

## 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'

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Full name:

School or Organisation:

Role:

Written evidence:

### Outcomes

- Statistically significant improvement in chemistry practical exam style questions
- Affective gains in science and English
- New formative assessment strategies
- Broader consideration of student identity and capital

### Provision

- On-line debate followed by live mini-debate

- Drama for English literacy
  - Talk protocols and laboratory roles for science
- Barriers
- Training students to adopt protocols and remain in role
  - Staff buy-in

1 Northampton School for Boys (NSB), rated outstanding by OfSTED, is a large 11-18 Boys' academy situated in an area ranked number 35 in worst areas of the country for social mobility for those from disadvantaged backgrounds (The Social Mobility Commission 2017). During the autumn term 2018, a school-wide oracy audit of existing practices revealed that every department both recognised and used oracy in their delivery of the curriculum. The strategies used regularly include: classroom debate, "Think-Pair-Share", peer coaching, chain sentences, individual and group presentations. Public activities include presenting to and guiding perspective parents, Rotary's Youth Speaks: A Debate and, Arts performances at KS3, KS4 and Post 16. Indeed, the school was invited to join The Prince of Wales at an event at the Royal Albert Hall to discuss the arts and creativity in schools with industry leaders. At the event, not only did students perform, meet and greet HRH and the celebratory guests but one of our students was the only young person invited to join the dignitaries in the debate (NSB 2018a).

2 The school development plan continues to place emphasis on oracy (defined as speaking and listening) as it key to: social mobility (Millard and Gaunt 2018); thinking (Littleton and Mercer 2013); learning, "dialogue is essential to developing learners' power of critical review through which they can come to internalise language as an instrument of thought" (Black and Wiliam 2018 p 557), and formative assessment (Black *et al.* 2003). Furthermore, the research discussed below evidences that oracy supports sociocultural aspects of learning, team work, the habits of collaboration (Education Endowment Foundation 2018a) and communication (Alexander 2008 p6), competencies valued by employers (CBI/Pearson 2016).

A number of research projects seeking to understand the impact of oracy development on our students' outcomes are currently in progress at NSB and others have already been published (NSB 2018b).

- 3 Helen Hasan (Performing Arts/Drama): To develop oracy and public speaking skills with a YEAR 8 cohort (on going).

Rational: Public speaking forms a significant part of any chosen career path. As young people become more introvert and shy away from face- to-face conversations, the art of informed and persuasive debate is diminishing and thus we are failing to prepare our pupils for communicative competency in adult life.

Objective: pilot a new pedagogy in English Literature in order to cultivate a greater confidence in public speaking with a cohort of KS3 students whilst preparing them for the further exploration of Shakespeare's Macbeth in Year 9. To build communicative competence (Savignon 2018), provide the pupils with a practical exploration of speaking and listening (EEF 2018b); to aid enjoyment and to embed an understanding of the overall plot, themes and central characters contained within the play.

**The overall scheme for the year:**

- o **Term 1: Introducing Shakespeare- *his language; life, Elizabethan Theatre and the Seven Ages of Man (All the world's a stage... As you like it).***
- o **Term 2: Greek theatre;** conventions of Greek theatre, including, choral speaking, narration, moving in unison, **the use of the mask.**
- o **Term 3: Comedy:** Conventions; Restoration and Shakespeare.
- o **Term 4: Tragedy:** Conventions of tragedy, Romeo and Juliet **(changed to stand- up comedy and the first public speaking task).**
- o **Term 5: Twelfth Night-** character, plot and themes **(changed to Macbeth, whooshing, foundations of plot and emerging characters WAL).**
- o **Term 6: Macbeth** (in preparation for Year 9) **Continued exploration of plot, themes, central characters, two performance based tasks: Chat show and duologue (with stage combat Macduff and Macbeth).**

**Outcomes:**

**Case study A:**

Pupil A was extremely shy in Year 7. Whilst he enjoyed Drama and regularly supported the school productions, he favoured more abstract and non- verbal parts. He enjoyed the Physical Theatre scheme for example, but found the final scripted assessment terrifying. When I began teaching him at the start of Year 8, you could see he wasn't particularly

enamoured at the prospect of having three timetabled Drama lessons. However, the turning point began when I taught a masked exercise where the pupils had to perform a conversation using non-verbal communication (Term 2). Pupil A and the other members of his group actually misinterpreted the task and began speaking. The enlightening thing was that pupil A took on the leading role and albeit with his back to the audience, he began speaking with command; the mask acted as a screen which separated him from his peers and gave him the confidence to find his voice. When I asked the class why they thought that was (as a general observation) they commented on the power of the mask and how it disguised their faces and therefore gave them the confidence to find their voice in front of their peers.

Indeed, for the *stand-up* assessment Pupil A was able to make direct eye-contact with a larger proportion of the audience; ignore hecklers and he didn't falter, shy away or turn his back; in fact his outward demeanour exuded someone who could speak with clarity and confidence; a far cry from the shy young student who started in Year 7.

#### **Case study B:**

Pupil B, like many others was sceptical of the scheme to begin with however, he became increasingly receptive as the year progressed and now enjoys learning in a practical way. Although well behaved in these lessons he struggled in classroom English and his test scores fluctuated but were always below target. After the last set of test scores were shared, he arrived at my lesson and said 'Miss, do our assessments in this lesson count towards our overall English score? When I explained they did not and asked him why, he said he feels he does much better in my lesson and said that the scores should contribute, which is perhaps something to consider if the scheme should run for another year.

Barnard (2017) reported that children living in poverty are at risk of lower academic outcomes, they are less likely to develop basic skills, including literacy, numeracy, and digital skills, suggesting that these children are among the mostly likely to be disadvantaged by pen and paper assessment. Although ultimately schools cannot control public examinations, we can help build learner confidence and capital by including broader formative assessment strategies that may also help foster "adaptive expertise" (Mylopoulos and Woods 2017).

#### **Case study C:**

Pupil C is an EAL student. When asked in a lesson if Macbeth's fate is within his control, he wrote the following answer:

*I think that Macbeth has partial control of his fate. The decisions he makes impacts his fate. By listening to the witches, he was impatient and got blood thirsty to become king.*

*The actions of Lady Macbeth also affect his fate. So partially Macbeth has control of his fate.*

Pupil C demonstrated an understanding and confidence here that was not evident in class which may be attributed to his identity (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005), language is a potent tool for social differentiation. Lonigro *et al.* (2018) discuss how socio-metric groups impact on the confidence of young learners, especially in how they articulate themselves in front of their peers which mirrors my experience of teaching socio-metric mixed groups, the number of pupils who asked if they could refrain from sharing their work with the class for fear of rejection, whilst others compromised the delivery of their performance in the hope that they would be accepted by the more popular members of the group. This was particularly evident during the preparation and presentation of individual stand-up routines.

- 4 Shirley Morrison (English/English Language): Developing year 10 students reading and improve their confidence when delivering their Spoken Language Endorsement.

**Rational:** With the withdrawal of a two-tier GCSE examinations and denser, more complex texts being presented to students in the GCSE English language papers, students who do not read are at a significant disadvantage. Coupled with this, a recent School Improvement Partner (SIP) asked us to review our Higher Achieving Pupils (HAP) attainment, revealing that our level 4, level 5 and above, is good but some students who have the very highest targets do not always realise these in terminal examination. A colleague's analysis of the new, more rigorous GCSE texts, found them to have reading ages of 16 years 8 months and above.

Students now have to submit a spoken language assessment, generally enjoy taking part in debate but are less confident when presenting individually. This work seeks harness student enthusiasm for debate to support the English department to encourage year 10 students to read more; enhance students' ability to read the GCSE texts in the

examinations and to improve confidence when delivering their Spoken Language Endorsement.

**The overall scheme:**

- I. Develop an online-digital debate platform on the school VLE
- II. Encourage students to read a text and write a comment on the forum that responds to another post and then state their opinion/claim.
- III. Conduct a mini debate on the same subject as a lesson starter.
- IV. To train colleagues and share the resources for dissemination across all year 10 classes.
- V. Compare attainment data from the previous cohort to attainment data for the “online debate cohort”.
- VI. Collect affective data through questionnaires to determine changes in students confidence in speaking publically.

A discussion forum is a threaded conversation flowing chronologically from the original topic post, multiple authors can begin or contribute to discussion threads, the forum is owned by an administrator who may moderate content before it is shared. The administrator may act as a gate keeper, excluding inappropriate posts and discouraging deliberate flaming, posting offensive messages (Christensson, 2006), or intervening before unintentional flaming occurs.

A forum offers the opportunity to start or add to a discussion thread, they are asynchronous which provides flexibility and convenience however, delayed responses can lack backchannel (listener responses). Expanding upon Mercer’s (2010) description of three types of talk, a lack of back channelling may result in a cumulative rather than exploratory exchange. Responses, however, are likely to be longer because there was time for more serious consideration of the material (Özçinar 2015) though working with adult learners reasoned.

In real life dialogue, as Coffin (2009) explains, people are more able to interpret each other’s understanding, adjusting when necessary to limit misunderstandings, this is not possible in asynchronous dialogue making checking posts imperative and necessitating the mini-debate to facilitate understanding.

Munneke *et al.* (2007) report having observed differences in the nature of the argument depending on its environment; asynchronous argumentation was more equitable than synchronous argumentation as a greater number of students participated. Electronic discussion can allow students to communicate independently of time, space, or identity to transcend the social limitations of face-to-face interactions.

Assessment, in my experience, increases the value of learning activities for students. Kuhn and Moore (2015), suggest that the more immediate feedback associated with synchronous argumentation may better promote extended argumentative exchanges and Noroozi and Hatami (2018) showed that argumentative essay writing was improved by argumentative peer-feedback, suggesting that immediate feedback and peer feedback could be harnessed to improve online argumentation. Again the follow up mini-debate fosters a feedback rich environment and offers the opportunity to build confidence in verbal expression as well as developing and responding to arguments in a socially acceptable manner.

McDowell (2011) observed that providing historically low achieving learners with the opportunity to make meaning in a range of modes increased both engagement and achievement in reading and writing. This is important as the “dominant models of literacy” (Jewitt 2008 p 248) privileged in schools and public examinations still rely on pen, paper, and print, the traditional tools of the literate mode. But, McDowell (2011) justifies the need to accommodate a broader, more inclusive, understanding of literacy inside the classrooms, one that is more aligned with contemporary literacy practices outside of school, by demonstrating that the inclusive approach increased student attainment, the value ascribed by the performance measures.

**Outcomes to date:**

Successful trials of the technology using I’m a scientist get me out of here materials were conducted and reported (Hannah 2019 a)

Increased awareness of students and teachers of the amount of reading students do NOT do.

Positive affective outcomes, the students report that they enjoy taking part in the online debate. Questionnaires yet to be fully analysed but indicate increased confidence in the following live debate.

Delivery of English staff training.

Summative data yet to be analysed.

**Challenges:**

Students contributed to varying degrees- some wrote an awful lot and really engaged with the online debate; others made minimal contributions and simply responded in order to avoid detention for lack of homework.

Some students had trouble accessing the material online at home and there were a few other technical issues.

Some students did not take themselves seriously in the online debates thus, useful to have the ability to make comments before publishing their views.

- 5 Naomi Hennah (chemistry/science): To enhance student understanding and learning about practical work using talk protocols, roles and storyboards.

Rational: This is the final iteration of a series of activities that seek to improve student learning and outcomes during GCSE curriculum practical activities. An earlier iteration showed that using video for pre-laboratory preparation and “Taking Points” to facilitate group work resulted in a statistically significant increase in students’ retention of GCSE curriculum practical methods as compared to traditional laboratory pedagogy (Hennah 2019). This iteration has built in protocols to better structure student talk and collaborative learning producing very convincing results to suggest that structured talk has a statistically significant impact on exam style practical exam question attainment (This work is currently being prepared for publication in 2020).

In addition to this affective data collected through interview and questionnaires’ indicate an increase in GCSE student confidence in answering conceptual and procedural questions about these practical tasks. An earlier publication (Hennah and Seery 2017) demonstrated an increase in A level chemistry students’ confidence when recording each carrying out and narrating their practical techniques, then using the video to provide peer feedback to develop practical competencies and mastery.

**Challenges**

The greatest challenge is to encourage students to adopt the talk protocols rather than slip back into their default communicative habits. To mitigate this I “trained” the students in the new ways of working before the research began, even so it was evident that some

students preferred to complete the storyboards individually and yet others resisted them completely.

6 Naomi Hennah (science): Key Stage 2 outreach in an informal educational setting. This work is reported as a series of three articles in the Association for Science Education's publication, *School Science Review* as the articles are not open access they have been attached (Hennah 2018a and b, and Hennah 2019c). In essence this work demonstrated that children could be supported in developing hands-on practical competences by promoting talk as a tool for "interthinking" (Littleton and Mercer 2013) furthermore although the work predated the Education Endowment Foundation recommendations for improving secondary science (EEF, 2018c) they are closely aligned. This work describes how activities and assessments reliant on oracy can be employed to enhance practical science learning from Key stage 1 to post-16. Throughout the series attention has been drawn to the theories such as, cognitive load theory, Science Capital, sociocultural theory and dialogic scaffolding, that underpin the strategies recommended so teachers can incorporate the methods and practices into their own lessons.

7 Naomi Hennah: oracy in chemistry teaching ideas.

Education in Chemistry is a free publication that the Royal Society of Chemistry makes available to all UK schools. They have published a number of articles that specifically detail oracy protocols to better support teaching and learning in chemistry education:

- I. Constructive conversations with talk triplets (2018c)
- II. Help students connect observations to theory (2018d)
- III. How to teach acids, bases and salts (2018e)
- IV. Metacognition (EEF Series), How thinking about thinking improves problem solving (2019d)

(2680 words)

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Additional guidance:

## 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?
2. What are the consequences if children and young people do not receive oracy education?
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)?
4. How can it help deliver the wider curriculum at school?
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?
6. What do children and young people at school and entering employment want to be able to access, what skills do they want to leave school with?
7. What is the value and impact of oracy education in relation to other key agendas such as social mobility and wellbeing/ mental health?
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

## Provision and access

1. What should high quality oracy education look like?
2. 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?
3. What are the views of teachers, school leaders and educational bodies regarding the current provision of oracy education?
4. Where can we identify good practice and can you give examples?
5. What factors create unequal access to oracy education (i.e. socio-economic, region, type of school, special needs)? How can these factors be overcome?
6. Relating to region more specifically, how should an oracy-focused approach be altered depending on the context?

## Barriers

1. What are the barriers that teachers face in providing quality oracy education, within the education system and beyond?
2. What support do teachers need to improve the delivery of oracy education?
3. What accountability is currently present in the system? How can we further incentivise teachers to deliver more oracy education to children and young people?
4. What is the role of government and other bodies in creating greater incentives and how can this be realised?
5. What is the role of assessment in increasing provision of oracy education? What is the most appropriate form of assessment of oracy skills?
6. Are the speaking and listening elements of the current curriculum sufficient in order to deliver high quality oracy education?
7. What is the best approach – more accountability within the system or a less prescriptive approach?
8. Are there examples of other educational pedagogies where provision has improved and we can draw parallels and learn lessons?