UCL Centre for Inclusive Education written submission to APPG Oracy Inquiry

Summary:

i)   Value and impact: The impact of oracy education at different life stages from early years through to employment, and how the delivery of effective oracy education contributes to individual and societal outcomes.

Yes – see examples below, particularly from the Millenium Cohort Study.

ii)   Provision and access: The current state of provision of oracy education across the UK, who is missing out and what factors create unequal access to oracy education.

Children with poor life opportunities are impacted most by poor focus on Oracy in Education.

iii)   Barriers to improving oracy education: What are the barriers to provision of a quality oracy education for all, and what is the role of government and other bodies in incentivising provision.

Teachers and schools need more investment – time and money – to focus on teacher and leadership development, reflective practice, action research, altering lesson plans and environment to provide better opportunities for dialogue, conversation, pupil voice and speaking-listening interactions.

Value and impact

1.   Given many teachers recognise the importance of oracy, why does spoken language not have the same status as reading and writing in our education system? Should it have the same status, and if so why?

     Yes, because Oracy underpins both academic and social success.

2.   What are the consequences if children and young people do not receive oracy education?

     *We need to be clear what we mean by **education**. Oracy should not be a topic on the curriculum, it should be woven into all elements of school life. Oracy is more about providing opportunities for children to talk, which means children need to be encouraged to experience the world and have opinions about it. This links to ideas like collaborative learning and Pupil Voice.*

3. What is the value and impact of quality oracy education at i) different life stages, ii) in different settings, and iii) on different types of pupils (for instance pupils from varied socioeconomic backgrounds or with special educational needs)?

    See above – providing rich experiential opportunities, valuing pupil opinions, encouraging opportunities for talk during all curriculum area will support children of all backgrounds and will offer particular benefit to children from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

4. How can it help deliver the wider curriculum at school?

    Many learning theorists (Vygotsky, Dewey, Bruner, Feuerstein and more recently, Dockrell, Lindsay, Higgins, Leat and Mercer) emphasise the importance of social interaction and communication in learning. Oracy underpins this. For children with poor spoken language, Oracy can include the use of British Sign Language, Makaton, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and software-based communication augmentation systems.

    In terms of wellbeing, we are increasingly seeing a link between communication skills and wellbeing. Van den Bedem, N. P., Dockrell, J. E., van Alphen, P. M., Kalicharan, S. V., & Rieffe, C. (2018). Victimization, Bullying, and Emotional Competence: Longitudinal Associations in (Pre)Adolescents With and Without Developmental Language Disorder.

5. What is the impact of quality oracy education on future life chances? Specifically, how does it affect employment and what value do businesses give oracy?

    The Millenium Cohort Studies suggest that Oracy is critical in future life chances: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248998946_The_Re-positioning_of_Oracy_ A_Millenium_Project In many employment areas, interviews are the gateway to employment, so future employees are judged through their Oracy Skills. There is also evidence to suggest that poor Oracy is indicated in higher criminal justice penalties due to poor articulation.

6. What do children and young people at school and entering employment want to be able to access, what skills they want to leave school with?

    See above

7. What is the value and impact of oracy education in relation to other key agendas such as social mobility and wellbeing/ mental health?

See above

8. How can the ability to communicate effectively contribute to engaging more young people from all backgrounds to become active citizens, participating fully in social action and public life as adults

    Communication underpins self confidence and enables people to share opinions, ideas and form friendships.

Provision and access

9. What should high quality oracy education look like?

UCL Centre for Inclusive Education have trialled a powerful programme which enables teachers to feedback robust evidence-based case studies on what good oracy education looks like. The programme (Supporting Spoken Language in the Classroom – SSLiC) uses audits, including this evidence-based tool, the Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool:
https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-practitioners/communication-supporting-classroom-observation-tool.aspx

SSLiC has case studies of great practice on Oracy Education.

10. Can you provide evidence of how oracy education is being provided in different areas/education settings/extra-curricular provision, by teachers but also other practitioners that work with children?

See above

11. What are the views of teachers, school leaders and educational bodies regarding the current provision of oracy education?
12. Where can we identify good practice and can you give examples?

    https://iris.ucl.ac.uk/iris/publication/1067087/7

    https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/centre-inclusive-education/supporting-spoken-language-classroom

13. What factors create unequal access to oracy education (i.e. socio-economic, region, type of school, special needs)? How can these factors be overcome?

14. Relating to region more specifically, how should an oracy-focused approach be altered depending on the context?

In our UCL CIE SSLiC programme, schools evaluate their provision of Oracy Education and make a decision about their next steps. They form an action plan, supported by our facilitators, to design their own reflective changes to practice. This means that schools can tailor their own approach to fit their own context, and monitor the impact of their approach.

Barriers

15. What are the barriers that teachers face to providing quality oracy education, within the education system and beyond?

    Time to attend CPD, audit school/classroom provision and change practice, including redoing lesson plans to include more opportunities for peer talk/structured conversation with adults in the classroom. Leadership needs to prioritise resources and teacher time and overall, schools need more funding for Special Educational Needs.

16. What support do teachers need to improve the delivery of oracy education?

    Training, ongoing support, time to do reflective practice/action research and many more resources, such as schemes of work and lesson plans.

17. What accountability is currently present in the system? How can we further incentivise teachers to deliver more oracy education to children and young people?

    It is not about short term incentives – it is about a properly funded school system to allow time for training, planning and working collaboratively with other school professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists and Teaching Assistants.

18. What is the role of government and other bodies in creating greater incentives and how can this be realised?

See above

19. What is the role of assessment in increasing provision of oracy education? What is the most appropriate form of assessment of oracy skills?

20. Are the speaking and listening elements of the current curriculum sufficient in order to delivery high quality oracy education?

No

21. What is the best approach – more accountability within the system or a less prescriptive approach?

*More opportunities for reflection and action research. Make schools accountable for **processes** such as how teacher CPD is managed and how much time is allowed for planning, reflection and collaboration. Don't make the measures based on pupil attainment or outcomes.*

22. Are there examples of other educational pedagogies where provision has improved and we can draw parallels and learn lessons?

Yes. Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants: http://maximisingtas.co.uk/

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