Oracy in the classroom

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Achieving for Children, Educational Psychology Service
SEND Futures Conference, October 12th 2022

Aims

- To explore what Oracy is

- To review evidence based practice and practice based evidence regarding Oracy in the classroom

- To consider how to assess Oracy

What is oracy?

Oracy is the ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language.

Learning to talk

ORACY

Learning through talk

voice 21
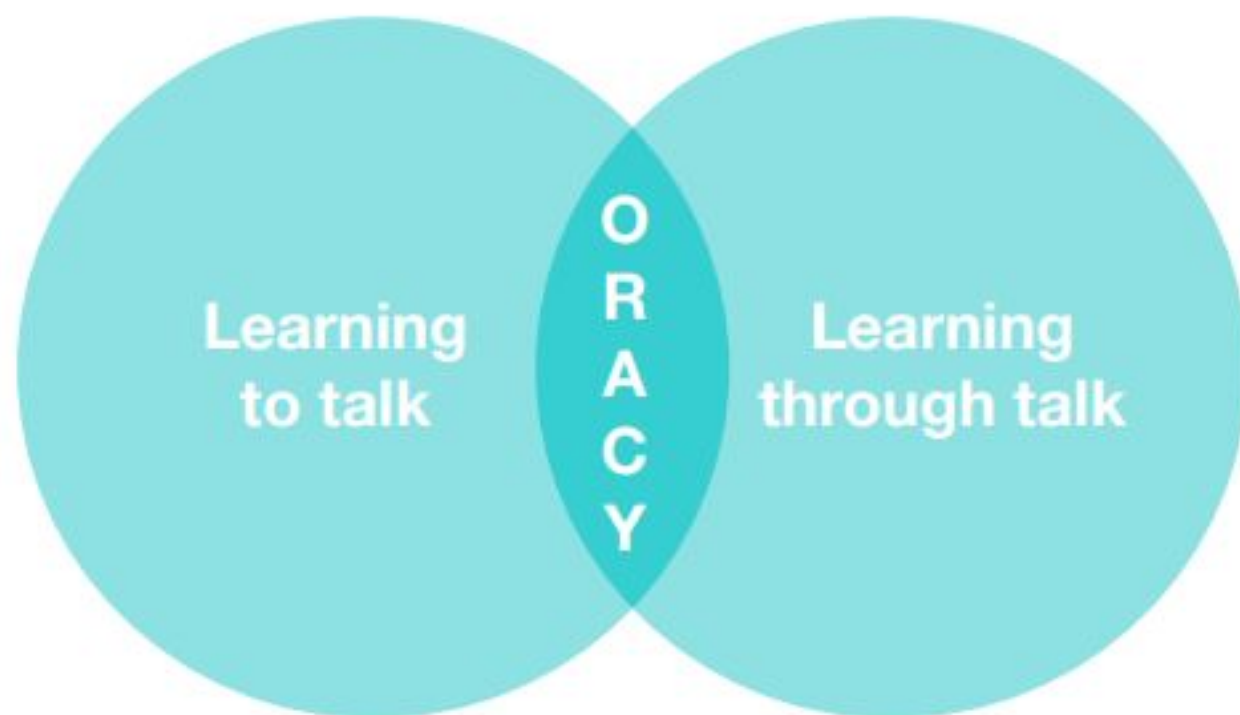
Why Oracy? High-quality talk in schools can have a profound impact upon children's cognition and learning

Attainment scores in **English, Mathematics & Science**

The **retention** of subject specific knowledge

Improved **verbal, non-verbal and quantitative reasoning**

Transferring comprehension and reasoning skills to other areas

Enhanced **communication for pupils with SEND**

Literacy

For references and further information

Oracy across the Welsh curriculum

A research-based review: key principles and recommendations for teachers

Professor Neil Mercer and Dr James Mannion

Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge

July 2018

Oracy Cambridge
The Hughes Hall Centre for Effective Spoken Communication

EAS
Education Achievement Service
for South East Wales
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg
i Dde Ddwyrain Cymru

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

High-quality talk in schools can have a profound impact upon children's social and emotional development

References

Self esteem/Self confidence

Engagement and on task focus

Social development/Peer interactions
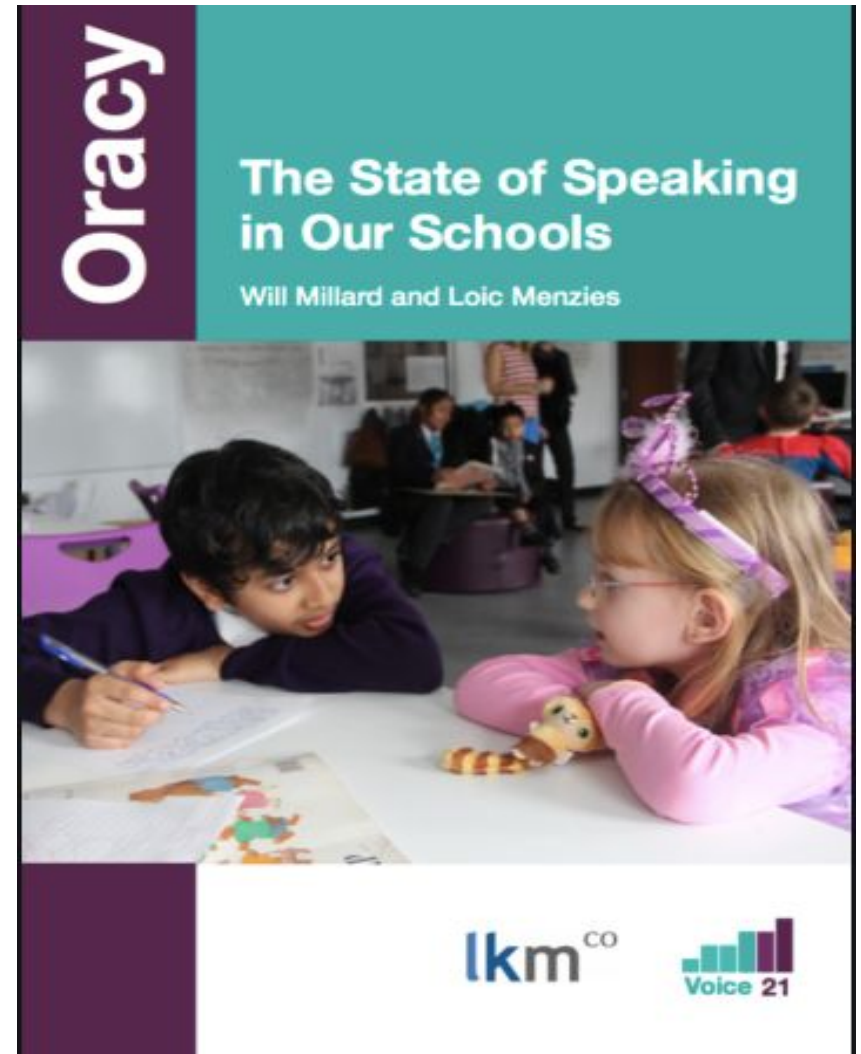
Emotional intelligence

Empathy

Ability to handle stress

And an impact upon…

- Language and communication
- Civic engagement and empowerment
- Employment opportunities
- Economic circumstances
- Social disadvantage

For references and further information

Oracy

The State of Speaking in Our Schools

Will Millard and Loic Menzies

lkm^{co}

Voice 21

Quiz: Speech Language and Communication Needs

Oracy across the Welsh curriculum

A research-based review: key principles and recommendations for teachers

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mercer & Manion, 2018

General principles for schools

Practical steps for school leaders

Practical steps for teachers and support staff

Focus for today

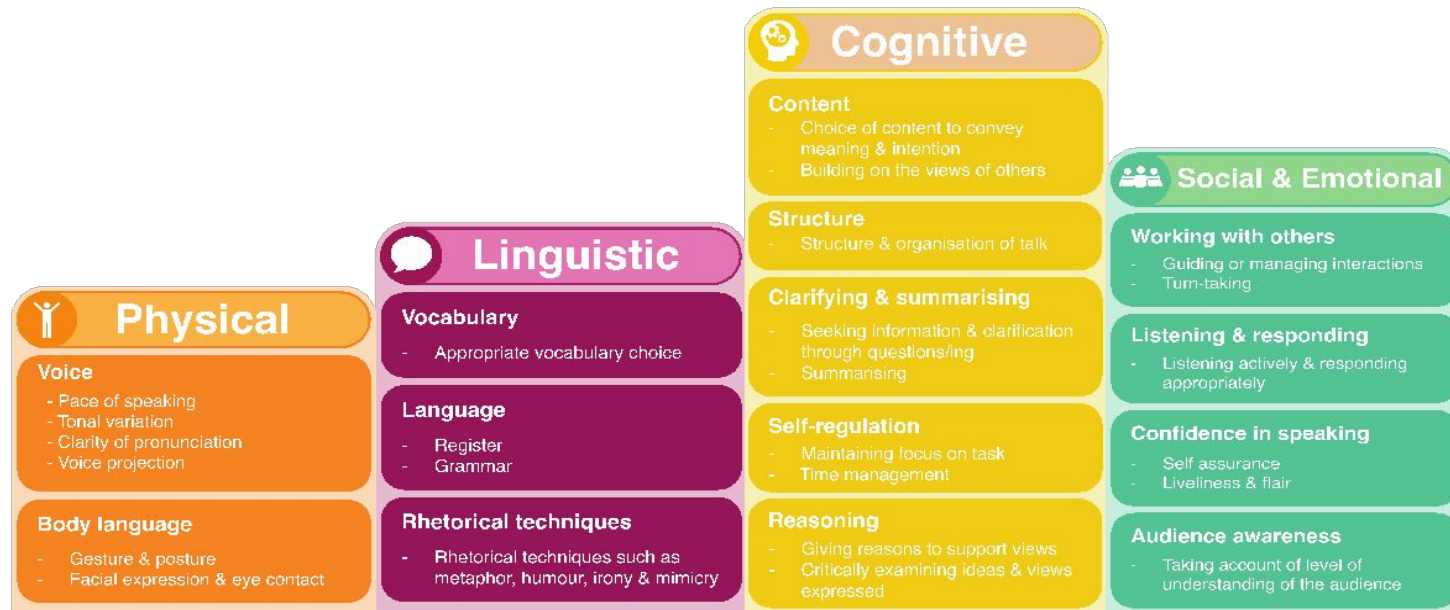**Practical steps for teachers and support staff**

What the research says

1. Make oracy visible in the classroom and in your practice
2. Teach talk skills for group work and collaborative learning: Exploratory Talk
3. Teach public speaking skills and presentation skills separately
4. Teach listening skills
5. Make meaningful use of Oracy assessment

Mercer & Manion, 2018

1. Make oracy visible in the classroom and in your practice

The Oracy Framework

Use the oracy framework to understand the physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional skills that enable successful discussion, inspiring speech and effective communication.

🧠 Cognitive

Content
- Choice of content to convey meaning & intention
- Building on the views of others

Structure
- Structure & organisation of talk

Clarifying & summarising
- Seeking information & clarification through questions/ing
- Summarising

Self-regulation
- Maintaining focus on task
- Time management

Reasoning
- Giving reasons to support views
- Critically examining ideas & views expressed

👥 Social & Emotional

Working with others
- Guiding or managing interactions
- Turn-taking

Listening & responding
- Listening actively & responding appropriately

Confidence in speaking
- Self assurance
- Liveliness & flair

Audience awareness
- Taking account of level of understanding of the audience

💬 Linguistic

Vocabulary
- Appropriate vocabulary choice

Language
- Register
- Grammar

Rhetorical techniques
- Rhetorical techniques such as metaphor, humour, irony & mimicry

🧍 Physical

Voice
- Pace of speaking
- Tonal variation
- Clarity of pronunciation
- Voice projection

Body language
- Gesture & posture
- Facial expression & eye contact

voice 21

© Voice 21 2018 developed in partnership with Oracy Cambridge. Voice 21 operates as an organisation under the School 21 Foundation, a registered charity in England and Wales registration number 1152672

Example: Teaching the cognitive strand: Structure and organisation of talk: Talk Tactics

Talk Tactics

Talk tactics encourage students to think strategically about their contributions to group talk

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Cognitive

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Reasoning
- Giving reasons to support views
- Critically examining ideas & views expressed

Instigate
Present an idea or open up a new line of enquiry

Start by saying:
- I would like to start by saying....
- I think....
- We haven't yet talked about....

Instigate

Probe
Dig deeper, ask for evidence or justification of ideas

Start by saying:
- Why do you think....?
- What evidence do you have to support X idea?
- Could you provide an example?

Probe

Challenge
Disagree or present an alternative argument

Start by saying:
- I disagree because....
- To challenge you X, I think....
- I understand your point of view, but have you thought about....?

Challenge

Clarify
Asking questions to make things clearer and check your understanding

Start by saying:
- So are you saying....?
- Does that mean....?
- Can you clarify what you mean by?

Clarify

Summarise
Identify and recap the main ideas

Start by saying:
- So far we have talked about....
- The main points raised today were....
- Our discussion focused on....

Summarise

Build
Develop, add to or elaborate on an idea.

Start by saying:
- Building on X's idea....
- I agree and would like to add....
- X's idea made me think....

Build

Example: Teaching the linguistic strand: Descriptive vocabulary

Key publications outlining age related expectations for children's speaking and listening skills (Oracy)

Universally Speaking

The ages and stages of children's communication development

From 5 to 11 years

The Communication Trust
Every child understood

National Curriculum in Wales

Skills

Children's oracy skills should be fostered and promoted through first-hand sensory experiences. Speaking, listening and viewing activities in the Foundation Phase should enable children to make progress in their ability to:

- make themselves understood
- listen to and carry out instructions
- use appropriate language in spontaneous and structured play activities and when conveying meaning
- view and listen carefully to a variety of visual and audio-visual stimuli
- listen to a variety of stories, traditional folk tales and poems from Wales and around the world
- listen and respond appropriately and effectively, with growing attention and concentration

- build on previous experience, speak confidently, and make themselves clear by:
  - organising what they say
  - choosing words deliberately
  - relating their contributions in discussion to what has gone on before by taking similar/ different views into account, using the conventions of discussion and conversation
- speak clearly, with appropriate intonation in their own accents, modifying their talk to the requirements of the audience
- recognise the importance of clarity, fluency and interest in effective communication
- in their explanations, descriptions and narratives, incorporate relevant detail and identify what is essential
- understand that there is variety in the language they hear around them
- adopt a role, making a conscious use of movement, gesture and speech using language appropriate to a role or situation
- respond to drama they have watched, as well as that in which they have participated.

2. Teach talk skills for group work and collaborative learning

1. Teachers must raise awareness of why children are being asked to work in groups so that they appreciate the potential value of talk for learning.

2. Teach children and YP how to engage in the kind of reasoned discussion which is known as Exploratory Talk.

Taken from Mercer, Manion 2018

Exploratory Talk

- There is a sense of collaboration and shared purpose. This could be trying to reach a shared agreement or solve a problem.

- Contributions are treated with respect.

- Students offer reasons for their opinions.

- Students are not afraid to politely challenge, question, or probe each others ideas.

- You might hear: " To challenge what you said "; "Do you mean"; "How about"; "Linking to what X said"; "Is it like when".

Disputational Talk

- There is a lot of disagreement and everyone makes their own decisions.

- There are few attempts to pool resources, or to offer constructive criticism.

- There are often a lot of interactions of the 'Yes it is! – No it's not!' kind.

- The atmosphere is competitive rather than cooperative.

- You might hear: "No, that's not right; Anyway, back to what I said".

Cumulative Talk

- Everyone simply accepts and agrees with what other people say.
- Children do use talk to share knowledge, but they do so in an uncritical way.
- Children repeat and elaborate each others ideas, but they don't evaluate them carefully.
- You might hear: "Yes, also…"; "Yes I like what X said…"; "That's probably right"

What type of talk is happening in your classroom?

- Why not observe the typical talk happening in your classroom. What do you notice when you hear students discussing a question in small groups?

- Look out for:
  - How students position themselves in groups
  - How students use their tone of voice and body language
  - The balance of talk between individuals in the group
  - The types of contributions being made: do students build on, challenge or question what others have said?
  - Whether they are able to come to an agreement as a group

Taken from Gaunt & Stott 2019

Evidence based practice: For Exploratory Talk to be taken up and used by students research suggests that teachers need to:

1. **Model and guide** children's use of language for reasoning. They should ask children to give reasons to support their views, engage them in extended discussions of topics, and encourage them to see what makes discussion productive.

2. Establish a set of **'Ground Rules'** for generating Exploratory Talk during group work, building on children's own awareness of what makes a good discussion.

Taken from Cambridge University Press, 2018
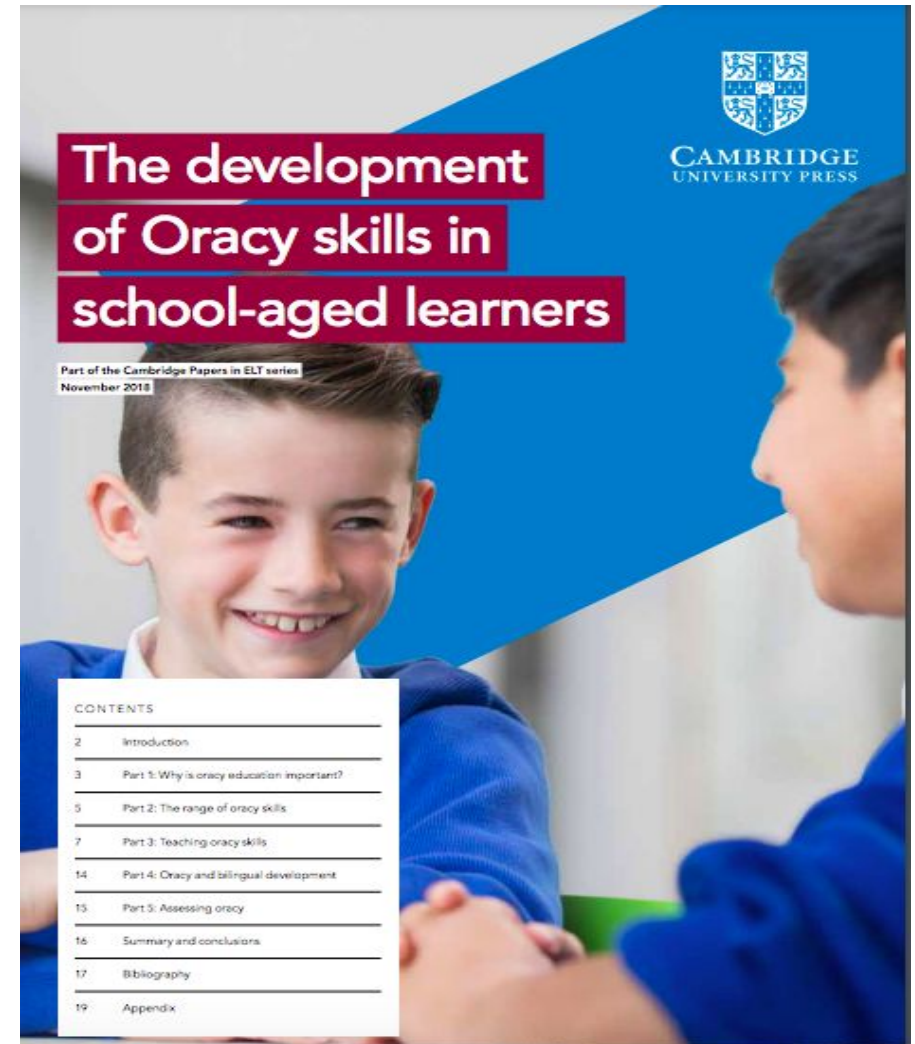
Model and Guide: Teacher Talk Tactics

Teacher Talk Tactics scaffold classroom dialogue, promoting educationally productive talk. Teachers have two additional tactics to employ in order to foster high-quality talk for learning.

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Instigate
Present an idea or open up a new line of enquiry.

Instigate:
- Let's start the discussion by...
- Has anyone considered...
- Let's think about...

Invite instigation:
- Who would like to begin our discussion...?
- Does anyone have another idea...?
- Would anybody like to share a different point?

Instigate

Probe
Dig deeper, ask for evidence or justification of ideas.

Probe:
- Why do you think...?
- Could you provide an example of...?
- How do you know that?

Invite probing:
- Would anyone like to probe what X said?
- Who would like to ask a probing question?
- Does this remind you of anything we've learned before?

Probe

Challenge
Disagree or present an alternative argument

Challenge:
- Have you considered...?
- You mentioned X but what about...?
- What if...?

Invite challenge:
- Would anybody like to challenge X's idea?
- Does anybody have a counter argument?
- Who disagrees with that point?

Challenge

Clarify
Asking questions to make things clearer and check your understanding

Clarify:
- So are you saying...?
- Let me get this right, what you're saying is...?
- Can you clarify what you mean by...?

Invite clarification
- Could anybody clarify what X is saying?
- Would anybody like to ask a clarifying question?
- Could I just check your understanding X?

Clarify

Summarise
Identify and recap the main ideas.

Summarise:
- So far we have talked about...
- The main points raised today were...
- To summarise X's idea?

Invite summary
- Can anybody summarise the main points so far?
- Could you summarise what X is saying?
- Who can recap the main ideas?

Summarise

Build
Develop, add to or elaborate on an idea.

Build:
- Building on X's idea...
- X's idea made me think...
- To develop X's idea...

Invite building
- Would anybody like to build on X's idea?
- Could you tell me more about..?
- Who can tell me why they might agree with X?

Build

Additional moves:

Model
Articulate the thought processes underpinning talk.

Model
- I'm not sure I agree with that so I'm going to challenge X's idea...
- I am going to clarify X's point to check I've understood correctly...
- It would be a good idea to summarise the points so far to help us move forward...
- I am going to refer to X to provide evidence for my point...

Model

Mark
Highlight an important idea or type of contribution

Mark
- That's an important point.
- Did everyone hear what X just said? How does that help move us on?
- Did you notice how X just probed X's idea?
- What did X say to challenge X's idea politely?

Mark

The additional teacher tactics are inspired by the 'Teacher Moves in Group Discussion' as set out in the Accountable Talk Sourcebook (Michaels et al., 2016)

Ground rules / Discussion guidelines

- Everyone should be invited to speak
- Everyone should listen carefully
- We will ask for, and give, reasons
- We can agree or disagree
- Everyone respects what is said in the group
- We will share what we know
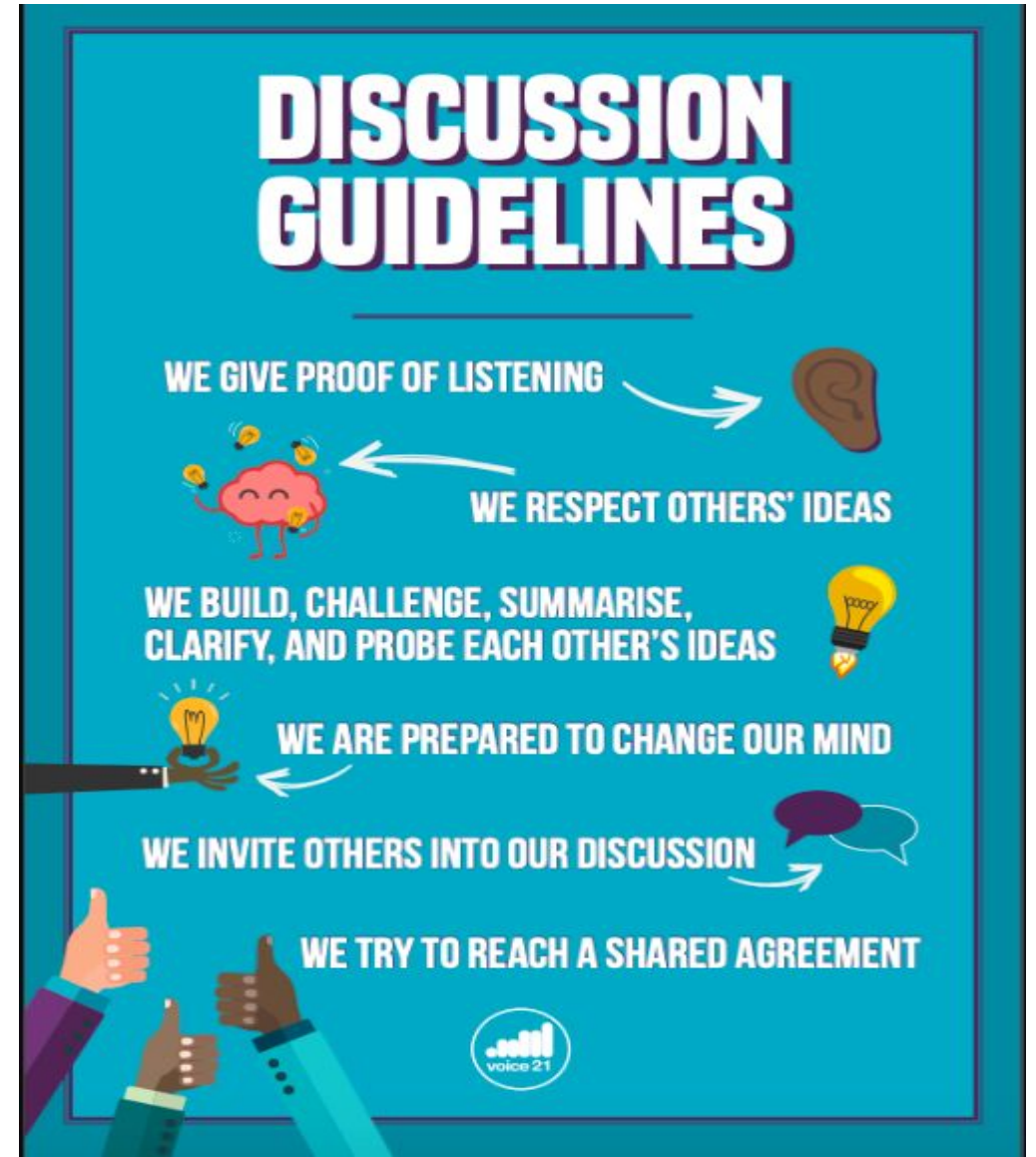
Taken from Cambridge University Press, 2018

Discussion guidelines: Traffic light pebbles

Discussion guidelines: traffic light pebbles

Name: _____

1. Talk together and **colour**:

   - Green = good ideas
   - Orange = not sure
   - Red = not good ideas

2. Talk together and **decide**:

   - Choose 4 green ideas
   - We choose numbers:

   [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

3. Make up two good ideas of your own. Write them below:

1. We will take turns to talk and to listen

2. We will try to reach a shared agreement

3. Everyone must do what the leader says

4. No-one can change their mind

5. Everyone will talk as loud as they can

6. We will try to get along with each other

7. We will listen and think about each other's ideas

8. We will ask for reasons

9. We think it's best to share our thoughts

10. The person who's writing chooses what happens

11. If people find it hard to join in, we can ignore them

12. We will keep our ideas quiet so no-one can copy

13. The person who speaks first will decide what to do

14. We understand that talking is thinking aloud together

15. We are trying to beat each other in our group

16. We will make group decisions that we can all agree to

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© Lyn Dawes, 2018

How to develop independent student discussion: Setting clear objectives: Talk Tactics
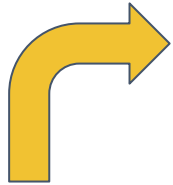
Talking point

This week, Elon Musk became the richest person in the world. He is now thought to be worth more than $185 billion!

- You can read more about this story here.
- Listen to US Representative, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, calling out billionaires.
- Read about the philanthropy of some of the world's wealthiest individuals.

TESLA

Activity

Discuss the following statement at home or online with your classmates:

Billionaires shouldn't exist

Talk tactics you can use in the discussion:

Instigator	Builder	Challenger
In my opinion… I think…	I agree and would like to add.. Your point made me think...	I disagree, because… To challenge you, I think...

Talking points: Key objective ask for and give reasons
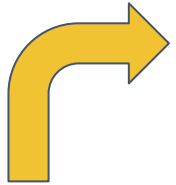
1. Romeo And Juliet

- Rivalry between the Montagues and Capulets is continued only by the men of the families.
- The Prince is sure that making threats will end the violence.
- Benvolio gives a truthful account of what started the fight.
- Tybalt calls Benvolio a coward; he is right.
- Romeo would be happier if he took up sport or spent time studying – he is just bored.

2. Magnets

- Magnets have poles.
- The north pole of a magnet points north.
- Magnets always point in the same direction if free to move.
- You can make magnetism from electricity, and electricity from magnetism.
- Magnets don't work under water.
- If you cut a magnet in half, you get two magnets.

Taken from Dawes, 2013

Cognitive

Content
- Choice of content to convey meaning & intention
- Building on the views of others

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- Structure & organisation of talk

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Self-regulation
- Maintaining focus on task
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Reasoning
- Giving reasons to support views
- Critically examining ideas & views expressed

Groupings

Different groupings support different types of talk

Trios

Talk with two other people. Alternatively, talk to a partner while a third person listens in and summarises or critiques the discussion. Or two people talk and the third listens in to summarise and critique the discussion.

Traverse

Stand in two parallel lines opposite a partner. Change partners by moving one person down to the other end of the line.

Pair

Talk to a partner

Circle

Groups of six or more people face each other in a circle. You can step inside the circle, one at a time, to speak to the whole group.

Onion

Form an inner circle and an outer circle. If you're in the inner circle stand back to back, facing a partner on the outer circle. Speak to a new partner by rotating the inner or outer circle.
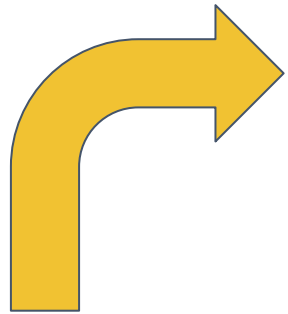
Fishbowl

Similar to an onion, but the people in the inner circle face each other while the people on the outer circle observe the inner circle's discussion.

Nest

Stand apart from each other and whisper your ideas to yourself.
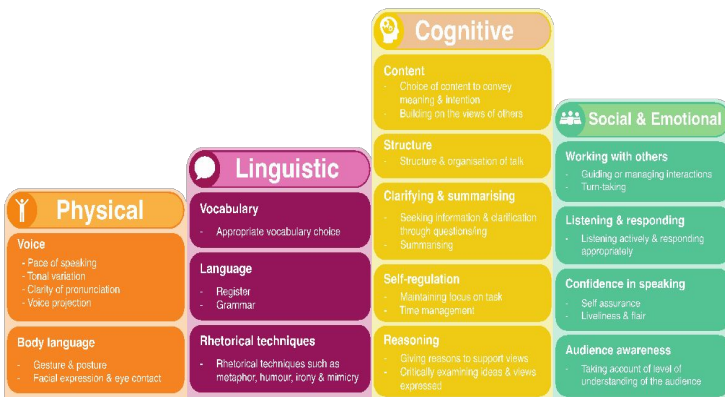
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3. Teach public speaking and presentation skills

Taken from Gaunt & Stott (2019)

The Oracy Framework

Use the oracy framework to understand the physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional skills that enable successful discussion, inspiring speech and effective communication.

Exploratory

Strand	
Physical	Students face each other and demonstrate open body language
Linguistic	Students use appropriate vocabulary
Cognitive	Students give reasons to support their views
Social and Emotional	Students ensure that everybody has a chance to speak

Presentational

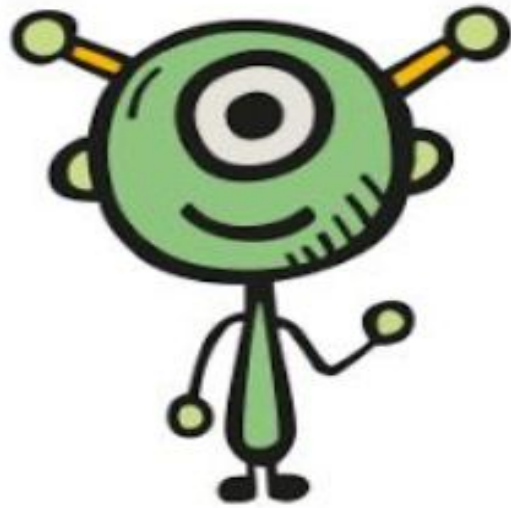| Strand	
Physical	Students project their voices, speaking loudly and clearly
Linguistic	Students adopt a formal register
Cognitive	The information included is relevant and clearly explained
Social and Emotional	The content of the presentation is adapted for the audience

Talk to explain

Meet Otto the alien from outer space. He's *never* been to earth before and has no idea what anything is or how anything works.

Think of a simple activity you do every day. It could be tying your shoelaces, feeding your pet or eating your dinner.

Activity

Can you explain to Otto what you're doing and why in 60 seconds or less?

Complete the challenge live or create a short video to share with your teacher

Don't forget to think about the Oracy Framework in your explanation!

Physical: How can you use gestures or actions to support your explanation?

Linguistic: How will you ensure Otto understands any key words or phrases in your explanation?

Cognitive: What are the most important points to include in your explanation?

Social and emotional: How can you reassure Otto?

Oracy home learning challenge

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Talk to persuade

Over the last few weeks, it has been heartening to see pictures of people receiving the Covid-19 vaccine. However, some people are still worried about the vaccination.

These kids made compelling and incredibly persuasive videos to encourage their grandparents to take the vaccine.

Activity

You have been chosen by the local council to produce a video to help with their public awareness raising campaign on the benefits and safety of the vaccine.

Create a short video (up to five minutes) outlining the benefits and addressing the risks to persuade those who might be hesitant to take the vaccine.

Don't forget to think about the Oracy Framework in your explanation!

Top Tip: If you speak another language at home, why not use this language in your video?

Physical: How can you adopt a reassuring tone of voice?

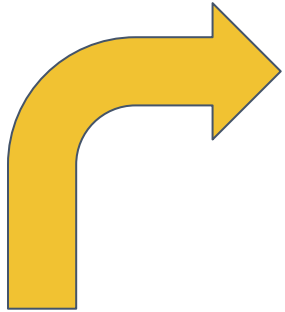Linguistic: What persuasive words and phrases will you include?

Cognitive: What compelling arguments can you give to encourage vaccine uptake?

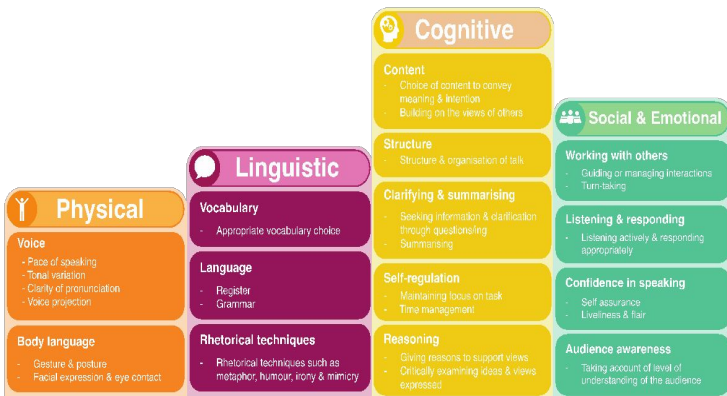Social and emotional: How will you adapt your speech to the needs of your audience?

4. Teach listening skills

The Oracy Framework

Use the oracy framework to understand the physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional skills that enable successful discussion, inspiring speech and effective communication.

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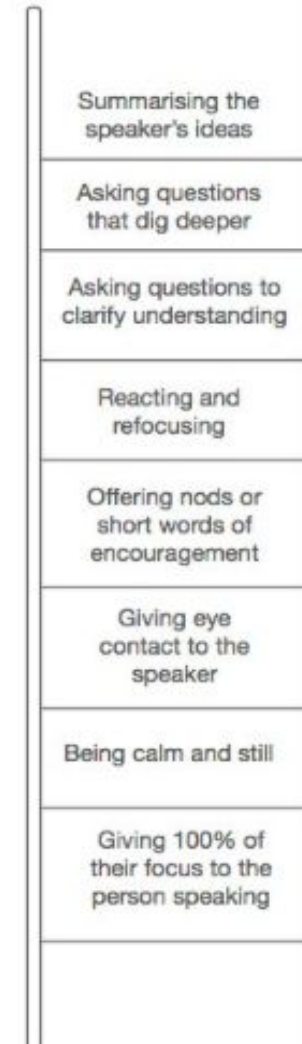| Strand	
Physical	Facing the speaker
	Making eye contact
	Remaining calm and trying not to distract
Linguistic	Paraphrasing
Cognitive	Summarising
	Asking questions
	Building on what has been said
Social and Emotional	Smiling
	Nodding
	Offering words of encouragement
	Reacting and refocusing (for example laughing when a speaker says something amusing, then refocusing on what they are saying).

Taken from Gaunt & Stott (2019)

Listening ladder

Listening Ladder

The Listening Ladder sets out the various listening skills and orders them in terms of complexity. It can be used to support students to reflect on their discussion and to set targets for which rung the have and want to reach.

Summarising the speakers ideas
Asking questions that dig deeper
Asking questions to clarify understanding
Reacting and refocusing
Offering nods or short words of encouragement
Giving eye contact to the speaker
Being calm and not distracting
Giving 100 per cent of their focus to the person speaking

Summarising the speaker's ideas

Asking questions that dig deeper

Asking questions to clarify understanding

Reacting and refocusing

Offering nods or short words of encouragement

Giving eye contact to the speaker

Being calm and still

Giving 100% of their focus to the person speaking

Taken from:
https://voice21.org/wp-cont
ent/uploads/2020/11/Voice-
21-Listening-Ladder.pdf

Talk detectives as a listening tool

Talk detectives

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juR87aAg4vM

Talk detectives!
Mystery to solve: what does good oracy look like?

Physical - Are they speaking loudly and clearly? - Are they using hand gestures?		
Cognitive - Are they giving reasons for their opinions? - Are they asking questions?		
Linguistic - Are they using ambitious vocabulary?		
Social and Emotional - Are they tracking the speaker? - Are they making sure everyone gets a turn to speak?		

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5. Make meaningful use of oracy assessment

Children	Teacher	Parents	Stakeholders
To know what they are doing well and how to improve furtner	To assess an individual child's progress over time and intervene To make comparisons between students, classes, cohorts	To understand their child's progress and how to support them	To monitor school performance and make comparisons between outcomes in different cohorts, schools education systems

Task related expectations
Age related expectations

Taken from Gaunt & Stott, 2019

Oracy Assessment Toolkit (for Year 7)

TALKING POINTS

https://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1830549

https://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1830643

Focus for today

LEGO TASK
- https://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1831242

- https://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1831262

- https://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1831410

PRESENTATION TASK
- https://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1830304

- https://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1830524

Taken from https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/research/programmes/oracytoolkit/

Practical steps for teachers and support staff

Summary

1. Make oracy visible in the classroom and in your practice
2. Teach talk skills for group work and collaborative learning: Exploratory Talk
3. Teach public speaking and presentation skills separately
4. Teach listening skills
5. Make meaningful use of Oracy assessment

Taken from Mercer & Manion (2018)

Plenary and questions

Key Links

- Oracy Cambridge: https://oracycambridge.org
- Thinking Together: https://thinkingtogether.educ.cam.ac.uk
- Voice 21: https://www.voice21resources.org

References

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