

## Written evidence

Members of the Oracy APPG will consider written, verbal and audio-visual evidence and oversee oral evidence sessions. All evidence will inform the final report.

The extended deadline for submitting written evidence is **20th September 2019**. We would appreciate if the submissions would follow the following guidelines:

- Be in a Word format
- No longer than 3000 words
- State clearly who the submission is from, and whether it is sent in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation
- Begin with a short summary in bullet point form
- Have numbered paragraphs
- Where appropriate, provide references

Please write your evidence below and email the completed form via email to [inquiry@oracyappg.org.uk](mailto:inquiry@oracyappg.org.uk) with the subject line of 'Oracy APPG inquiry'

provided in a personal capacity)

Full name:

Dr Arlene Holmes-Role:

Senior Research Fellow – Speaking  
Citizens Project

School or Organisation:

Uni

Written evidence:

1. International comparative oracy education

- This evidence suggests that England should look to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) (Australia) for two, well-established, assessment frameworks which prioritise oracy via vocational and academic pathways.
- Unlike in England, the VCAA has increased the focus on oracy during the Covid-19 pandemic by adjusting upwards the weighting on oral presentations.
- Oracy and critical literacy are inextricably linked in Victorian education. This is more important than ever during the 'infodemic'. See Holmes-Henderson (2020)  
<https://www.wcmt.org.uk/about-us/blog/blog-surviving-infodemic-teaching-students-read-between-lines>

## 2. Oral presentation in the Victorian Certificate of Education

1

The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) requires that, in English (and English as an additional language), students in the senior phase must give a 4-6 minute oral presentation that presents a point of view on material that has appeared in the media since 1<sup>st</sup> September the previous year. They must *craft and present reasoned, structured and supported arguments and experiment with the use of language to position audiences.*

Key skills described in the 2020 specification document include:

*Develop sound arguments using logic and reasoning, and detect bias and faulty reasoning in the arguments of others*

*Develop, clarify and critique ideas presented in their own and others' arguments using discussion*

*Debate, active listening, checking for understanding, questioning*

Key knowledge includes:

*The features of spoken texts to position audiences such as appeals, petition and vocabulary choice*

*The conventions of oral presentations including intonation, stress, rhythm, pitch, timing, volume, gesture and eye-contact.*

This unit in the VCE is school-assessed. The oral presented counted for 25% prior to 2020 but its weighting was increased to 30% in English and 40% in English as an Additional Language. In this way, during the Covid-19 pandemic, oracy has been prioritised for students on the VCE pathway.

## 3. The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

A vocational pathway, the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) has three levels: foundation, intermediate and senior. In the literacy strand, Oracy is named in four separate learning outcomes: *oracy for self-expression, oracy for knowledge, oracy for practical purposes and oracy for exploring issues and problem-solving.* Elements within the learning outcomes include:

*Participate in an oral exchange requiring some negotiation*

*Demonstrate active listening*

*Participate in a group discussion on an issue, responding to and contributing alternative ideas*

*Use spoken language to identify and work towards solving problems with at least one other person*

*Comment on the range of ideas presented on an issue in a discussion Plan and deliver a sustained presentation in a group setting, using appropriate staging and including*

*open question time if appropriate*

*Evaluate the content and effectiveness of a complex spoken transaction.*

#### 4. Further reading

2

I conducted comparative research in Australia during a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travelling Fellowship. My report can be accessed here, Holmes-Henderson (2014): [https://www.wcmt.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrated-reports/1144\\_1.pdf](https://www.wcmt.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrated-reports/1144_1.pdf)

VCAA syllabus documents can be accessed online.

VCE:

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/english-and-eal/Pages/index.aspx>

VCAL: <https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vcal/vcal-curriculum/Pages/LiteracySkillsReadingandWriting.aspx>

#### 5. Speaking Citizens Research Project

The link between oracy and citizenship is the subject of my current research project: *Speaking Citizens*, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (led by Dr Tom Wright). From 2020-2023 a team of five researchers, from different disciplines, will make a new case for oracy education in the UK – one which is closely tied to ancient and modern conceptions of citizenship in policy and practice. To find out more, visit [www.speakingcitizens.org](http://www.speakingcitizens.org)

3