teaching camera angles, incorporated analysis of actors’ line delivery and direction of the scene. Although this was the second lesson on this scene, many students struggled with media analysis on top of plot and character. I thus simplified the tasks in the next lesson using film, drawing on Schupak (2018)’s notion of a ‘performance sensibility’. I kept the second lesson using drama simpler as well, and did not try to get everyone acting as I had learned some would be enthusiastic and some would opt out. I felt Act 3, Scene 3 particularly benefitted from being performed in order to fully grasp the impact and significance of Banquo’s murder, and watching Act 3, Scene 4 would enable students to appreciate the presence of Banquo’s ghost at the banquet. Act 3, Scene 2 lent itself to exploration of the Macbeths’ emotional and mental

state once Macbeth is crowned King, so I used the graphic novel in line with McNicol (2014)'s suggestion that it particularly supports student understanding of emotion. Before introducing the graphic novel, I built on a successful lesson my mentor had done with the class drawing images to go with quotes to aid understanding and analysis. My plans ended up needing two lessons; I have included them as separate lessons in Table 2 (next page) outlining the sequence. The cultural capital questionnaires were administered and 'rivers of reading' carried out prior to the commencement of the research teaching sequence.

Date	Medium	Scene	Learning Objective	Activity Overview	Student Work Produced
14.3.19	Drama	2.3	Explore characters' reactions to the discovery of Duncan's murder.	Devise advice for the Macbeths re: how to act innocent. Use: 1) experimenting with delivery of lines summarising subtext and 2) freeze-framing key moments within the scene to understand and analyse the scene.	Advice for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth on how to seem innocent.
18.3.19	Film (Goold 2010 version)	2.3	Analyse how convincingly Macbeth and Lady Macbeth act innocent upon the discovery of Duncan's murder.	Consider who might say key lines and how they should be delivered. Re-cap questions. Analyse how key lines are delivered and how innocent characters seem. Spectrum line re: how guilty the Macbeths seem.	Answers to re-cap questions; answers to questions re: who might deliver particular lines and why, and then who does deliver them and how.
21.3.19	Graphic novel	3.2	Explore how Macbeth and Lady Macbeth feel after the murder, once Macbeth is King.	Answer questions re-capping implications of witches' prophecies for Banquo and Macbeth. Identify key lines showing the Macbeths' feelings immediately after the murder. Use illustrations: 1) to show how you expect the Macbeths to be feeling once Macbeth is King and 2) to develop understanding of key quotations. Rate Macbeth and Lady Macbeths' levels of calm and anxiety.	Answers to re-cap questions; pictures of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after they have murdered Duncan and Macbeth is King, labelled with explanations; illustrations of key quotations.
25.3.19	Graphic novel	3.2	Analyse how Shakespeare and the graphic novel artist present Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the murder, once Macbeth is King.	Re-cap questions re: the Macbeths' feelings after they have murdered Duncan and Macbeth is King. Use categorising lines as suggesting worried/unhappy or pleased/triumphant, and comparison of own illustrations to the graphic novel artist's, to understand and analyse the scene. Produce a paragraph analysing a panel of the graphic novel version of the scene.	Answers to re-cap questions; paragraph analysing how the artist has shown Macbeth or Lady Macbeth's feelings in one of the panels, and how the images link to the text.
27.3.19	Drama	3.3	Assess how Macbeth's character has developed since the start of the play.	True or false statements re: Banquo and how the Macbeths are feeling. Use: 1) charades-style activity acting out different types of violence and responses to violence, and 2) students performing the scene to understand and analyse the scene. Colour in outline of Macbeth showing % good or evil at start of play and now, putting evidence around it.	Answers to questions re: what happens in the scene and what this shows about developments in Macbeth's character; coloured-in and annotated Macbeth outlines.
1.4.19	Film (1971 Polanski version)	3.4	Explore how Shakespeare uses the supernatural to engage the audience and show Macbeth's mental state.	Use: 1) own ideas about supernatural, 2) information about theatre audiences in Shakespeare's time and 3) the film, to understand and analyse how it grabs the audience's attention. Rate Macbeth's levels of sanity at different points in the play from 100% sane to 100% insane, and justify placements.	Answers to questions re: supernatural; analysis of film version; worksheet rating Macbeth's sanity levels across the play. Student ratings of multimodal approaches also gathered.

Table 2: Summary of Teaching Sequence

Data, Discussion and Evaluation

Measuring Cultural Capital

Coles (2013) is concerned that students need experience of Shakespeare in their home lives to study it successfully. Across both my lower-attaining and higher-attaining sets, most students reported having this in some form, as can be seen in Table 3 below, which presents the questionnaire results for Question 6 (see Appendix 1), referencing the experience that each of the two sets had had of Shakespeare plays outside of school. Question 6 asked students to look at a set of given activities and tick any they had experienced. I have grouped them together into rows showing different types of experience. Where students ticked both one play, film or theatre production and more than one, I have only counted more than one. Only 2 out of 11 and 2 out of 25 respectively reported having no experience of Shakespeare in their home lives in any form.

Experience of Shakespeare Plays Outside of School	Number out of 11 (Lower-attaining Set)	Number out of 25 (Higher-attaining Set)
Read one play	0	0
Watched one film	1	1
Seen a theatre production of one play	0	0
Read more than one play	0	2
Watched more than one film	0	1
Seen more than one theatre production	0	0
Experienced them in more than one medium	1	1
Experienced them in one medium and talked about them	2	3
Experienced them in more than one medium and talked about them	1	6
Talked about them, with adults	1	2
Talked about them, with adults and with people your age	1	5
Talked about them, with people your age	0	2
None	3	2

Table 3: Students' home experience of Shakespeare

A higher proportion of the higher-attaining set has experienced Shakespeare in more than one medium and talked about it outside school, but 1 out of 11 and 6 out of 25 respectively this is not definitively higher and a majority of the higher-attaining set has not. A slightly higher proportion of

the lower-attaining set at 3 out of 11 against 2 out of 25 respectively reports no experience of Shakespeare at home, but nevertheless the proportion who have experienced a Shakespeare play in some form outside school is around 50% for both sets. This does not suggest a strong relationship between home experience of Shakespeare and being in the higher-attaining set. Coles (2013) based her findings on reference to experience of Shakespeare at home coming from three students in her study most comfortable studying Shakespeare. To explore this relationship further, a study would need to be more systematic about gathering a picture of students' home experience of Shakespeare and link this to attitudes and attainment levels. All students in my study talk about their schoolwork or work on their homework with their families at least yearly, and the majority more regularly; it is unclear how much of their home experience of Shakespeare is linked to this and how much occurs independently of schoolwork.

For the variables identified by Gaddis (2013) as dominant empirical measures of cultural capital, the difference between the lower-attaining and higher-attaining sets is starker, as shown in Tables 4 and 5 below. Table 4 presents questionnaire results for Question 1 (see Appendix 1), referencing the regularity with which students go the theatre and museums or art galleries. The table shows how many from each class do each activity, and how many never do either. Table 5 presents quantitative questionnaire results for Questions 2 and 4 from the questionnaire, which pertained to their and their parents' reading habits.

Activity	Regularity best described as	Lower-attaining Set		Higher-attaining Set	
		Number out of 11	Percentage	Number out of 25	Percentage
Theatre	Monthly	0	0	3	12
	Yearly	2	18	13	52
	Never	9	81	9	36
Museums or art galleries	Monthly	0	0	11	44
	Yearly	3	27	7	28
	Never	8	73	7	28
Theatre museums / art galleries	Never	6	55	0	0

Table 4: Regularity of students' visits to theatres, museums and art galleries

Reading habits	Lower-attaining Set		Higher-attaining Set	
	Number out of 11	Percentage	Number out of 25	Percentage
Named a book or type of book they enjoy reading	4	36	23	92
See parents reading books	2	8	19	76

Table 5: Student’s and their parents’ reading habits

None of the higher-attaining set never goes either to the theatre or to art galleries and museums outside of school, whereas over half of the lower-attaining set (6 out of 11) never goes to either. A clear majority of the higher-attaining set name a book or type of book they enjoy reading (23 out of 25) and report seeing their parents reading (19 out of 25); a clear majority of the lower-attaining set do not (7 out of 11 did not name a book or type of book they enjoyed reading; 9 out of 11 reported not seeing their parents reading).

In my literature review, differences in cultural capital were rarely mentioned in relation to recommended approaches to teaching Shakespeare: authors variously distinguished between reluctant and habitual readers, low and high ability students and more and less engaged students. This data shows strong correlation between dominant empirical measures of cultural capital and the difference between being in the higher-attaining or lower-attaining set. It does not include the sets in between, cannot show the nature of the relationship and is not broken down into levels of attainment within sets. It provides a basis for further research into the possibility that distinctions between levels of ‘ability’ or attitudes to reading are differences in levels of cultural capital, and thinking of them as such could aid teaching.

All student in the lower-attaining set reported talking to their families about school or homework at least monthly. With some degree of regularity, all their parents engage in at least one of TV, cinema and video games with them. This suggests parents who do not read or take their children to the theatre or art galleries are investing in them culturally as best they can, and lends credence to the idea bringing cultural familiarity with film into the classroom may help compensate for limited familiarity with written text or Shakespeare. Given parents’ clear willingness to spend time investing in their children culturally and supporting their school and homework, supporting parents to incorporate more privileged forms of cultural capital into students’ home lives would be a potential area for research.

From the ‘rivers of reading’, it emerged that several students who did not read much had enjoyed the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, with one of them citing the pictures as part of why they liked it – I wondered whether this might link to finding the graphic novel helpful for studying Shakespeare. Two students had stopped reading all together because they had been told they should not be reading simple books with pictures. Another, relatively high-attaining student with a high level of cultural capital for the group likes ‘making little comics for friends to read’, suggesting graphic novels may usefully support and develop his Shakespeare study.

Looking at the ‘rivers’ together shows a rich history of a shared reading culture within the lower-attaining set, although two EAL students said they did not feel able to share books they had grown up reading in their other language. Some students said having more freedom to play out and increased internet use had reduced their reading of books as they got older, representing this visually with narrowing and widening of the river, but it is interesting to note these social conditions do not seem to have prevented the majority of students in the higher-attaining set being in the habit of reading, and one student in the lower-attaining set has written ‘The Internet have never stopped me from reading books’.

Use of Multimodal Approaches

Film

In evaluations and observation notes across the sequence, it is striking how much my teaching was developing. Regardless of medium, success was affected by factors such as how effectively I handled behavioural issues, how well-structured lessons were, and how confident and relaxed I was delivering them. It is interesting to note, then, that in the first lesson using film, in amongst lots of questions to encourage me to reflect on and develop my approach to behaviour management and how I had structured some of the activities, my mentor wrote *students are really engaged with the film version*. Both times students encountered a scene through film, I was struck by how quiet and focused they were while they watched, writing in my evaluations, *they got really into the film* and *the film really engaged them – they were watching largely in a very focused way – even a student who had his head in his arms was watching*. In terms of engagement then, my own and my mentor’s notes on the lessons support each other in identifying film as successful with all students, regardless of differing levels of cultural capital.

In terms of understanding, I wrote for the first lesson *it did help with their understanding – a student had clearly got it in a way that I'm not sure I'd seen before – Macbeth killing the guards and his explanation*. Quite a lively debate broke out as to why Macbeth killed the guards and how innocent or guilty that made him seem. Following this, we agreed to watch the scene again to double-check our understanding – one student protested against the idea of re-watching the scene, but others were interested in using this to resolve the debate.

In relation to the dilemma identified in my literature review between facilitating students arriving at their own interpretation and guiding them towards one, there was an instructive moment within the first film lesson. In combination with readings on use of film in Shakespeare teaching, I had based it on a lesson I was in as a TA; in that lesson, the teacher guided students towards the idea Macbeth's lines that begin "had I but died an hour before this chance" (2.3.92-97) sound like a pre-prepared speech and are thus ineffective at seeming innocent. Something my mentor challenged me on was focusing on imparting this idea rather than engaging with students' authentic responses. One lower-attaining student whose questionnaire had shown he was not from a theatre-going or reading family and who had written '*I dont do any Shackspere*' was able to comment that Macbeth seemed '*over the top*' here, and I think I thought I was building on this response by guiding him towards the idea the speech sounded pre-prepared. In students' written responses, however, where they have used that idea, many of them have just quoted it without showing understanding. One has said '*Macbeth's speech here is different from him later because he is too focused on acting innocent*', which may be gesturing at the same thing, but other ideas that genuinely came from them are no less correct and show more authentic understanding, e.g. '*he sounds heartbroken, like there's no point in living if the king is dead. He seems very shocked but not overdone*'. In terms of examination skill success, they are not at higher level skills within the reading assessment framework of exploring the impact of individual words or phrases, but they have clearly got a sound sense not just of meaning but impact and significance, even if they cannot yet fully explain it. By trying to get them to focus on how actors were delivering multiple lines *and* how the scene had been directed *and* what characters were saying *and* how this came across, I had set them up to not do any of it in detail. A fuller dialogic conversation focused on just the language of one section of the text may have better built on the effectiveness of the film medium for engaging them and aiding their understanding. This suggests that, to be optimised, the benefits of using film need to be combined with dialogic-teaching and avoid demanding too much of students in terms of what they are being asked to analyse.

Having learned from the impact of trying to do too much with film in the first lesson, in the second, I focused my attempts to foster understanding on two key questions: how Shakespeare and the filmmakers use the supernatural in Act 3 Scene 4 to grab the audience's attention, and what this scene shows about Macbeth's mental state. Students' answers showed clear understanding: all had got that Macbeth was seeing Banquo's ghost and linked this to his mental state deteriorating. Fascinatingly, a student who came out as lacking privileged cultural capital but a regular cinema-goer wrote '*his going mad and seeing him as in a shadow*'. Macbeth addresses the ghost as a "horrible shadow", and this film version has the ghost more in shadow than Macbeth and the other dinner guests – I wonder which this student was picking up on, or whether it was both? He has not got to the point of quoting and analysing, but he has implicitly focused in on a language detail, unprompted.

Whereas in the first film lesson I tried to get all students analysing both the language and enactment of sections of the text, in the second one I included cinematic analysis as an extension question for if they had answered the two baseline ones on plot and character. This question was how students would direct the scene differently – one student said he would have Lady Macbeth see the ghost too, which initially struck me as fixed by the text and not open to interpretation, but has got me wondering whether Lady Macbeth could act the line "this is the very painting of your fear" to suggest she sees it too and does not allow it to bother her in the way Macbeth does. This is another example of it working to trust students within this lower-attaining group that lacks privileged forms of cultural capital to develop their own understanding rather than trying to direct it.

Drama

In the first drama lesson, getting students participating was an issue. Powell (2010) mentions that students have sometimes been reluctant to join in, but implies this is successfully addressed by telling them successful acting requires everyone to participate. My mentor noted, *Some are reluctant with the drama while others are doing great – how could you best take advantage of this? You are able to get more groups better involved by supporting one of the reluctant groups.* The third group, however, had one student complaining of being ill, and no one willing to take the lead or get the acting going. I wrote in my evaluation *I was encouraging with the drama* – notably, I did not say I was *successfully* encouraging. A dilemma arose between capitalising on the students who were doing the drama, allowing others to observe, or keeping pushing all to join in. The former

maintains a “performance sensibility” (Schupak, 2018, p.168) while avoiding the focus becoming whether students will perform. By contrast with film, where both I and my mentor were struck by how readily it engaged all students, I did not have the same feeling of students being in comfortable territory with drama. This perhaps relates to the fact that theatre and drama are not part of the majority of their home lives. Also, Powell (2010) does her drama in a drama studio, and Irish (2017) advocates reorganising the classroom to create space for drama – there is perhaps accumulated buy-in for drama activities within drama studios, or spaces altered to feel more like drama studios. I did not do this because I was trying to incorporate drama into a normal lesson to avoid disrupting students’ routine too much, but my mentor highlighted afterwards that I had still suddenly based much of the lesson around drama activities. I reflected in my evaluation *I didn’t set the scene effectively*. After that, I started supporting student engagement by incorporating explicit explanation of which medium we were trying out that lesson before starting.

Students’ written work suggests a starter about advising Lady Macbeth and Macbeth in how to act innocent did successfully engage them. Within the parameters of their usual levels of written output, all students answered this question at length, and it both brought out creative ideas and paved the way to engaging with the text. One lower-attaining student who came out as lacking cultural capital seems to be preparing their defence if accused: *‘they could just say why would he do that he helped the king and he was given the Throne of Cordore’* – while ‘throne’ needed correcting to ‘thane’ here, the student had synthesised a fair amount of understanding from across the play. This understanding of reasons why it does not make sense for Macbeth to have killed Duncan has the potential to feed into sophisticated analysis of character and plot. Although a written task, this falls within the scope of Schupak (2018)’s ‘performance sensibility’, as it is focused on how characters behave as a way into what they say. Encouraging students to think of the Macbeths as people needing advice has drawn out understanding in a quick starter activity in a way simply calling on students to analyse the text would not have been likely to, across differences in cultural capital levels within the group.

In the second drama lesson, I only tried to get all students to participate in a charades-style drama activity, recruiting just 5 to act out the scene. This time, I was more successful at encouraging them, getting every group doing the charades and finding 5 students willing to act. Interestingly, an EAL student was reluctant to act until we realised Fleance was a non-speaking part, and then she could be included. I was aware at the time the acting was requiring a lot of direction and explanation from

me, and realised afterwards it was not realistic to expect students to act out the scene upon first reading. I perhaps should have adopted more of a ‘read-through’ type approach, where we read the scene through together, ensured understanding, and then acted it out; or set the gist of the scene up as an improvised activity instead of reading from the script. My mentor noted, *they focus on reading and lose the acting – how could you support this?* Schupak (2018) seems to imply students can arrive at understanding *through* performance, but I found students in this group needed direction to be able to enact a scene they had not had an opportunity to understand yet, rather than the two happening at once. Schupak does suggest there are techniques for pre-reading of sections of text that can support students’ enactment of it, using movement to aid understanding, so I have come away from this feeling that there is room to develop my approach to using drama more, rather than it cannot work.

An aspect I noted as successful was *it was useful to be able to refer to the charades activity* (‘*was he a brave murder victim or a terrified one?*’) and *the performance of the scene* (‘*what happened to that student? who were they playing?*’). This reminded me of a lesson I had observed in which my mentor *...did some spontaneous drama for Lady M. coating the daggers with blood, and we were able to refer back to it and it helped it stick*. I found this helpful across the group for supporting analysis of the scene.

Graphic Novel

For the lesson in which students looked at a scene in graphic novel form, I have written in my evaluation *having the pictures of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to refer to gave students a starting point – all could comment on their expressions*. Neither my mentor nor I have commented the graphic novel engaged students in the way we did with film. Having said that, having the graphic novel images to comment on alongside the text does seem to have supported student understanding, and analysis of particular quotes seems to have been made easier for them by framing it in terms of the question of how the expressions the artist has given them match the language. Again, a student who had struggled to analyse language in other lessons wrote *‘In panel 3 Macbeth is feeling powerful I think he has given Macbeth this expression because it says “let the frame of things disjoint” This line matches this expression because the words phrases suggest he’s willing to do anything image 4 suggests Macbeth is feeling manic as well as powerful – these ideas have come entirely from a student who often seeks my support in working out what to write, and are an*

interesting and valid analysis that could be used in an examination without reference to the graphic novel images. Unfortunately, I do not have a cultural capital questionnaire for this student, so cannot gauge any links. From his ‘river of reading’ he does not have strong memories of a reading history, but is a fan of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, perhaps linking with finding images in books helpful. He had not chosen this quote to draw an image for in the lead-in lesson, and the idea it suggests Macbeth is powerful, as opposed to ideas of desperation or selfishness we had discussed as a class, came entirely from him and his analysis of the graphic novel.

Three students had mentioned liking picture books in their ‘river of reading’, so I particularly hoped graphic novels might work well for them. One was unfortunately absent that day. The one who likes ‘*making little comics for friends to read*’ was most able to analyse the features of the graphic novel as a medium, explaining how the artist had drawn characters’ eyes to make them look serious, and successfully linking to the language with the idea the phrase “treason has done its worst” is a reflection of the seriousness of what the Macbeths have done to Duncan. The student who was put off reading once he was told he should no longer be reading books with pictures did not write out a full response, but linked Macbeth looking angry and Lady Macbeth looking horrified to the phrase “let the frame of things disjoint”, implying some level of understanding of the force of this line. This student also commented to me ‘*I don’t know why but I expected Lady Macbeth to be bigger*’, going on to explain upon further questioning that it was because she is a ‘demanding’ character. It is fascinating that, although limited language to express himself holds this student back both orally and in writing, the graphic novel provided him with a means of showing insight into the forcefulness of Lady Macbeth’s character and her relationship with Macbeth.

Students’ Own Ratings of the Multimodal Approaches

Students’ own ratings of how helpful they had found the different ways of approaching *Macbeth* came out as shown in Figure 1 below, on which each of the 5 types of media are shown for each of the scale ratings from 1(not at all helpful) to 5 (very helpful). Ratings for drama are shown in dark blue, just reading the play red, using the graphic novel green, watching the film purple, and reading the graphic novel light blue. I was surprised that so many (5 students) rated drawing images to go with quotes 1, as I had thought this a useful way for them to focus in on a particular quote and demonstrate and clarify understanding, e.g. one student drew a picture of the earth cut in half with an arrow from a grumpy looking Macbeth, showing his understanding of the quote “let the frame of

things disjoint”. The graphic novel is not popular, even though my assessment of the written work arising from its use is it was notably strong. Students perhaps did not conceptualise the idea of ‘helpful’ as enabling close written analysis: breaking down the concept of ‘helpfulness’ into enjoyableness, ease and close analysis may have yielded more nuanced results. Drama is much less unpopular than I would have imagined, fitting in with my idea that, despite the difficulties I had with it, it has potential. One student took the opportunity to say he believes drama activities work better when he is allowed to choose who he works with, perhaps highlighting the importance of trust to drama. A clear majority rate the helpfulness of film as middling or above, and none give it the lowest rating. This aligns with my feeling that film is one of the most accessible ways for students predominantly from a cinema, TV and video game culture, rather than a theatre-going and book-reading one, to encounter Shakespeare.

Interactions with Cultural Capital

Unfortunately, I cannot cross-reference students’ ratings of the different mediums to their levels of cultural capital because only four of the ten who completed that questionnaire identified themselves, and cultural capital was so limited within the group overall. To develop that question, a comparison across the different sets, where there was a big contrast between overall levels of cultural capital, would be needed. This study is more a case study with a class that, overall, was found to be deprived of cultural capital, and responded well to more familiar mediums and a ‘performance sensibility’ being introduced into their study of Shakespeare. Given that drama is not a specialism of mine and I was trying out these approaches for the first time, this suggests these mediums could be utilised to even greater effect with more experience. Thinking in terms of cultural capital was useful for developing and refining my approach – rather than thinking of students as ‘low ability’, I was thinking about ways of accessing the text that would capitalise on cultural experience they had.

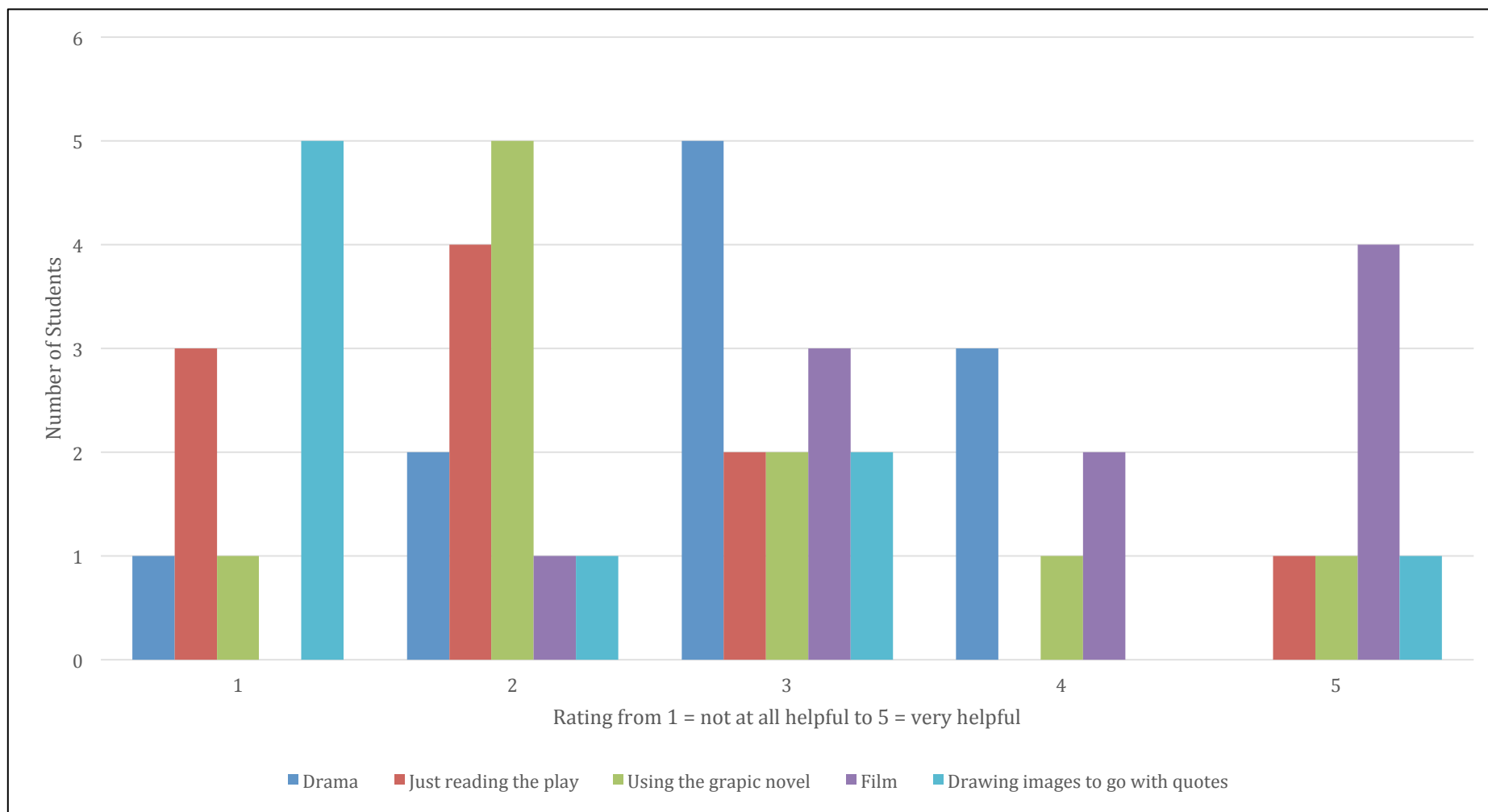


Figure 1: Students' Own Ratings of the Helpfulness of Different Mediums

Conclusion

The scope of the questions I set out to answer was large, covering both using three different multimodal approaches in Shakespeare teaching, measuring cultural capital and gauging links between the two. For RQ3, I feel I have shown that using multimodal approaches has potential to support student learning on Shakespeare in ways that increase their understanding, engagement and examination skill success, but I will need to continue to develop my approach to be able to optimise this, and adapt it to different classes. The process of formally researching the approaches and then treating student work, observation notes and evaluations as research project data has been incredibly helpful. Pitfalls of attempting to integrate aspects of research readings into lessons are clear from, for example, my difficulties getting the balance right between using film as an aid to understanding on the one hand, and attempting to integrate media analysis into these one-off lessons on the other. Having written up this research project, though, I am now clearer on what I was trying to do in these lessons and why, and what about it went well and what did not.

In terms of interactions between students' cultural capital levels and different approaches to teaching Shakespeare, I cannot definitively say one medium compensated particularly well for students not being from a household with a culture of reading or high-arts participation. All three drew out understanding and even quite sophisticated analysis from students with limited privileged cultural capital, however. Moments like one lower-attaining student, for whom reading and high-arts participation are not part of his day-to-day life but cinema and television are, honing in on the word 'shadow' to describe Banquo's ghost, suggest potential in translating students' greater familiarity with film as a medium into more ready apprehension of Shakespeare. This could lead in time to stronger analysis.

I found that a benefit of all three mediums is providing something visual to link discussion of language to. They also bring students closer to apprehension of the text as enacted, thinking for example about what characters look like and how they move. This is both a more authentic cultural experience of something originally designed for consumption primarily as performance, and links to GCSE requirements to use appropriate subject terminology and show awareness of form and context.

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Appendix 1

Cultural Capital Questionnaire

Name: _____

Please fill in this questionnaire as fully as you can. If you need more space, please continue on another sheet of paper. It should take around 15 minutes. Thank you very much.

1) Please tick the box that best describes how often you and your family do each of these activities together:

Sit down for an evening meal	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Watch TV	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Go to the theatre	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Go to the cinema	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Play video games	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Go to art galleries or museums	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Talk about your schoolwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Work on your homework	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Share a hobby or activity outside of the house*	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly	<input type="checkbox"/> Never

* If you share a hobby or activity outside of the house with someone in your family, please tell me about this:

2) Outside of school, what do you most enjoy reading?

3) What activities do you enjoy other than reading?

4) How regularly do your parent(s) or carer(s) read? What do they read?

5) Please tell me about two things that you have watched on TV recently that you have really enjoyed.

6) Please tick any of the following activities that you have experienced with Shakespeare's plays outside of school:

- Read one play
- Read more than one play
- Watched one film
- Watched more than one film
- Seen a theatre production of one play
- Seen more than one theatre production
- Talked about them with adults
- Talked about them with people your age

7) Please describe one or more experiences you have of Shakespeare outside of school.
