



Submission for APPG on Oracy call for evidence

The Association of Colleges (AoC) represents nearly 93% of the 266 colleges in England incorporated under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

Thank you for the opportunity to supply a short submission for the APPG call for evidence on Oracy. As we are in an extremely busy period for colleges due to the pandemic, our response is shortened so that we were able to fit it in and contribute to this important discussion.

We would like to state that we prefer not to use the term oracy if possible. The term itself is not very inclusive and does not give equal weight to listening skills which are key to effective communication.

If you would like further information on any of these topics, please contact our Public Affairs Manager, Lauren Conceicao, on Lauren.Conceicao@aoc.co.uk who can arrange a meeting with our policy team member to expand on these issues.

Thank you

Value and impact

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?

1. Oracy or speaking and listening no longer forms an integral part of the GCSE in English Language and yet competency in spoken English is key to playing an active role in society.

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

2. Children and young people should be prepared to be able to advocate and explain ideas for themselves (and others) verbally as well as in writing. Effective and confident speaking and listening skills are key to this.

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)?

3. Effective communication skills are essential for both work and life. In the college context employers are keen to ensure that students joining them from school or college have effective and accurate communication skills including the ability to present, use context appropriate tone and register and turn taking.
4. Debating clubs are often integral to private education. Some colleges run this type of activity, but debating and presenting should be integral to all college-based provision.

How can it help deliver the wider curriculum at school?

5. Effective communication skills are the basis for success throughout the college curriculum, helping to ensure better engagement in education by asking for feedback, contributing to classroom discussion and working with others.

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?

6. The CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey report 2019¹ notes that employers value written and verbal communication skills. Presentation and debating skills are highlighted.

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

7. Young people should be able to communicate effectively in a variety of situations, both formal and informal.

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

8. Effective spoken communication skills are valued by employers and so will help to ensure that young people are successful in getting work and accessing services and support as and when necessary which is essential for well-being.

¹ https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/3841/12546_tess_2019.pdf

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

9. Encouraging young people to become active citizens will encourage better communication skills, which in turn leads to greater social interaction. There should be greater emphasis on encouraging all young people, from all backgrounds to get involved. Sometimes such activities can be perceived as being 'for them, not us'. Lack of confidence in spoken skills and the value of your voice can exacerbate this.

Provision and access

What should high quality oracy education look like?

10. In colleges high quality communication skills should focus on appropriate use of tone and register, presentation skills, listening to others and responding appropriately.

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?

11. Through presentations and as part of Functional skills. However, effective speaking and listening skills are not always given the priority they should be.

What are the views of teachers, school leaders and educational bodies regarding the current provision of oracy education?

12. It should be given greater emphasis and form an integral part of GCSE English Language.

Where can we identify good practice and can you give examples?

13. College based Functional skills and ESOL (English to speakers of other languages) delivery

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. There should be greater emphasis on effective speaking and listening in all educational contexts through the post-16 curriculum. Effective communication

skills are not highlighted as an integral part of the post 16 study programme. They are included as an integral part of T Levels:

15. General English Competencies:

- E1 Convey technical information to different audiences;
- E2 Present information and ideas;
- E3 Create texts for different purposes and audiences;
- E4 Summarise information/ideas;
- E5 Synthesise information; and
- E6 Take part in/lead discussions.

16. Something similar (depending on level) should be embedded within all 16 to 18 study programmes.

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

17. Ensuring that young people are aware of context and the use of standard as compared to regional vocabulary. It is important that both are valued, but that young people appreciate that use of regional dialect may impact on comprehension to a non-regional audience.

Barriers

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

18. There is little emphasis in post-16 education on the importance of speaking and listening.

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

19. Speaking and listening should be integral to all post-16 study programmes as part of employability and personal and social development.

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

20. Speaking and listening should form an integral part of English Language GCSE and of all post-16 Study Programmes.

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

21. Allocating greater funding to personal and social development and enrichment activities such as debating, drama, social action to encourage participation from young people from all backgrounds.

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

22. Speaking and listening should be an integral part of the English Language GCSE. It should also be part of all study programmes. Something shouldn't have to be assessed to be important. We are not assessed on our spoken language in the work place and yet it is key to good working relationships and carrying out many work related activities.

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

23. No, Speaking and listening should form part of the GCSE English Language Grade and should be given greater emphasis in all Study Programmes.

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

24. A less prescriptive approach. Speaking and listening is key to effective communication and should be at the heart of the curriculum.

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

25. In the post 16 landscape Centres for Excellence have been established for maths to promote good practice and research into what works. There should be similar investment in English Language

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