An exploration of the impact of oracy intervention on the quality of Key Stage Four students' classroom talk and students' confidence levels when talking in the classroom

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An exploration of the impact of oracy intervention on the quality of Key Stage Four students' classroom talk and students' confidence levels when talking in the classroom.

Abstract

This research explores the impact of oracy intervention sessions during one weekly session of tutor-time on the quality of Key Stage Four students' classroom talk and students' confidence levels when talking in the classroom. Through this mixed-methods study, a system for oracy intervention is trialled for five months and reflected upon, to be refined for the next academic school year. Using Mercer's (1995) four categories of classroom talk, with exploratory talk being the end goal in this study, the findings of this study appear to evidence that a blend of teacher-led and student-led pre-planned oracy interventions can improve the quality of students' exploratory talk, namely: their utterance length; turn taking skills; listening skills and reduce their use of disputational language. The findings also conclude that student confidence levels can be improved through oracy interventions, highlighting the social benefits of teaching oracy, which may enhance curriculum engagement and academic attainment overall.

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An exploration of the impact of oracy intervention on the quality of Key Stage Four students' classroom talk and students' confidence levels when talking in the classroom.

1.Introduction

Over the past 50 years, there have been various attempts to expound the impact of oracy on childrens' cognitive development. However, this issue has stimulated contention as the value of oracy has been regularly overlooked by the constant focus on literacy and numeracy within the curriculum (The National Strategies, 1997-2011). Whilst The National Oracy Project (1987) and the National Literacy Strategy (1989) made a start at looking at the importance of oracy in schools, it has been argued that they were overlooked and side-lined by the National Literacy Strategy of 1998. Various changes have since been made to the current National Curriculum, the latest in 2014 where significant emphasis relates to pupils' talk, specifically setting out several spoken language benchmarks:

> "Pupils should be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using standard English. They should learn to justify ideas with reasons; ask questions to check understanding; develop vocabulary and build knowledge; negotiate; evaluate and build on the ideas of others, and select the appropriate register for effective communication". (National Curriculum, 2014)

Whilst fruitful academic discussion continues surrounding the issue of oracy within schools, the research continues to highlight that there needs to be a more practical, unified approach to teaching oracy, to ensure that all schools are giving oracy as much attention as their numeracy and literacy policies, and therefore integrating oracy teaching seamlessly into the school curriculum itself.

Indeed, a review by the UK Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in 2005 found that few students had an understanding of what is meant by speaking and listening, oracy or spoken expression. Commenting on this report, Jones (2007) asserted that the integration of speaking

and listening into planning for literacy should be 'systematic and automatic' (Jones, 2007, p.577). Despite this, years later in 2012, Alexander acknowledged that oracy skills were still declining and that the main cause of this is that writing and reading are still seen to be a priority over oracy; oracy still was not being taught systematically or automatically (Alexander, 2012). Evidencing this claim, in a 2016 impact report produced by Voice 21, only '14%' of classroom teachers stated that their school meets the statutory National Curriculum requirements for school language "to a great extent" (Voice 21, 2016, p.4).

Today, we face a more pressing challenge: understanding the picture of oracy throughout a Covid-19 pandemic, where remote learning periods, social distancing and mask-wearing will have inevitably impacted, and continue to impact, the standard of verbal communication in classrooms, and in society as a whole. Already, teachers and researchers are commenting on the effect of the pandemic on students' oracy skills. Nick Pear, a London headteacher writing for the Times Educational Supplement (2021), argues that speaking skills inevitably took a back seat when online teaching began and thus, this is having a knock-on effect on students' confidence levels at speaking up now they are back in the classroom. Similarly, Charney, Camarta, Stephen and Chern (2021) researched the impact of the pandemic on communication skills in schools and in society as a whole, and they assert that innovative methods to promote communication skills are paramount. Voice 21 echoed this view after finding that 7 in 10 teachers said teaching online had a negative impact on the number of opportunities that were created for developing students' oracy skills (Voice 21, 2016, p.26).

Twenty-first century research highlights that high-quality verbal discourse affects academic attainment (Van Oers Elbers, Van Der Veer and Wardekker, 2008; Whitebread, Mercer, Howe and Tolmie, 2013), socialisation (Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif and Sams, 2004 and Newman, 2020) and community cohesion (Yandell, 2013; Coles, 2004, and Littleton and Mercer, 2013) as a whole. Since high-quality oracy is therefore seen not only to be an educational imperative but a societal imperative too, the importance of oracy and its need to be at the forefront of all that

we do in schools is reiterated, if we seek to integrate our students seamlessly into society once they leave school.

In light of this, my current secondary school, a mixed comprehensive school in a mixed socio-economic area of South London, has implemented a school-wide policy to address issues around verbal communication and oracy within the classroom. In our latest mock Ofsted review, our school was judged to be outstanding but oracy was found to be an area for development because, as a school, we weren't clear about how and when to teach oracy. Our whole-school drive to address this deficit has been strengthened by a clear decline in our students' verbal reasoning in the classroom post-pandemic. Using one thirty-minute tutor-time session a week, a whole-school oracy intervention has been implemented, using debate topics and academic talk sentence starters to make a start at addressing the need to teach oracy within our curriculum. Since this was the first year that the intervention had been trialled, my research explored its effectiveness and possible alterations for its implementation in the 2022-2023 academic school year.

Since our school's desire is to learn and improve from our first trial year of the oracy intervention in tutor-time, my research seeks to explore the impact of explicit oracy intervention on the quality of Key Stage Four students' classroom talk and their confidence levels when talking in the classroom, using these two questions as my research foci:

1) To what extent can oracy intervention encourage students to communicate collaboratively and use more exploratory talk?
2) Can oracy intervention improve students' confidence with their classroom talk?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Context

As discussed in the introduction of this essay, oracy has not consistently been at the forefront of schools' priorities. Time and time again, the importance of oracy teaching in the curriculum has

been stressed; yet, despite an array of research looking at different types of classroom talk, their benefits and their implementation in schools, schools such as mine, feel at a loose end with how, when and why to implement oracy teaching effectively.

Thus, in this literature review, I seek to explore what the research to date concludes about the following questions, in order to consider how oracy teaching can be effectively implemented into the school curriculum:

1) What is oracy and what is its place within the school curriculum?
2) Can teachers teach oracy?
3) What are the benefits of teaching oracy?

2.2 What is oracy and what is its place within the school curriculum?

2.2.1 What is oracy?

Originally coined by Wilkinson (1965), when making the case that it should carry equal importance to literacy, oracy can be defined as 'the ability to understand and use spoken language' (Jones, 2007, p.498). The relationship between language and thought and thus, spoken language and learning, was considered as early as the ancient Greeks but its consideration by many researchers emerges from the mid-twentieth century to present day. As early as 1962, Vygotsky recognised the interrelationship between language and thinking and its impact on interaction and development in learners; yet, Vygotsky's view that language and thought had their 'own separate mental origins' was contradicted by Piaget's view that language and thought work synonymously as part of human development (Edwards and Mercer, 1987, p.19). Beneficially, this prompted the London Association of Teachers of English (LATE) and the National Association of Teachers of English (NATE) to begin to explore the links between language and enhanced student experiences in the classroom (Jones, 2017). Later in the 70s, Vygotsky's works (1978) returned to consider the social origins of language and the importance of expression in identity formation.

In their early exploration of classroom talk, Sinclair and Coulthard's IRF sequence (initiation-response- feedback) brought to light issues around classroom discussion, namely the issue of naturally teacher-led classroom talk and regimented questioning within the classroom (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). Edwards and Mercer (1987), becoming fundamental to the research around classroom talk, began to critique and evaluate Sinclair and Coulthard's IRF sequence in the classroom. They reconsidered oracy teaching, starting with the importance of ground rules for discussion (Edwards and Mercer, 1987). This set of rules, building on Paul Grice's early thoughts on the importance of turn-taking in a discussion (Grice, 1975), began to explore what speaker and listener must know and do, in order to have a productive discussion.

As we moved into the twenty-first century, there was a renewed collective effort by researchers to consider specific types of classroom talk and the value of oracy on human development once again. Mercer (2000), building on his and Edward's principle of ground rules, developed four main types of talk in the classroom: 'playful, disputational, cumulative and exploratory' (Mercer, 2000, p.504). In playful talk, conversations are light-hearted and lack structure whilst in disputational talk, the conversation feels competitive and argumentative. In cumulative talk, the conversation involves sharing ideas but there is no sense of ideas being challenged or evaluated. Seen to be the most effective for learning, exploratory talk involves active listening, asking questions, sharing ideas, which can be challenged or built upon, thereby promoting engagement and understanding. In Littleton, Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif, Rowe and Sams' (2005) research into this on Key Stage 1 students, the level of active engagement seen in exploratory talk was far higher than the other three categories that he coined.

Building on this, Mortimer and Scott (2003) and Scott, Mortimer and Aguiar (2006) looked at different types of talk based on the balance of authority within a conversation. Coining four categories of talk, they considered the nature of interactive (presentation and question and answer) vs non-interactive (lecture style) talk in unison with authoritative vs dialogic talk. The category generating the largest amount of discussion was unsurprising dialogic interactive talk.

This four quadrant model of classroom talk primarily focused on the teacher and their responsibility in relation to classroom talk.

Similarly, placing far more onus on the teacher's responsibility to facilitate effective classroom talk, Chaplin, O'Connor and Anderson (2003) set out guidance for different 'talk moves' which can be used to generate productive classroom discussion. The five main talk moves, 'revoicing', 'repeating', 'reasoning', 'add on' and 'wait time', consider the steps that a teacher can take to better the quality of a student's spoken language within a classroom conversation.

Alexander's model of dialogic teaching and scaffolded dialogue evolved in 2004 (Alexander, 2004). In this professional outlook on classroom talk, it pays as much attention to the teacher as it does to the student. In dialogic teaching, students are encouraged to explain their answers in depth and evaluate different arguments, rather than recalling facts. In collaboration with the teacher, students explore their ideas and Alexander asserts that this empowers students for lifelong learning and civic engagement. Much like the IRF sequence, answers are received and feedback is given, instead of just being received; however, the process of feedback in Alexander's model drives the conversation forward, as opposed to ending the conversation. In this way, the conversation becomes 'collective, reciprocal, supportive, cumulative and purposeful' (Alexander, 2004, p.99); pupils are expected to speak more extensively, explaining their ideas as they go along. Alexander's research (2003) highlighted different cultural expectations around dialogic teaching, finding that Russia and France utilised this approach far more than the US and the UK. This cultural difference may illuminate issues surrounding differing expectations for rote learning styles and it may expose the emphasis that different cultures place upon actively speaking up in society.

Also looking at the benefits of collaboration on thinking and development, Mercer, Hennessy and Warwick (2019) and Littleton and Mercer (2013), more recently coined the concept of 'interthinking' and thus the programme: 'Thinking Together'. In their exploration of how working with others can develop human creativity and provide humans with the necessary skills

for working life, they stress the importance of teaching effective group discussion and thinking as an essential learning tool. Rather than interacting with someone, you similarly learn to 'interthink' (Mercer and Dawes, 2010, p.11); this concept has been received and explored widely in school and work settings as a rationale for more group-based work, highlighting the importance of talk for collaboration and thus learning.

In more recent years, Voice 21, a National Oracy Educational Charity, have begun to delve more deeply, producing four main strands of oracy. In their research, building on different types of classroom talk, they have explored how 'physical' (concerned with voice and body language), 'linguistic' (concerned with vocabulary and rhetorical techniques), 'social and emotional' (working with others) and 'cognitive' (content, structure and reasoning) aspects of talk affect learning in the classroom (Voice 21, 2016, p.15). Moreover, evaluating a project aims to embed oral language intervention into over 800 schools across the country, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), have explicitly outlined what oral language projects in schools might look like based on 154 studies so far, describing: targeted reading, explicit vocabulary teaching, structured questioning in comprehension tasks or purposeful curriculum-focused interaction tasks (EEF, 2021).

As is extremely clear in the content above, there has been a sustained attempt to understand oracy and its significance in thinking and learning. Our understanding of what oracy is and why it is important only continues to progress and will undoubtedly change once research looks at teaching during the Covid-19 remote learning periods and mask-wearing periods, when schools returned to face-to-face teaching.

2.2.2 Implementation in schools

Despite continuous efforts to research and understand oracy, numerous issues have occurred with its implementation in schools and the school curriculum itself. It has been widely

acknowledged that oracy skills are still declining and that the main cause of this is that writing and reading are still seen to be a priority over oracy (Alexander, 2004).

The National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy (1989) were extremely significant for the implementation of oracy in schools because 'Speaking and Listening' was, for the first time, considered to be just as important as reading and writing (National Literacy Strategy, 1989). For the first time, the National Curriculum acknowledged the link between speaking and listening and children's language development, and teachers were urged to focus on the quality of talk in their classrooms. Classroom talk was considered to be 'impoverished' of fruitful discourse and thus, less teacher-led closed-question teaching was seen to be needed to encourage students to extend their verbal responses (Coles, 2005, p.114). Off the back of this, the National Oracy Project (1987–1993) produced extensive resources to support the teaching of Speaking and Listening in the English National Curriculum.

Yet, the 1998 National Literacy Strategy sidelined oracy once again, focusing on reading and writing and collectively 'literacy', ignoring the importance of verbal literacy (Coultas, 2015). As part of this initiative, the introduction of 'Literacy Hour' in primary classrooms encouraged teachers to focus on guided reading and group work, encouraging a fast, interactive oral exchange (Barnes, 1988). The somewhat extensive resources of the National Oracy Project disappeared and became unidentifiable.

A further revised National Curriculum in 1999 highlighted the importance of group work and discussion but by 2003, in The Literacy Strategy, talk was omitted from its documentation and instead, returned to the ambiguous term literacy. Many people took this term to mean reading and writing, again sidelining all of the research looking at the importance of talk on cognitive development. Despite numerous objections to this strategy, it took until 2006, when Jim Rose published The Rose Report, that speaking and listening was deemed to be as important as reading and writing to enhance children's social and emotional development. In this Ofsted report of speaking and listening in schools (2006), its key findings shed light on the neglected

state of oracy in schools and thus stressed the importance of explicit teaching of Speaking and Listening in schools.

These constant changes in educational policy, many have argued, has meant that oracy has been both 'promoted and side-lined' and as a result of this, teachers are not entirely confident with when to teach Speaking and Listening, how to teach it and how to measure its effectiveness (Jones, 2017, p.498). Many have critiqued the government's implementation of oracy teaching in schools and have argued that reforming talk was just a political matter and not an educational prerogative. Indeed, former Education Secretary, Michael Gove, criticised educational theorists who reduced the teacher's role in education; he stated that it is far more productive for children to acquire knowledge by 'attending to an expert' (Gove, 2013), reducing children to passive learners.

Our most recent National Curriculum (2014) reiterates the need to teach pupils to 'speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using standard English' (National Curriculum in England, 2014). In 2015, an important amendment was made to the title of an assessed aspect of the AQA English GCSE course from 'Speaking and Listening' to 'Spoken Language', acknowledging the importance of fluency in spoken language to enhance students' success in the rest of the curriculum (AQA, 2015, Non-Exam Assessment Guide: Spoken Language). Whilst the instructions to teach spoken language are far more explicit to teachers than they ever have been, it is undeniable that schools are playing catch up after a century of mixed-messages and constant change around ideas about oracy in schools.

2.3 Can teachers teach oracy?

Despite the fact that it is widely recognised that communication skills, particularly oracy, can be taught and learned, the literature around the practicalities of teaching oracy in the classroom raise some issues (Conrad and Newberry, 2012). Some recurring issues that occur in the literature and will therefore be explored in this literature review are:

-The teacher's role in planning and facilitating classroom talk.
-The balance between student-led group work and teacher-led sessions.

2.3.1 The teacher's role in planning and facilitating classroom talk

A key question that arises in the literature on oracy teaching is to what extent do oracy sessions need to be planned for by the teacher. A wide body of literature favours the use of preplanned oracy packages in the classroom (Wren, 1989; Hill, 2021; Mercer, Warwick and Ahmed, 2017 and Whitebread, Mercer, Howe and Tolmie, 2013) or consciously structured, dialogic approaches to teaching oracy (Coles, 2005). In his review of a 32 year research project in Scotland in primary and secondary schools, Wren credited Neville's study for using some carefully designed sets of oracy tests. These preplanned sets of oracy tests were deemed to support the incorporation of oracy into teachers' literacy teaching and they had particular benefits for those students with language-disabilities, such as EAL and other SEN needs. Yet, later into the twenty-first century, Mercer, Warwick and Ahmed (2017) acknowledged that no clear 'skill framework' exists to help teachers to teach students the spoken language skills that they will encounter when they leave school, thus resulting in the development of a set of research-informed resources for the assessment of oracy in the classroom, particularly designed for students aged 11-12: The Cambridge Oracy Toolkit (Mercer, Warwick and Ahmed, 2017, p.51). After a study where this package was trialled across four schools, findings suggested that students' improvements in their spoken language skills were aided by their teacher's delivery of the package in the classroom. Whilst problematic because these four schools were also trialing other oracy packages across their curriculum too, this research's video footage of the classroom did highlight some improved spoken language sessions in the classes that were following the package; this may suggest that packages can be effective when they are delivered effectively by the teacher (Whitebread, Mercer, Howe and Tolmie, 2013). Even at postgraduate level, Elsevier (2021) comments upon the effectiveness of explicit oracy teaching packages for a UK Business School; the effectiveness of a more rigid oracy package for the business school encouraged students to engage in purposeful talk around the course content which expanded their spoken

repertoire, a skill that universities were encouraging students to develop ready for their chosen workplaces. The view that preplanned oracy packages may be beneficial may also be justified in a recent study in Norway with 22 tenth-grade students, where oracy teaching was deemed ineffective due to a lack of a 'systematic teaching structure' (Kaldahl, 2020, p.5). However, in their review of over 154 studies across 800 schools, the EEF assert that whilst oral language interventions can have up to six months of additional progress on a student's learning, the intervention itself can incorporate a range of methods such as: targetted reading, explicit vocabulary teaching, structured questioning in comprehension targets or specifically planned purposeful curriculum-focused dialogue sessions. Indeed, any of these were found to be effective as long as they were embedded into the school's practice over a long period of time (EEF, 2021).

Additionally, since a range of educational theorists and preceding literature promotes the importance of utilising a range of different types of classroom talk, particularly exploratory talk, in the classroom, one must question the importance of packages and toolkits in enabling teachers to guide students to use those beneficial types of talk in the classroom (Alexander, 2003) and Mercer, 2000). Mercer (2000) states that 'conversational ground rules' for talk are necessary; they are not a set of rules that students will naturally learn and an explicitly planned conversation, which sets out these rules, will encourage students to talk productively and collaboratively (Mercer, 2000, p.28). Moreover, research looking at the use of effective exploratory talk to aid learning in British and Mexican primary school children, asserts that this type of talk only arises out of explicit oracy teaching, designed with a clear purpose (Rojas-Drummond, Perez, Gomez and Mendoza, 2003 and Mercer, Wegerif and Dawes, 1999). In a secondary school context, Sutherland's (2006) research within 180 secondary school students aged 11-12, across five schools in the UK, found that a series of explicit oracy interventions, enhanced student engagement and as a result of this, promoted higher-order thinking in the form of exploratory talk in students, in the tested group pre and post intervention. Further, in a 2016 impact report (Voice 21), planning oracy outcomes were seen to be vital in order to measure the success of such programs in the classroom. Building on Mercer and Dawes' (2014)

view that teachers need to plan for, and monitor how talk happens in the classroom, Edwards and Furlong (1978) once went as far as to say that teachers need to produce the equivalent of 'stage directions' for students; a really clear set of instructions and guidelines which go beyond just 'conversational ground rules' (Edwards and Furlong, 1978, p.21). Since exploratory talk is deemed to be the most effective way to enhance learning and engage students in higher-order thinking, these explicit oracy interventions and packages seem to aid teachers in facilitating those skills for students. Kerawalla, Petrou and Scanlon (2013), utilising the online app 'Talk Factory' in these oracy interactions in secondary schools also stressed the importance of the teacher's role in modelling effective spoken language and their role in guiding students through the process of using exploratory language.

Despite this, teachers having a 'package' or 'toolkit' to teach from isn't deemed to be the only success factor in oracy teaching. Vaish (2013), looking at schools in Singapore, found that well-planned questioning in the classroom was as important as the classroom environment itself (the relationship between the pupils; the relationship with their teacher and the classroom layout itself), in prompting students to speak up and elaborate on their ideas. Similarly, Maseda and DeFeo (2014) found that classroom dialogue was only fruitful when they observed a relaxed classroom environment, in their observation of Spanish speaking in Mexican schools. Galton and Williamson's research (1992), after two earlier oracy projects, conversely suggests that talk that is exploratory in nature only arises out of suitably challenging tasks, designed by the teacher, in conjunction with a clear set of rules for classroom conversation. This research highlights the complex nature of the classroom and the varying factors which may influence the way in which students obtain the spoken language skills that we desire them to learn.

2.3.2 Should oral language interventions be teacher-led or student-led?

In addition to the level of planning that a teacher needs to undergo to facilitate effective classroom talk, a wide body of literature looks at the extent to which oracy sessions need to be teacher-led or whether students should be undertaking independent group work.

In setting up different types of talk, Mercer (2000) asserts that when children are learning to think collectively, they must be involved in some 'guided participation' in the classroom; the teacher must have some level of input in helping the students to think together and share their understanding during a problem-solving activity (Mercer, 2000, p.134). Acknowledging that children learn a great deal by just talking to one another, Mercer (2000) argues that the process of 'guided participation' must be used initially, to model and set up an effective conversation, and then 'Talk Lessons' should consist of a careful blend of teacher-led, whole-class sessions and talk groups, to ensure that students are not constantly supervised (Mercer, 2000, p.162). Conversely, Jones (2007) and Mortimer and Scott (2003) argue that we need to overcome the restrictions of the IRF style of teaching but he believes that classroom talk should still be led primarily by the teacher in a dialogic style of teaching. Additionally, in Haworth's (2001) review of oracy research over the past decade, he recommends a model of oracy teaching that is controlled by the teacher entirely, in the form of 'whole-class interactive teaching' (Haworth, 2001, p.11). Interestingly, Haworth's research looked at children mostly of primary school age and this may reveal that a greater level of control may need to be exerted by teachers of younger children, allowing secondary school students to conduct talk lessons with more autonomy. Akin to this, in a Voice 21's 2016-2021 impact report, students stated that they valued being listened to by other students, feeling that it made them feel respected and important.

Kerawella, Petrou and Scanlon (2013) experimented with a digital app called Talk Factory in primary school science plenaries. The app itself consists of a bar chart in which pupils insert the ground rules of conversational talk and each time in their conversation that they use any of these elements, they log them on the bar chart. At the end of the conversation, students reflected on the effectiveness of their conversation. After comparing the dialogue used by

students who use Talk Factory and those who did not, this app was seen to improve the nature of the children's dialogue so that it was more exploratory in nature. Whilst the teacher can initially help the students to set up the ground rules in the bar chart in the app, this study may provide evidence that even primary school children can monitor and manage their own Talk Lessons when using tools that are deliberately designed to enhance student autonomy and self-efficacy.

In addition to this, a range of literature supports the view that students should learn to talk effectively in a less controlled manner at any stage of their education. Some research in UK primary schools advocated for less controlled discourse, where students are encouraged to take risks (Galton and Williamson, 1992). Additionally, research in Iranian secondary schools found that a teacher-led lecture-style classroom environment produced less controlled spoken language in the children (Dastgahian, Turner and Scull, 2020). In direct contrast to Jones (2007), Mortimer and Scott (2003) and Haworth (2001), Mroz, Smith and Harman (2000), Burns and Myhill (2004) believe that too much of classroom discourse is teacher-led and a move away from interactive whole-class teaching is vital to encourage students to talk playfully and learn oracy without the attachment of 'literacy-based outcomes' (Hibbin, 2016, pp.60-61). In their research project looking at talk lessons in three schools in Exeter, Burns and Myhill (2004), believing that this exacerbates the issue of social mobility further, found that higher sets were often given more opportunities to talk independently and to extend their verbal responses during talk lessons, as opposed to lower sets where group work was tightly controlled, if not non-existent.

Indeed, a body of research favours the use of less-controlled group work to enhance cognitive functioning in children, regardless of their sets at school. Clark, Anderson, Kuo, Kim, Archodidou and Nguyen-Jahiel (2003), found that collaborative reason discussions happen when students have more control over the discussion and thus, children experience better cognitive outcomes. The same was found to be true in studies with children with English as an Additional Language (Kotler, Wegerif and Levoi, 2001) and children with ASD (Ben-Sasson, Lamash and Gal, 2013).

Utilising Mercer and Littleton's 'interthinking' concept in the Thinking Together programme, Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif and Sams' (2004) findings highlighted that partner and group work aided problem solving in several secondary school science lessons and similar findings have been replicated in other subjects such as Mathematics too (Mercer and Sams, 2006).

Additionally, a range of literature has supported the view that group work that involves drama has significant benefits for students' abilities to have in-depth, exploratory discussions. In O'Toole and Stinson's (2013) research, the use of drama was seen to enhance students' oral communication, when reflecting on video footage of eight sequential lessons. Additionally, Stinson, Janks, Myhill and Bingley (2015), found the same success in their research in a primary school in Australia, asserting that drama as a form of pedagogy is hugely successful in getting students engaged in the topic and therefore, drama gave them more to say in the discussion afterwards.

Although a range of research favours group work to enhance students' exploratory talk in the classroom, some studies do highlight that the teacher needs to have some level of control over the selection of the groups. For example, in Coultas' (2015) research, small groups were seen to be more effective and beneficial for students and in Redman's earlier work (1965), she argued that groups needed to be carefully selected and the teacher needed to circulate the room to monitor and refocus groups. Additionally, Rojas-Drummond and Mercer (2003), whilst supporting the view that group work encouraged exploratory talk, agreed with the careful blend of teacher-led discourse and peer group interaction set out by Mercer (2000).

Educational charities (such as Voice 21) and educational apps such as Talk Factory wholeheartedly push for more talk time in the classroom, feeling that oracy carries the same status as literacy and numeracy but the research clearly fails to unite in a preferred method of implementing oracy into the classroom (Voice 21, 2016 and Talk Factory, 2019). In a review of research in 2013 (Howe and Abedin, 2013) and a 2016 report produced by Voice 21, they found that teachers know that oracy is incredibly important but the support that they receive to

implement this is still very patchy and further research is needed to look at the effectiveness of different types of organisation in oracy lessons. It is also clear through the scope of international research that different cultural expectations on whether exploratory talk and speaking up is deemed to be a positive quality in the classroom, affects the way that teachers choose to deliver oracy teaching in the classroom (Alexander, 2003).

2.4 What are the benefits of teaching oracy?

2.4.1 Academic benefits

A body of researchers look at the academic benefits of teaching oracy and they unite in their views that learning to communicate verbally has a direct impact on academic attainment in a range of ways (Van Oers Elbers, Van Der Veer and Wardekker, 2008; Whitebread, Mercer, Howe and Tolmie, 2013 and EEF, 2017). Firstly, the positive impact on word recognition, extending your vocabulary repertoire (Macleod, Macmillan and Norwich, 2007) and the early stages of reading acquisition (Storch and Whitehurst, 2002) has been explored, particularly for students below their expected attainment for their age. Several studies have supported the view that students with better oracy skills have better literacy too, therefore helping students to access a wider range of the curriculum and obtain better academic attainment overall (Smith and Foley, 2015; Neville, 1988 and Newman, 2020). In agreement with these findings, Wegerif (2010) found that explicit oracy teaching benefitted students in their reading scores and their academic attainment in mathematics lessons, where joint problem-solving was required; he argues that teachers became more aware of the importance of social skills in facilitating learning and this, in turn, has huge academic benefits.

In addition to the cognitive benefits of teaching oracy, a range of research suggests that the enhanced academic attainment may be a result of better student engagement in their education (Clark et al, 2003 and EEF, 2017). Kotler, Wegerif and Levoi (2001b) concluded from their research on 64 pupils, who had talking partners to support their oracy, that if you speak

well, you are more able to engage with your education because the current curriculum demands oral competence. Supporting this view with a study on 4985 five year-olds, the EEF found that dialogic teaching methods promoted higher order thinking and articulacy, resulting in two months of additional progress for students, including students with free school meals (EEF, 2017). Indeed, this was seen to be the case at university level too, where students with more effective verbal communication skills were able to engage more, and reap the benefits of, seminar-style learning at university level (Heron, Dippold, Hosein, Khan, Ameena, Tijen, Aksit, Doubleday and McKeown, 2021). Scott and Ametller's (2007) findings mirror these in that they found that better oral competence meant that students understood more and therefore became more engaged in their learning and were more motivated to learn. Whilst very few studies look at the direct relationship between oral competence and students' confidence levels, Jones and Hodson (2012) suggest that children's language development is directly improved through improvements to a child's oral competence, which in turn develops a child's confidence to speak up in discussions. Despite this, the direct relationship between improved oral competence and students' confidence levels is still an area that needs to be explored in greater detail.

2.4.2 Social benefits

In addition to the academic benefits that oral development brings, research highlights the social benefits of oracy too. In studies that found that oracy intervention improved the quality of classroom talk, participants displayed better social interactions with their peers too (Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif and Sams, 2004 and Newman, 2020). Similarly, Ben-Sasson, Lamash and Gal (2013) report a similar conclusion in their study with children with learning difficulties, who were able to form more positive relationships through better social interactions with their peers.

Van Oers Elbes, Van Der Veer and Wardekker (2008) and Whitebread, Mercer, Howe and Tolmie (2013) findings also support this body of research and go further in saying that people who have

better oracy skills have better social engagement generally, both in education and in society; these kind of qualities produce proactive citizens, not just students with good exam results. A report in 2016 by Voice 21 mirrors these claims and emphasises the social, emotional and employment benefits that we see as a result of a greater push at teaching high-quality oracy in schools. In fact, the findings of several studies who found large improvements in students' oracy skills after interventions, also found that better oral competence facilitates better 'reasoning in social contexts'; this is not just limited to the classroom setting (Rojas-Drummond, Perez, Gomez and Mendoza, 2003, p. 353 and Kerawella, Petrou and Scanlon, 2013). This ability to interact and reason with people has been recognised as a critical skill that enhances someone's ability to articulate themselves well and manage others in the workplace (Jackson, 2014 and Conrad and Newberry, 2012). This, it has been argued, improves students' workplace opportunities (Elsevier, 2021) which may in turn take a small step in the climb towards social democracy.

Whilst very few studies look at the direct relationship between oral competence and students' confidence levels, Jones and Hodson (2012) suggest that children's language development is directly improved through improvements to a child's oral competence, which then develops a child's confidence to speak up in discussions. Similarly, Mallon, Meritt and Porath's (2020) research found a direct relationship between students' self-confidence and participation in class; oracy teaching was seen to allow students to assess where they struggled, monitor their progress and ultimately, feel confident that it is possible to improve. Despite this, the direct relationship between improved oral competence and students' confidence levels is still an area that needs to be explored in greater detail.

2.4.3 Community cohesion

Finally, it can be argued that producing more orally competent individuals can improve community cohesion, both in school environments and in society as a whole. In a school context, De Botton (2019), Headteacher of School 21 in East London, has researched the impact

of effective oracy support on school communities and he argues that better spoken language communication in schools produces more harmony and has significant behavioural benefits. In other school contexts he also reports of better curriculum design, teacher collaboration and a greater level of whole-school purpose. Yandell (2013) and Coles' (2004) earlier research also supports the view of a greater level of harmony that can be produced when high-quality oracy is incorporated into the backbone of a school. They argue that this opens up more multi-modal talk, where 'new forms of cultural discourse are opened up' (Coles, 2004, p. 57). The ability to engage with, and discuss, different cultural perspectives and viewpoints again addresses a school's moral imperative to address inclusion. Myhill's (2002) research addresses a similar issue but with gender imbalances in the classroom. Finding that male students typically dominate classroom discussion with less academic benefit compared to high-achieving girls who engage in classroom discussion, Myhill argues that creating oral competence in all students, particularly low-confidence girls, creates a climate of more 'consensual learning' and could start to address concerns arising over the gender attainment gap (Myhill, 2002, p.350).

Beyond the school context, Littleton and Mercer (2013) assert that working together and collaboration is a key part of our evolutionary history and that community cohesion is key for our survival as humans. Therefore, the ability to communicate with people and be orally competent is a social imperative as well as an academic one.

2.5 Conclusion

In summary, there is a wide body of literature that looks at oracy and its importance. Whilst it is widely recognised as being as important as numeracy and literacy, a rather turbulent period of mixed-messages in educational policy in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century has meant that effectively implementing oracy teaching into school curriculums has been sidelined and, when oracy has been prioritised, a lack of clear guidance has meant that it is still challenging for schools to implement oracy seamlessly into their curriculum design. Promisingly,

the instructions to teach spoken language are far more explicit than it ever has been and whilst schools are still arguably playing catch up with this, oracy is being addressed more rigorously.

It seems that teachers and researchers, whilst confident that oracy intervention can have huge academic and social benefits, both in schools and other communities in society, are still unsure about how they should be planning and delivering their teaching of oracy and to what extent they should be leading the delivery of these sessions. While the literature and educational theorists themselves do not seem to agree on one mode of delivery, Mercer's (2000) 'exploratory talk' seems to have become the goal that we want students to strive for, post intervention, to collaboratively talk, think and thus, learn (Mercer, 2000, p.504). As a result of this, it seems that teachers need to consciously plan for this and monitor talk, but they do not need to lead and dictate the direction of classroom conversation in the way that the IRF sequence sets out. Instead, Talk Lessons can incorporate a blend of teacher-led, group work and whole-class sessions, which enable the teacher to facilitate the teaching of exploratory language, whilst giving students the freedom to extend their verbal responses and reason with others. It seems that planned packages and other educational online resources such as Talk Factory may facilitate this guided approach, without the teacher leading from the front of the classroom for the entirety of this process.

In light of literature that I have explored, my first research question seeks to find out:

1) To what extent can oracy intervention encourage students to communicate collaboratively and use more exploratory talk?

I wish to explore this because such a wide body of literature supports the use of explicit oracy language interventions in schools but it does not agree on a desired mode of delivery in the school curriculum. I want to explore the effectiveness of the tutor-time oracy programme that has been designed at my school, on students' ability to use more exploratory talk.

2) Can oracy intervention improve students' confidence with their classroom talk?

I seek to explore this because theorists and the literature are very unified in their view that oracy teaching can have huge academic and social benefits but the direct impact on students'

confidence levels are hardly touched upon in the research. Since students must feel confident in order to speak up more in class discussions, and therefore engage more in their learning, it seems essential to explore the direct link in more detail.

3. Methodology

In this mixed-methods practitioner research, I seek to evaluate the effectiveness of the weekly thirty-minute tutor-time sessions focusing on whole-school oracy. Since this is the first year that the intervention has been trialed, my research will explore its effectiveness and consider possible alterations for its implementation in the 2022-2023 academic school year.

3.1 Summary of the Intervention

The intervention itself took place over five months, from November 2021 to March 2022. The intervention consisted of twelve thirty minute tutor-time oracy teaching sessions once a week, as part of the school's pre-planned tutor-time scheme of work; this included two pre-intervention recording sessions at the start and the two post-intervention recording sessions at the end, where the intervention ran as normal but with the addition of a microphone to record selected pupils.

For context, each day of the week, students have a pre-planned thirty minute session taught to them at the start of the day by their form tutors, before their period 1 lesson. These thirty minute sessions include: Monday, powerful knowledge; Tuesday, assembly; Wednesday, well-being; Thursday, reading and Friday, oracy. However, the oracy session may sometimes fall every other week, if two assemblies are required within one week.

It should be noted that the first oracy tutor-time session of the year consisted of the students and the form-tutor creating a list of 'ground rules' for classroom discussion around controversial

topics and a list of 'ground rules' for paired debating and discussion. Students are reminded of these ground rules at the start of every oracy session.

Within the 30 minute tutor-time oracy sessions, students have a list of pre-written topics that they will be debating over the course of the school year. Each week, the students and the form tutor choose the topic that they're going to debate in that thirty minute session. Some examples of these topics are: 'The monarchy should be abolished' or 'cosmetic surgery should be banned'.

Once the topic has been selected, the class and the teacher click the topic on the PowerPoint and it takes the class to a new PowerPoint slide with information about that topic or two different videos to watch which present ideas for and against the statement. At this point, the class and the teacher spend around five minutes writing down their ideas for and against the statement on mini-whiteboards at the back of students' planners, and onto the teacher's main whiteboard. At this point, the students work with the person seated next to them and label themselves A or B. Person A argues for the statement and Person B argues against the statement. Students are given a further five minutes to write down, on the mini-whiteboards at the back of their planners, the points that they will need to use in their argument for the side of the argument that they're arguing. Finally, the students are timed five minutes to debate their topic in pairs, using the ideas that are written on their mini-whiteboards at the back of their planners and the academic talk sentence starters which are designed to promote exploratory talk through sentence stems such as: 'I'd like to build on _____'s idea…' or 'Contrary to what _____ has said, …'. Teachers are encouraged to project the full list of these sentence stems onto the board from the pre-planned PowerPoint (see Appendix A).

3.2 Participants

The main participants for my research were my own Year 9 tutor group - a mixed class of 30 students. Whilst the selection of this group was purely based on the tutor group that I was

allocated when I started teaching at the school, Key Stage Four (our school starts Key Stage Four in Year 9) was particularly of interest to me because so far, all of their secondary school years have been affected by Covid-19 in some capacity and, from an English teacher's perspective, Year 10 is the first year where our students complete an assessed Spoken Language assessment, where the quality of their oracy is graded as part of their GCSE. This Year 9 class are the participants whom I observed during the oracy sessions and collected the questionnaire data from.

However, within the class of 30 students, I selected two students (one male and one female) who are notably shy and low in confidence; these students were sat next to each other and worked as a pair for all of their oracy intervention sessions. Additionally, I selected another two students (one male and one female) who aren't shy but don't stand out as being confident in the group; I named these students my 'mid-confidence' participants and these students were sat next to each other and worked as a pair for all of their oracy intervention sessions. These four Year 9 students became part of my smaller sample who I recorded pre and post the oracy intervention sessions. For the purposes of anonymity, these students are referred to as Student A and B (low confidence pair) and Student C and D (mid confidence pair) in my findings and discussion.

In addition to this, I selected three students from the class, one confident (male), one mid-confidence (female) and one shy (female), to conduct follow-up interviews with as part of the data that I gathered to ascertain students' confidence levels post intervention. For the purposes of anonymity, these students are referred to as Person E (confident), F (mid-confidence) and G (low confidence) in my findings and discussion.

To ensure that I gathered some ideas from other members of staff and the views of other students in Key Stage Four, I also contacted three members of staff, who consented to conduct a verbal interview with me. These members of staff were Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 form tutors from differing subject disciplines; the Year 9 form tutor taught Science, the Year 10 form tutor

taught Art and the Year 11 form tutor taught PE. This aspect of my methodology enhanced the collaborative element of the project and allowed me to gather perspectives from other form tutors on the effectiveness of the oracy sessions. These form tutors were also carefully selected together with the school's Deputy Headteacher to ensure that these staff were not teaching subjects that necessarily ensured that they were comfortable with the day-to-day practice of teaching high-quality oracy.

3.3 Research Methods

Table 1

Research Methods Timeline

Phase	**1: Understanding Context**	**2: Pre-Intervention Data Collection**	**3: Oracy Intervention**	**4: Post-Intervention Evaluation**	**5: Feedback and Reflection**
Month	*September-October*	*November-December*	*January- March*	*April*	*May/ June*
Focus	-Understanding the oracy tutor-time project and the school's action plan for improvement.	-Understanding current student confidence levels and the quality of their exploratory talk.	-Delivering the main eight oracy intervention sessions.	-Evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention on students' exploratory talk and their confidence levels.	-Collating the main findings and feeding back to the school.
Methods	**-Informal meeting** with the school's Head of Teaching and Learning. -Selection of Year 9, 10 and 11 form tutors and initial email sent out for April interviews.	-Explanation of the project to students in my tutor group. -Pre-intervention **questionnaire**s completed in tutor-time. -Pre-intervention **recordings and observations** of the two pairs of students; taken	-Eight **intervention** sessions delivered during Friday tutor-time.	-Post-intervention **questionnaires** completed in tutor-time. -Post-intervention **recordings and observations** of the two pairs of students; taken place over two sessions because one pair is recorded per session.	-Analysis of the data collected. -Brainstorming ideas for the whole-school CPD PowerPoint and information sheets. -Editing the current scheme of work for next academic year.

		place over two sessions because one pair is recorded per session.		-Semi-structured staff **interviews** with other form tutors at lunch times. -Semi-structured student **interviews** with three students at break times.	
<u>Collaboration</u>	Collaboration with other Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 form tutors. Collaboration with the school's Head of Teaching and Learning.	Collaboration with my Year 9 tutor group- explaining the project to them and the importance of their views at the end for changing its delivery next academic year.	Every other form tutor in the school will be delivering this tutor-time intervention.	Collaboration with my Year 9 tutor group- explaining the project to them and the importance of their views at the end for changing its delivery next academic year. Collaboration with Year 9, 10 and 11 form tutors through semi-structured interviews.	Preparing to collaborate with the whole school by feeding back on the findings through whole- school CPD. Assisting the Head of Teaching and Learning with the alternations for the oracy scheme of work for next year.

3.4 Collaboration

Since this research project investigates a whole-school initiative with the end goal of amending and improving it for next academic year, it was important that my own assumptions and beliefs about the intervention were balanced in my findings by working with other members of staff and students (Creswell, 2013).

As can be seen in the timeline above, the methods that I employed are thus very collaborative in nature, working alongside our school's Head of Teaching and Learning, my own Year 9 tutor group and three other form tutors throughout the research process. It was really important to me that both students and teachers felt involved in the design and evaluation of this project because this promoted a more participatory style of research, which Cohen, Manion and

Morrison assert is vital to ensure that there is 'equal control of the research for both participants and researchers and the movement towards change through empowerment' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.38); this style of research allowed me to address my dual role as teacher and researcher and the issues surrounding power dynamics because it gives the students greater control over what is happening in their classroom environment. It also made the post-intervention data collection more fruitful because students and staff felt that their data would contribute towards change and improvement within the school community.

Finally, this level of collaboration and therefore the school being closely involved in my research project, promoted an open dialogue about the findings and thus, will lead to the delivery of a whole-school CPD session for all staff. Therefore, the points raised in my conclusion and implication are points that the school will address and seek to implement.

3.5 Data collection and Analysis

In order to answer my research questions ('To what extent can oracy intervention encourage students to communicate collaboratively and use more exploratory talk?' and 'Can oracy intervention improve students' confidence with their classroom talk?'), I knew that I needed to obtain rich, context-specific, qualitative data which captures the nature of exploratory classroom talk and the students' perspectives on their confidence levels pre and post intervention (Cohen et al, 2018). To ensure that I could evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention that the school is implementing, I naturally created a pre-test post-test quasi-experimental design, keeping it small scale due to the limits of working as a full-time teacher whilst conducting the study, and to ensure that I could analyse the data in depth to establish patterns and meaning (Gläser and Laudel, 2013). However, to ensure that I could address my second research question and utilise the perspectives of other teachers and other students, the study became mixed-methods, utilising questionnaire data and interview data too, focusing specifically on students' confidence levels.

3.5.1 Audio-recordings/ observation

The main method of data collection that I used to record the students' debates pre and post oracy intervention was through the audio recordings; I conducted these through Microsoft teams for each pair (mid-confidence and low-confidence). In an ideal world, an audio-visual recording would have been the most effective way to record the students' verbal conversations and other important aspects of communication, such as gestures, expression, body posture etc (Jewitt, 2013) but the school's policy for camera usage meant that I could only use the camera built into my desktop and the only way to angle that at my selected participants would have been to turn the whole desktop screen abruptly round to face the students and consequently, disturb their natural behaviour. I therefore adapted my methodology and designed it to use an audio-recording alongside some observational notes (Erickson, 1992, pp.209-210); this methodology met the school's policy and the USB microphone was cheap to buy, it could rest on the side of my teacher's desk subtly and it made the audio easy to transcribe for data analysis through Microsoft Word. Additionally, whilst recorded data can only capture those isolated moments of recording and can lose its meaning when it is transcribed in text, observational data carries more ecological validity (Cohen et al, 2007, p.396).

Once I had collected these recordings, I used Microsoft Word to transcribe the qualitative data, to ensure that it was easy to interpret and draw some meaning from; it also meant that I could abide by my school's policy of not moving the audio recordings outside of the school's software. However, I was conscious that the process of transcribing the audio may strip the data of some of its deeper meaning and so, once the audios were transcribed, I relistened to them all whilst reading the text version (Garcia-Horta and Guerra-Ramos, 2009, p.152). At this stage, I had a lot of data and I needed to reduce it whilst looking at my first research question; I therefore counted the frequency of disputational and exploratory words and/or phrases in the pre and post intervention audios for both pairs. When I looked for disputational words or phrases, I included words or phrases that indicated competition or argumentativeness, particularly where a student hadn't listened to the previous point that had been made. When I looked for

exploratory words and/or phrases, I used the academic sentence starters as a starting point (Appendix A) but I also included any words or phrases which indicated that students were considering the other student's idea or opinion by building on it or challenging their point in a constructive manner. This count data, alongside some example words or phrases, is presented in two tables in my findings.

Finally, I reread my observation notes and added those to the audio notes for each pair (Glaser and Laudel, 2013). The main patterns, issues and sequences from the audio and observation notes are discussed in my findings too.

3.5.2 Questionnaires

To address my second research question exploring students' confidence levels, I designed a questionnaire that I would give to students pre and post their oracy intervention sessions. I chose to use a questionnaire because it is easy to disseminate (Edwards and Talbot, 1984) and because a large quantity of data can be collected quickly (Cohen et al, 2018).

For ease of statistical analysis, I chose to create a questionnaire made up of compulsory closed questions. However, Cohen et al (2007) state that: 'the larger the size of the sample, the more structured, closed and numerical the questionnaire may have to be' (Cohen et al, 2007, p.320). Since I had a small sample size, I needed to ensure that I captured the 'authenticity, richness, depth of response, honesty and candour' (Cohen et al, 2007, p.330) that you can obtain from an open question. To address this, I included some optional open questions which encouraged the participants to explain their answer to the above-mentioned closed question (see Appendix B).

Since questionnaire data can be affected by respondent fatigue, I trialed and timed the questionnaire with my colleagues to ensure that it did not exceed 10 minutes. To ensure that all respondents took part and fully completed the questionnaire, I wrote the time it would take, alongside the number of questions, in the instructions at the top of the questionnaire. To check

for accuracy and consistency in the respondents' responses, the final question of the questionnaire was designed as a Likert scale, using a matrix question format (Cohen et al, 2018, p.476), which allowed respondents to place their answers on a continuum. This question, relating to the earlier questions in the questionnaire, fell at the end of the questionnaire because it is easier to complete and would therefore reduce the effects of respondent fatigue.

To analyse my questionnaire data, some of the raw numbers from the closed questions pre and post intervention are presented in tables in my findings. The qualitative data collected from the open questions was coded using a variation of index coding by highlighting any recurring words or phrases which added a significant clarification or extension to the closed response; these words or phrases have been discussed alongside the numerical data presented in the table in my findings (Elliott, 2018).

3.5.3 Interviews

Finally, follow-up interviews with students and staff were conducted as part of the collaborative component of the research, and to ensure that my own assumptions and beliefs about the interventions were balanced in my findings by working with other members of staff and students (Creswell, 2013).

The interviews were designed to be semi-structured and I followed a funnel approach, starting with questions to relax the participants and to ensure that the atmosphere was not too formal, before progressing onto questions that I had pre-written (see Appendix C and Appendix D), directly honing in on my research questions. This approach allowed me to maintain some control over the data gathered, whilst keeping the interview short, so that staff and students did not have to give up necessary time for the research (Khan and Connell, 1961 and Litosseliti, 2003). Additionally, I predesigned some prompt questions to ensure that I was able to obtain some data that focuses on my research questions and to help the participants to expand on their ideas (Drever, 1995). Whilst participants answered some pre-planned and some naturally

occurring questions, I made a note of their answers and their non-verbal cues, to capture the 'interpersonal, interactional, communicative and emotional' aspects of speech (Cohen et al, 2007, p.362).

Whilst I had originally planned to conduct the staff interviews in a group setting because they can be an effective way to create an informal atmosphere and encourage participants to build on one another's ideas and since they're used to working together (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987), due to staff timetables being busy and the need to fit my research around their workload, I chose to conduct them on a one-to-one basis in ten minute slots that worked for those members of staff. Since these interviews were with adults, who were quite extroverted people, the one-to-one nature of the interview did not feel restrictive or awkward.

For the student interviews, I chose to conduct the interviews on a one-to-one basis because I knew that I'd be interviewing a mixture of confident, mid confidence and low-confidence students and I wanted to hear the opinions and perspectives of all students. Additionally, I knew that these students did not necessarily know each other that well and this may therefore have affected the honesty in the answers that they gave to the questions; I wanted to create an interview setting that these students were comfortable in (Cohen et al, 2007). This style of interviewing also meant that the students could choose a 10 minute time that worked for them, thus not interfering with their lunch time or break time extracurricular activities. Whilst there are issues here surrounding the power dynamic and some students being intimidated by one-to-one interviews, the funnel approach helped me to mitigate this by relaxing the students before moving onto more focused questions.

The staff and student interviews only lasted around five minute in length and so, to analyse the qualitative interview data, I utilised several of Miles and Huberman's (1994) tactics for interview analysis. Firstly, I noted any repeated words, themes and ideas for the staff and student interviews. Secondly, using these repeated words, themes and ideas, I analysed them alongside

the repeated words, themes and ideas in the questionnaire data; I analyse and discuss these main ideas in my findings.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations were paramount for this research project, not only because the research uses human participants but because it takes place within a secondary school setting, working alongside children aged 11-18 and thus deemed 'vulnerable' under CUREC and in need of safeguarding. To comply with this, an application using a CUREC 1a form was submitted, outlining my proposed title, research project and the methodology overview; this was submitted for ethical approval to the Central University Research Ethics Committee, CUREC (Appendix E). Following the university's approval of my outline and prior to the commencement of my research, my Head Teacher was presented with a Modus Operandi letter using the university's template, stating the aims of the research and an outline for the study itself, before seeking their consent.

In addition to this, other specific measures stated below were taken to ensure that my research complied with the British Educational Research Association (2018) 'Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research' (BERA, 2018):

3.6.1 Consent and participation

Before my research began, I made teachers aware of what the project involved by sending out an email to all form tutors outlining the project and its aims in October (Appendix F). To ensure that students understood what the project involved, a student-friendly PowerPoint was created and shown to the students before the intervention began (Appendix G). Students were also given information at the top of their questionnaires (Appendix B) which set out the aims of the study again and their right to withdraw at any time up until the data has been analysed for the project (BERA, 2018).

Before recording the students, I obtained written consent from the school's GDPR manager; it was agreed that I could only Microsoft Teams to record the students and the recordings could only be saved to our school's One Drive platform. Once the audio recordings were anonymously transcribed, they were deleted. Whilst many steps were taken to ensure that I obtained informed consent, I faced a difficult ethical dilemma with the audio-recordings. Since the audio-recordings were undertaken on Microsoft Teams, an everyday aspect of our educational provision, the school's GDPR manager stated that I would not need to obtain written consent from parents/ guardians on behalf of the students because they have already consented to the school's full use of Microsoft Teams, including its recording functionality, to provide remote learning for students who are isolating. It was really important as part of the research that the recordings from the intervention sessions were as natural as possible, to capture the authenticity of classroom talk; indeed, Cohen et al argue that this style of covert observation/ recording 'overcomes problems of reactivity', particularly given that students may change their natural behaviour if they knew that they were being recorded (Cohen et al, 2007, p.409). Without this, I could not ensure that my data was going to be a true reflection of the students' talk and thus the effectiveness of the school's oracy programme, thus limiting the educational benefits of the research for the school. Weighing up the benefits of the research alongside the moral dilemma of violating the principle of informed consent, I took the decision to not tell which pairs I was recording pre and post intervention but I did tell the class that sections of some discussions would be recorded.

3.6.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

To ensure that I fulfilled the need to store my data securely, the original audio recordings from this research were only saved to my school's OneDrive platform and they were deleted once they had been anonymously transcribed (BERA, 2018). Once these were transcribed onto a Word document, they were anonymised by referring to the students using letters.

All student questionnaires were completed anonymously and the findings are therefore presented as figures to collaborators (BERA, 2018 and Cohen et al, 2018). I obtained consent from students before the interviews took place and the written up data from the interview was anonymised to ensure that the participants could not be identified. Students were told that they could withdraw at any time during the interview and up until the point at which the data is analysed. Before the staff interviews, I also obtained written staff consent and the written up data from the interview has been anonymised to ensure that the participants cannot be identified. Staff were also told that they could withdraw at any time during the interview and up until the point at which the data is analysed.

3.6.3 Safeguarding of participants

To ensure that the wellbeing of my participants was at the forefront of all of my research, I thought carefully about the time restraints on respondents (Cohen et al, 2018). The questionnaires were completed in tutor-time to ensure that students were not giving up their own time to complete them. The questionnaires were also designed to ensure that the compulsory questions were multiple-choice or Likert-scale in style, to ensure that they were quick, with optional long-answer questions too. Whilst staff interviews were going to be done as a group, they ended up being on a one to one basis in any free time that staff had around their workload; staff chose the time and the interview was timed to ensure that it did not exceed 10 minutes. Student interviews were again on a one to one basis in any breaks or lunches that students chose; the interview was timed to ensure that it did not exceed 10 minutes.

To address the issue of potential disclosure of illegal content or content that raises safeguarding concerns (BERA, 2018) in the student interviews, at the start of the interview, students were made aware of my duty as their teacher to disclose any information that is illegal or concerning to the school's safeguarding lead and their Head of Year, via our school's safeguarding platform: CPOMS.

3.6.4 Role of the researcher and professionalism

During the student interviews, I inevitably needed to mitigate the power balance between student and teacher in the research. To achieve this, my semi-structured interview questions were used to make the nature of the interview more informal. A funnel approach (Khan et al, 1961/ Litosseliti, 2003) was used to relax the participants at the start before going into more research specific questions. However, my professional standards as a teacher were maintained to avoid overfamiliarity (Lichtman, 2013). The same approach was taken for staff interviews, to ensure that staff could relax and feel confident in sharing their views.

I also knew that whilst investigating a school-sponsored programme, if I found the programme to be ineffective, I would need to approach the feedback on school improvements with careful consideration. To ensure that I did not put myself in an uncomfortable position as an employee, I stress the fact that my findings are some tenuous links for some Key Stage Four students only and not a reflection of the whole school. My findings are therefore presented as a starting point and I use tentative phrasing in my write up of the findings; I will follow the same approach when I plan my whole-school CPD feedback presentation.

3.7 Limitations

There are some limitations to this research project that should be addressed before presenting my findings. Firstly, whilst a lot of strategies were put in place to mitigate the imbalance of power between student and teacher (Johnson and Christensen, 2008), ultimately my dual role as teacher and researcher could not be fully removed and thus, some of my questionnaire and interview data may be affected by participants bias, where students have a desired to please their teachers. However, the interview data from other form-tutors, relating to students who I do not teach, may help to reduce the scale of this problem.

Furthermore, the oracy intervention is a whole year intervention which began in the first week in September and will finish in the last week of school in July. It was therefore unavoidable that some of the oracy sessions took place whilst I was seeking CUREC approval and school consent. Consequently, I could not start my research. In total, only three oracy sessions took place before my research began and in order to reduce the effects of this issue, these three oracy sessions involved one 'ground rules' session and two sessions involved practising less structured whole-class debates, without using the academic talk sentence starters; whereas, when I started my official intervention, I put students into pairs to debate their topics and the sessions followed the structure outlined in the intervention overview section of this methodology.

Finally, whilst I state that I observed and audio-recorded my chosen two pairs within the tutor group. My observation notes are fairly limited since I have a duty as the teacher and form-tutor of the group to ensure that I am supporting all of the students within the class and thus, not solely focusing on the four students whom I was recording. I will therefore be relying on my audio-recordings far more than my observation notes in my findings.

4. Findings

4.1 To what extent can oracy intervention encourage students to communicate collaboratively and use more exploratory talk?

As a measure of exploratory talk and collaborative communication, these findings consider four aspects of the students' talk: their utterance length, their turn taking, the frequency of disputational language and the frequency of exploratory language in discussion.

The audio recordings demonstrate that the length of students' utterances did extend post intervention. However, this was more notable in the low confidence pair than it was in the mid confidence pair. Whilst the low confidence pair began the school year using regular fillers and stutters such as: 'uhh-', 'So like' and 'So', if you remove those from the utterance length, it is

clear that they were struggling to communicate in full coherent sentences; this can be seen below in the small section of Audio 1, where the audio has been transcribed so that the end of the student's sentence falls onto the next line of text because of their long pauses or stutters, rather than them extending their ideas. In turn, this, when playing the audio video aloud, gave the students quite a confrontational tone of voice (that which Mercer defines as 'disputational talk'- Mercer, 2000, p.504), where ideas go back and forth regularly, without any clear sense of progression. Indeed, it is evident that Student B (SB) was frustrated by the wait to voice his opinion and therefore cut in sharply to get his point heard: 'although I do see what people would think that…'. Student B, at this stage, does demonstrate some attempts to build on Student A's (SA) ideas but the way that they conduct this in the discussion reveals his inability to listen and wait his turn. Finally, it was notable that the students lacked structure in the communication of their points; this can be seen below when Student B suddenly adds in the point about blue light.

Audio 1- Low Confidence Pair Pre Intervention

Time	Student	Audio
00:01:05	SA	Ok but the problem with that is that students uhh-
00:01:08	SA	may be using
00:01:09	SA	it for different purposes-
00:01:12	SA	so like they may go on YouTube or start watching things, or they may say that they're looking up something but instead they–
00:01:15	SA	might be like on Instagram. Sooooo-
00:01:18	SB	*[Cutting in sharply]* Although I do see what people would think that, I would also argue that these perceptions, these ummm guidelines-
00:01:33	SB	these different apps can be blocked - can be-
00:01:35	SB	can be - protected by the school-
00:01:39	SB	so it should not be a rule-

00:01:43	SB	but students like- like even if they use their phones, let's say during lunch they might uhh-
00:01:49	SB	be a bit more disconnected.
00:01:53	SB	and they gunna you know- be more distracted.
00:01:54	SB	Oh and also the blue light-
00:01:56	SB	having that at school and at home, that's bad.

However, post intervention (see the section of Audio 2 below), students' sentence lengths are notably longer, with less stutters and fillers too, making their points more coherent and concise. It seems that the incorporation of more of the academic talk sentence starters into their responses had enabled them to make their points more coherently, through phrases such as 'To a certain extent, I would like to think…'. In addition to this, the pair of students are using phrases which indicate that they're listening to the previous ideas and building on them 'I understand what you're saying but…'. Through this, the audio, when played aloud, sounds more like a discussion, rather than the dispute which was displayed pre-intervention.

Audio 2- Low Confidence Pair Post Intervention

Time	Student	Audio
00:01:22	SB	To a certain extent, I would like to think it's crucial to initiate the idea that age ratings are an implicit method for parents to dictate whether children should watch certain content.
00:01:34	SB	And they implicitly protect maturing watchers from disturbing, misleading graphic content glitches.
00:01:41	SB	And if there is exposure to violence at a younger age, it can lead to examples of civil misconduct.
00:01:46	SB	We can be associating fantasy with reality, which is not exactly a thing that we want to be—
00:01:54	SB	giving a motive to younger people, because at this time they are-

00:01:58	SB	they're sort of our foundational level and they aren't really able to disassociate-
00:02:03	SB	the fantasy and violence that you see in- in films with the- with the real world and the Lords of the Rings.
00:02:11	SB	In this civilization that we have-
00:02:13	SB	I think it would be very detrimental.
00:02:15	SA	I understand what you're saying, but I believe that we shouldn't have to dictate what children watch, like some kids should be free to choose what to watch.
00:02:25	SA	Some like 5 year-olds may choose to watch a programme-
00:02:28	SA	and that's just what they prefer.

Despite this, it should be noted that students were pausing more regularly, presumably to think about and utilise the sentence starters, rather than using fillers such as 'ummm' and 'ahhh'; this, at times, made the post intervention audio sound more rigid and awkward. Despite this, during those extended periods of pausing, turn taking was more efficient and self-regulated by the students, allowing students to fully finish their point before being cut off, as can be seen in the small section above, where Student B dominated the conversation for a significant period of time, before Student A is given the opportunity to counter that point. This is further evidenced throughout the entire five minute audio because Student B only cuts Student A off once compared to the ten interjections in the pre-intervention audio.

The findings above are reinforced by the count data in the table below where there was a clear reduction in the pair's use of disputational words or phrases and an increase in the frequency of exploratory words or phrases being used by both Student A and Student B across the whole five minute audio clips. Through this, the discussion post intervention became more productive and controlled.

Table 2

Table to show the frequency count of disputational and exploratory words and phrases in the low confidence pair pre and post intervention.

Audio	Frequency count of disputational words or phrases	Examples phrases	Frequency count of exploratory talk words or phrases	Example phrases
1 (low confidence pre intervention)	15	'We shouldn't.' 'So it should not…' 'Why should we not…?' 'I know that…' 'No. It's because…' 'They could just adjust.'	3	'I do agree with your point but…' 'I think that…' 'Although I do see why people would think that, I would also argue that…'
2 (low confidence post intervention)	8	'That's just what they prefer, right?' 'What's exactly the idea of that?' 'Also' (*whilst cutting the other student up*) 'So going back…' 'Not sure' 'I don't think that.'	12	'I therefore believe that…' 'I would like to add on to that.' 'It's important to consider the view…' 'I understand what you're saying but I believe…' 'To a certain extent, I would like to think that…'

Interestingly, the audio findings from the mid confidence pair do not parallel the findings presented for the low confidence pair. The pre audio recording for the mid confidence pair demonstrates some extended ideas in full sentences using the academic talk sentence starters, with some discourse markers which indicate the student's confidence in their tone of voice (E.g: 'first of all' in the section below); therefore, Student C (SC) and Student D's (SD) utterance length did not change significantly post intervention. In the small section transcribed below, Student C and Student D manage to communicate in full sentences with less stutters and fillers than Student A and Student B from the onset. However, as can be seen when Student D cuts in at 00:00:28, Students are struggling to regulate turn taking and their ideas do not build on the point that the other student has previously made, making the conversation less exploratory and productive; alike to the low confidence pair, the conversation does not feel collaborative or exploratory, it feels argumentative, exemplified nicely in the question that Student C poses to

Student D in the audio below: 'Why do people with depression say that social media makes them happier?'

Audio 3- Mid Confidence Pair Pre Intervention

Time	Student	Audio
00:00:18	SC	First of all, I would like to state that cyberbullying can be reported and dealt with-
00:00:24	SC	so I believe-
00:00:25	SC	*[Student starts again and rephrases]* First of all, I would like to state that cyberbullying can be reported and dealt with.
00:00:28	SD	*[Cutting in]* I think that- well say that someone is being cyber bullied- it could also cause them to suffer from anxiety or depression. Therefore, I don't think that young children should be allowed to- to- use social media.
00:00:30	SC	Why do people with depression say that social media makes them happier?
00:00:33	SD	I think- also- *[long pause]*- you don't actually know how old the person you're talking to is. Say you were talking to someone and you thought they were a girl, it could be the opposite and a boy or something, you wouldn't know.
00:00:37	SC	Children with social anxiety might just like- develop- friends on it.
00:00:38	SD	Wellllll- if they are suffering from anxiety or depression, it could increase because there are so many other things that could cause it.

Through the discussion of whether children under 12 should be allowed to have social media accounts, Student C's response to Student D's first point in Audio 3 above, implies that Student C is not fully listening or understanding the point that Student C has made. Indeed, both students' responses to each other lack a connection to the previous point.

Despite this, post intervention, the mid confidence pair displayed more competence at listening, turn taking and building on each other's ideas. In the audio below, Student C and Student D are actively trying to respond to the previous point that has been posed in their new point. The academic talk sentence starters may have helped their tone of voice in the audio recordings,

making them sound more confident and less confrontational, as can be seen through the polite presentation of counter-arguments in phrases such as: ‘You also need to consider’, ‘To counter your point’, and ‘I agree with your point but…’ below.

Audio 4- Mid Confidence Pair Post Intervention

Time	Student	Audio
00:00:16	SC	Firstly, I would like to say people want to look how they want to look, so they want to look differently then they can.
00:00:31	SD	You also need to consider-
00:00:33	SD	that it creates unrealistic standards, so if something-
00:00:39	SD	goes wrong or anything like that-
00:00:42	SD	that's not gonna be good 'cause then they- they can't change it and you're-
00:00:45	SD	stuck. Yes, that's a bad thing.
00:00:48	SD	To counter your point-
00:00:50	SC	there shouldn’t be something like in the first place, so it should only be like fully functional.
00:01:03	SD	I agree with your point, but personally I feel that- *[long pause]*-
00:01:12	SD	there can be other options which are better for use-
00:01:15	SD	like - say if youuu-
00:01:18	SD	need to get some rid of fat in your–
00:01:21	SD	stomach or something, you could easily go to the gym and be healthier and try other options instead of trying to remove your natural features.
00:01:35	SC	*[Long pause as student reads the sentence stems]* Although I agree with that, I’d like to counter it because-
00:01:39	SC	-we can fix-
00:01:39	SC	*[Student rephrases]* It can fix bad injuries, so people like with second degree burns-

00:01:45 SC -they use cosmetic surgery to fix it.

Once again, these findings are reiterated by the count data in the table below where there is a clear reduction in the students' use of disputational words or phrases and a sharp increase in their frequency of more exploratory words or phrases across the five minute audios.

Table 3

Table to show the frequency count of disputational and exploratory words and phrases in the mid confidence pair pre and post intervention.

Audio	Frequency count of disputational words or phrases in five minutes	Examples phrases	Frequency count of exploratory talk words or phrases based on the academic talk sentence starters	Example phrases
3 (mid confidence pre intervention)	9	'Right?' 'No. Because…' 'Wellllll–' 'I think that…' *(cutting in)* 'Why do people with depression say that social media makes them happier?'	2	'First of all, I would like to state that cyber bullying…' 'Second, we could …'
4 (mid confidence post intervention)	2	'Why not?' 'The problem is..'	10	'Firstly, I would like to say…' 'You also need to consider…' 'To counter your point' 'Although I partially agree with that, I'd like to counter it because…'

However, whilst the academic talk sentence starters are used more regularly to build on the ideas of the previous argument, in the audio clip itself and in the transcribed clip above, the conversation at times sounds rigid and repetitive. This data was mirrored in the staff interviews

and in Question 3 of the student questionnaire where students were asked: 'To what extent do you agree that having sentence starters, or examples of how to say your ideas, might help your confidence at speaking up in the classroom?' In response to this question, pre-intervention, 14/26 students strongly agreed or agreed, compared to 19/26 strongly agreeing or agreeing post-intervention. This data implies that several students found the sentence starters helpful in phrasing their ideas and in helping them to feel more confident in their expression. However, the optional open question of the post- intervention questionnaire illuminated the shared view by many students that 'sentence starters can benefit some people but they aren't necessary for everyone'. One student stated that the time spent working out which sentence starter to use, made his academic expression awkward, clumsy and in his words: 'forced'. Indeed, in these audio clips, the sentence starters seem to have supported the low confidence students but perhaps the mid confidence students have relied on them too greatly, when other more natural phrasing would suffice. This same response was reiterated by two of the form-tutors that I interviewed; staff felt that the sentence starters could be restrictive if a student was already competent but they were a helpful starting point for weaker or even EAL students as a talking scaffold.

Overall, the student interview findings mirror the findings drawn from the audio clips. Whilst there was some improvements in the mid confidence pair's ability to turn take and listen to each other ideas, and some improvements in the exploratory language, turning taking and utterance length of low confidence pair, both the Student E (mid confidence) and Student F (low confidence), stated that the oracy intervention helped them somewhat, particularly referencing enjoyment when 'talking to other people and listening to other people's ideas'. Indeed, both the low confidence and the mid confidence pairs improved in some respect at their ability to talk to one another collaboratively and in some aspects of their exploratory talk.

To further support these conclusions, other form tutors whom were interviewed stated that whilst some of the quieter, less confident students did not improve in terms of their academic expression, their utterance length did improve and they noticed a reduction in their use of

fillers/ stutters in conversations, suggesting that students become more comfortable talking to and interacting with others.

Finally, it should also be noted that all three students and all three members of staff mentioned that discussions would be more engaging or interesting if students could choose their own topics for the debates. Since all of the topics were preselected, this may have affected students' utterance lengths if the topics were not of interest and thus, the students were disengaged. The Year 11 form tutor that I interviewed did state that they felt that their group's oracy had not improved as much as they'd hoped because there were multiple sessions where students were disengaged and more concerned with their upcoming exams, rather than tutor-time sessions.

4.2 Can oracy intervention improve students' confidence with their classroom talk?

To explore students' confidence levels with their classroom talk, the questionnaire data pre and post intervention, alongside the student/ staff interviews generally mimic one another with a shared conclusion that students felt slightly more confident post-intervention than they did before the interventions started.

In the table below, the number of students who strongly agreed/ agreed that they were more confident at expressing their ideas increased slightly after the intervention; this data was reiterated in the final Likert scale, using a matrix question format, increasing the reliability of the data and confirming that I had mitigated the issue of respondent fatigue. Further, in Question 3 of the questionnaire, the number of students who felt that the sentence starters helped their confidence levels increased more significantly.

Table 4

Student Confidence Levels in Questions 1 and 3 Pre and Post Intervention

Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree- Pre Intervention	Strongly Agree/ Agree- Post Intervention

1. During class discussions or debates, how confident are you at expressing your ideas?	18/25	22/26
3. To what extent do you agree that having sentence starters, or examples of how to say your ideas, might help your confidence at speaking up in the classroom?	14/25	19/26

This slight improvement in the students' confidence levels is perhaps not as notable/ significant as the improvements seen in their exploratory talk in the audio clips or the change of tone in their voices to sound more confident, post intervention. This perhaps suggests that whilst certain aspects of the students' exploratory language did improve, this does not necessarily overcome issues that students feel with their own self-confidence at speaking up; this may be more to do with a students' introverted or extroverted personality type, perhaps something that teachers cannot teach but instead, we can only encourage them to practise. Indeed, Student G in the student interviews stated, despite the practice, they still do not like talking to people but they enjoyed the sessions because they 'learn new ideas'. Despite this, the mid confidence student (Student F) said that the interventions have helped them to talk to different people more. However, lots of students expressed their concerns with making mistakes and 'sounding stupid' in the optional long answer section of this question in the questionnaire pre-intervention. Their responses post-intervention repeatedly mentioned 'learning from the mistakes', finding the discussions easier because the teacher 'prepares us beforehand' or 'it's interactive' which several students said helped. Students linked this to being able to use: 'better vocabulary and grammar because we are not thinking about the point and the phrasing on our own'; again, this perhaps implies that the intervention was starting to help students' classroom talk but the numerical data does not look as optimistic because students may not have fully developed the confidence to do it unaided, and thus the teacher's role in that is critical.

Further, in Question 2 of the questionnaire, in response to the question: 'How do whole-class discussions or debates make you feel?', 17/ 25 students stated that it made them feel nervous, very nervous or none of the above before the intervention started, compared to 15/26 after the intervention. This very small reduction may again support the assumption that feeling confident in yourself is something that cannot always be taught but some interventions can make a small difference and perhaps over a lengthier period of time this difference may have been more significant. It should also be noted that in the optional extended response to this question, several students stated that they selected 'none of the above' because they don't mind debates (they don't feel confident or anxious), with several students writing comments relating to the enjoyment of listening to other people's ideas but not necessarily enjoying the process of speaking themselves. This findings were also raised in the staff interviews, where several form tutors stated that they noticed an improvement in students' ability to speak to one another and their enjoyment at listening to what other people have to say, a skill that several form tutors said their tutees lacked after Covid-19 and several lockdowns.

Finally, it should be noted that Student E in the student interview (the confident student) stated the extra oracy sessions did not improve their confidence because they already felt confident but that they 'enjoyed the process of talking to people'; they were the only student in the interview to acknowledge the benefits of good quality oracy in the working world when the students were asked why they think we are doing this in tutor-time. Indeed, this finding was reiterated in the staff interviews where form tutors felt that the confident students led the sessions and were already confident in themselves, thus making the most out of the sessions, whereas the mid- low students were making very small, gradual progress in their confidence levels. This is something challenging for the teacher to balance and will be addressed in the conclusion and implications session of this report.

5. Discussion

5.1 To what extent can oracy intervention encourage students to communicate collaboratively and use more exploratory talk?

The findings in relation to my first research question draw some interesting parallels to the literature and the research explored earlier in the literature review. The findings of the study overall suggest that explicit oracy intervention can aid students to communicate collaboratively and potentially increase their use of exploratory talk, in line with that seen in the work of Mercer (2000). There are perhaps certain elements of the intervention that enabled the students to make some progress in some areas of their talk. As set out by Edwards and Mercer (1987) and Edwards and Furlong (1978), before any productive oracy intervention can take place, it seems necessary for students to have a set of ground rules or 'stage directions' with which they are working towards; this can help students to understand the conventions of productive discussions and, as seen in the findings of this study, help students to move away from confrontational talk to more discursive talk. It seems that the etiquette of talk is not necessarily naturally learned and thus explicit teaching of these rules is essential.

Moreover, contrary to Gove's (2013) belief that group work hinders students' learning and that students should be entirely led by the teacher, these findings support the majority of the literature explored in the literature review, where an oracy language intervention which harnesses thinking, evaluating and expressing your ideas, partially teacher-led and modelled (Alexander, 2004), with a significant chunk of time allocated to students freely interacting with one another under the teacher's supervision, can aid students' exploratory talk. Indeed, Jones (2007), Mortimer and Scott (2003) and Haworth (2001) assert from their findings that teaching oracy in a teacher-led style produces less controlled spoken language; the pre intervention audio recordings in my study mirror this, where both pairs of students lacked control and the ability to take turns in their discussion, presumably due to a lack of freedom given to students historically in their oracy learning. In line with Dastgahian et al's (2020) finding that too much teacher-led instruction leads to less controlled spoken language, the improvements in students'

more controlled language in this study seem to be due to a blend of teacher-led and group work in the intervention sessions.

Additionally, the overall findings concur with the views of Wren (1989), Elsevier (2021) and Mercer et al (2017) who argue for the benefits of preplanned oracy sessions such as The Cambridge Oracy Toolkit, because these findings highlight that replanned oracy sessions can work in making some improvements to students' oracy, though the full effect of this would need to be measured with a longer period of intervention (EEF, 2021). Pre-planned sessions and consideration for the types of questioning and modelling needed within the session may have been a contributing factor in the students' progress in this study too, since the academic talk sentence starters were repeatedly used by the classroom teacher and other students over the sessions, allowing students to learn and then use that exploratory language in their own talk (Kerawalla et al, 2013 and Vanish, 2013).

Despite this, the findings in this study do highlight different outcomes for students with varying confidence levels on their collaborative and exploratory talk. Through the oracy intervention sessions and a process of 'guided participation' (Mercer, 2000), these findings highlight that we can teach students to talk collaboratively regardless of their confidence levels beforehand. As can be seen in the audio recordings of this study, discussion was most fruitful and collaborative when 'exploratory talk' was used rather than disputational or cumulative talk (Littleton et al, 2005) suggesting that this is the style of talk teachers may be wanting to promote in their classrooms and as part of their oracy teaching, a significant move away from the rigidity of the IRF sequence (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). However, in the low confidence pair, whilst utterance length improved, staff interviews and student interviews highlighted that the phrasing of their talk still needed improvement. In line with the Four Strands of Oracy set out by Voice 21, the low confidence pair improved on their emotional and cognitive elements of talk, as seen through more effective turn taking and extended utterance length but the linguistic and physical aspects of talk still need to be refined to reach an optimum form of collaborative, exploratory talk. Whilst the academic talk sentence starters did help students to extend their utterance

length and take turns more formally, the phrasing at times sounded awkward and produced unnatural pauses, to an extent supporting Galton and Williamson (1992), Kettler et al (2001) and Ben-Sasson et al's (2013) view that sometimes children need more control over the way in which they talk and they should be encouraged to take risks. This is a difficult balance to establish, however and perhaps suggests that the sentence starters can be used as an initial building block for the structure of exploratory discussions but they should then be removed to encourage students to speak more naturally, in a more discursive manner. Moreover, the low confidence pair's transition away from confrontational talk to more discursive language complies with the views of James (2007), Mortimer and Scott (2003), Haworth (2001), Mroz et al (2000), Burns et al (2004) and Hibbin (2016) to suggest that oracy teaching needs to move away from entirely teacher-led sessions to ensure that there is opportunity for more playful exploratory talk; it seems that once students were given time and space to explore their talk under preplanned conditions, their talk gradually become more discursive. It is also interesting to note that Burns et al (2004) adds that higher set students are generally given more opportunity to do this and in agreement with this, both the students in the low confidence pairs had lower target grades and lower class sets for all of their core subjects, compared to the mid confidence pair; this may imply that perhaps their lower set classes were given less opportunity to practise their oracy skills in a less controlled environment, explaining the disparity between the two pairs' quality of oracy pre intervention. Finally, the view that Grice (1974) proposes that turning taking can be modelled and taught to improve students' oracy is reiterated in the low confidence pair where turn taking improved significantly and Student B's interjections of Student A's talk reduced from ten interruptions to one interruption in a five minute audio, pre and post intervention.

On the other hand, the mid confidence pair in this study presented extended ideas from the pre recordings of the intervention and thus, their utterance length did not improve as greatly as a result of the oracy intervention. Yet, in line with Mercer's (2000) view that explicit teaching can enrich students' ability to utilise different types of talk, the mid confidence pairs' ability to use more exploratory talk (building on one another's ideas and therefore listening to the previous

person's point) is undeniable from the findings, thus showing that the social benefits of teaching the conventions of effective talk explicitly can be seen regardless of the initial ability of the pupils at the start of the intervention (Jackson, 2014 and Newberry, 2012).

Despite this, contradicting the findings of the low confidence pair, the academic talk sentence starters were seen to hinder the students who already found sentence construction and expression of their ideas a more natural process. As seen in the findings of this study, student responses became far more exploratory but their overreliance on the sentence stems made the conversation sound too rigid and repetitive (the phrase 'to counter your point' was just five times in just one five minute audio), thus highlighting that students need more control over the way in which they speak once the initial process of modelling and teacher-led learning has taken place (Kettler et al, 2001 and Ben-Sasson et al, 2013). Whilst none of the recorded participants in this study were SEN or EAL, it would be interesting to further explore Ben-Sassson et al's assertion that the same is found to be true for those with ASD and EAL too.

Finally, whilst a body of research argues that explicit oracy intervention enhances student engagement and higher-order thinking (Rojas-Drummond et al, 2003; Mercer et al, 1999 and Sutherland, 2006), in this study, students made progress in their higher order thinking, but participant engagement varied based on the tutor group and the students' individual perceptions of the oracy programme. Firstly, in the student questionnaires and the staff interviews, students appeared to be more engaged when they could choose their own topic for the debating sessions. Notably, several students gave examples of the types of topics that they'd like to debate, arguably more complex and contentious to the ones that were preselected on the school's scheme of work; this may affirm Galton and Williamson's (1992) argument that effective oracy sessions should embed significant challenge, with low control discourse and risk-taking needed to stimulate the learners (Galton and Williamson, 1992). However, several staff expressed some concerns with teaching and leading sessions on such contentious topics, through fear of 'saying the wrong thing', thus highlighting the importance of staff CPD and training for this to be effectively implemented. Secondly, several students expressed a desire to

work with different students in the classroom but they wanted these pairs or groups to be pre-selected by the teacher; these findings support the need for teacher input and planning at a housekeeping level, as was too found in the findings of Coultas and Valerie (2005) where small groups were found to be preferable and more manageable for learners and Rojas-Drummond and Mercer (2004), where a carefully pre-planned blend of teacher-led discourse and peer group interaction was vital. Despite this, as found in the Voice 21 2016 impact report, having a set of clearer oracy outcomes as benchmarks may help the school to evaluate the effectiveness of the program going forward.

5.2 Can oracy intervention improve students' confidence with their classroom talk?

Whilst there is a lack of research and literature exploring the direct relationship between oracy competence and students' confidence levels, the findings from the questionnaire and interview data, alongside the audio recordings of the paired students in this study demonstrate a slight increase in the students' confidence levels as a result of explicit oracy intervention sessions. The questionnaire findings, however, only show a small increase from 18/25 students pre intervention to 22/26 students post intervention feeling confident or very confident with their oracy skills, not as significant as the change in the students' exploratory talk shown in the post-intervention audio recordings. Whilst Mallon et al (2020) were unable to find a direct link between students' confidence levels and their oral competence, these findings, alongside those of Jones and Hodson (2012), could be an indication that children's language development can be directly improved through improvements to a child's oral competence even if they are listening to others, which in turn can develop a child's confidence to speak up in discussions.

However, crucial to this, students' optional long-answer responses to the questionnaire questions revealed that they only felt more confident when the teacher carefully modelled ideas to be used in the debates themselves because students were scared of making mistakes. When thinking about the teacher's role in facilitating and modelling talk, these findings align with those asserted by Mercer (2000) and those found by Chaplin et al (2003) and Alexander et

al (2004), where a progress of 'guided participation' must be used initially and then 'Talk Lessons' should consist of a careful blend of teacher-led, whole-class sessions and talk groups, to ensure that students are not constantly supervised (Mercer, 2000, p.162).

Further, whilst a significant number of students remained unconfident pre and post oracy intervention sessions, their extended qualitative responses to the questionnaire indicated that, whilst they did not necessarily feel more confident at speaking to others, they did enjoy interacting with other students more and listening to what other people have to say, as was found to be the case in a review of Voice 21 in 2016. This significant finding can go some way to argue that oracy interventions can have social benefits for students (Mercer et al, 2004 and Newman, 2020), a skill that schools need to be particularly concerned with after a two year long pandemic. In agreement with Jackson (2014) and Newberry (2012), these oracy intervention findings seem to suggest that whilst we cannot teach all students to want to speak up in every lesson and transform them into extroverted individuals, we can aid their social skills and create a more social democratic classroom. It may be argued from these findings that taking the time to teach students the basic conventions of talking (Edwards and Mercer, 1987) and creating a classroom environment that is relaxed, safe and teacher-managed (Masada and Defero, 2014) can aid students with their social interactions, even if they aren't the student naturally leading all of the conversations. This, in turn, will eventually have significant community cohesive benefits for schools, as asserted by headteacher De Botton (2021), and encourage a culture of students wanting to think and learn together. By promoting and teaching this style of learning, that which Mercer (2013) defines as 'interthinking', students may overtime engage more in their learning and become more confident thinkers, listeners and possibly in time, talkers.

These findings were reaffirmed in the staff and student interviews, where students and other teachers noticed a generally more accepting culture of listening to others and a willingness to move to and speak with other students. Several members of staff stated that they felt this would have significant academic benefits for students, because akin to the views of Kotler, Wegerif and Levoi (2001), staff acknowledged the academic demands of the current curriculum

and the importance of oral competence for students to engage with their learning and meet those demands. Moreover, the student questionnaire data and interview discussed the academic benefits of high-quality classroom talk. Seven students mentioned the fact that the oracy sessions had taught them new vocabulary, particularly how to use these new words in a sentence (Macleod et al, 2007). Whilst students may not have acknowledged this for themselves, research such as Storch and Whitehurst (2002), acknowledges how this vocabulary learning can then have a positive effect on their reading acquisition too. Five other students mentioned the benefits they felt it had had on their understanding of some grammatical features too. Contrary to Hibbins (2016) belief that oracy needs to be taught with less of a consideration for literacy-based outcomes, it seems that the students in this study are very self-aware of the literacy-based outcomes and this can be used as a buy-in for students to engage with the tutor-time programme. In line with the findings of several studies, students and staff seemed to be touching on the very idea that students with better oracy skills have better literacy too, therefore helping students to access a wider range of the curriculum and obtain better academic attainment overall (Smith and Foley, 2015, Neville, 1988 and Newman, 2020).

However, whilst some research in the literature review noticed that where students had more effective verbal communication skills, they were able to reap the benefits of more seminar-style learning at university level (Heron et al, 2021), in this study, after the five months of interventions, students made it very clear that they still felt unconfident doing the sessions unaided. This, again, highlights the teacher's role in facilitating the learning at this stage in the secondary school students' oral development. The way in which the intervention gradually removes the teacher's level of input as students go into the upper years of secondary school is something that my current institution will need to consider carefully in their alteration of the whole school intuitive for next year.

Moreover, a key finding in the literature review that did not necessarily come to light in the findings of this study, is relating to Myhill's (2002) research addressing gender imbalances in the classroom. Finding that boys typically dominate classroom discussion with less academic benefit

than high-achieving girls who engage in classroom discussion, Myhill argues that creating oral competence in all students, particularly low-confidence girls, creates a climate of more 'consensual learning' and could start to address concerns arising over the gender attainment gap (Myhill, 2002, p.350). My current school are very conscious of the gender attainment gap and the findings of this study with a mixture of male and female participants, did not necessarily raise any concerns regarding the unequal progression of the male and female participants in the study, nor did any students or staff touch upon the boys typically dominating classroom discussion before they broke off into their pairs. Instead, the extraneous link was found to be that students with more confidence, typically higher target grades and then higher sets for their subjects, regardless of their gender, dominated classroom discussion. However, Myhill's view that a climate of 'consensual learning' creates more opportunity for all students to learn is supported by these findings.

Finally, this study did not necessarily set out to explore staffs' confidence levels when teaching oracy but this finding cannot be ignored from all of the three staff interviews conducted. Akin to the findings of Jones and Deborah (2017), the staff interviewed in this study were frank about the fact that there are contentious topics that they would not feel entirely confident in leading a session on. Several staff referred to terms that are reflective of a more progressive society but terms that they have not necessary grown up using such as 'queer' or 'gender neutral'; it would seem that staff need, and would like, a greater level of CPD and training on how to deliver oracy/ debating sessions on such topics, to ensure that staff can cover and model these kinds of challenging and contentious topics in a way that will engage the students in their learning and encourage fruitful exploratory talk. It is notable that in the EEF's review of dialogic teaching in 76 schools, the teachers received thorough training beforehand (EEF, 2017). Without this kind of training, several oracy intervention sessions run the risk of being quite ineffective and futile. Whilst this study did not explicitly set out to explore this, this is something that will inevitably need to be considered in the alterations for my school's 2022 to 2023 oracy programme.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Research Questions

6.1.1 To what extent can oracy intervention encourage students to communicate collaboratively and use more exploratory talk?

Using Mercer's (2000) four categories of classroom talk as a foundation, with exploratory talk being the benchmark in this study, the findings of this small scale study appear to evidence that a blend of teacher-led and student-led pre-planned oracy interventions can improve the quality of students' exploratory talk, namely: their utterance length; turn taking skills; listening skills and reduce their use of disputational language. Crucial to this, however, is a careful blend of teacher-led instruction and modelling of the rules and etiquette of paired or group talk, coupled with significant time for student-led work and freedom to explore different types of talk independently. This blend of learning is a difficult balance to establish and the findings of this study suggests that the academic talk sentence starters can be used as an initial building block for the structure of discussions, particularly for less confident students, but they should then be removed over time to encourage students to speak more naturally, in a more discursive manner, particularly if students become over reliant on them, or if they are capable of full discussions without them initially.

Regardless of the participants' initial confidence levels, the data from this small scale study pre and post intervention fits into a wide body of research that sheds light on the benefits of teaching oracy explicitly on: students' academic attainment, their social skills and community cohesion as a whole, though the full effects of this would need to be measured over a longer period of time, using a larger sample of students. It should also be acknowledged that the effects of the interventions used in this study may have been greater in my school context if the students were given more autonomy over the topics that they debated in their oracy sessions.

6.1.2 Can oracy intervention improve students' confidence with their classroom talk?

Whilst there is a lack of research and literature exploring the direct relationship between oral competence and students' confidence levels, the findings from the questionnaire and interview data, alongside the audio recordings of the paired students in this study, demonstrate a slight increase in the students' confidence levels as a result of explicit oracy intervention sessions.

Through the students' questionnaire data and interview data, it is apparent in this study that students still lack confidence because they are at times fearful of making mistakes. However, students stated that this was mitigated when the process was discussed and modelled beforehand, reiterating the importance of 'guided participation' and the teacher's role in building students' confidence levels at talking in the classroom (Mercer, 2000).

Moreover, whilst a significant number of students remained unsecure after the oracy intervention sessions, their extended qualitative responses to the questionnaire indicated that, whilst they did not necessarily feel more confident at speaking to others, they did enjoy interacting with other students more and listening to what other people have to say. These findings may show that explicit oral language interventions over a five month period will not necessarily transform students into extroverts but oracy intervention can enhance students' social and communication skills, and the effects of these may be seen over an extended period of time. These social benefits of teaching oracy may, overtime, enhance curriculum engagement and academic attainment overall. Additionally, over time the school may notice a climate of more 'consensual learning' and community cohesion (Myhill, 2002, p.350).

Finally, whilst this study did not explicitly set out to explore staffs' confidence levels, the findings from staff interviews raises an important point about staff receiving sufficient training to deal with contentious and progressive topics in classroom discussion. This is something that will need to be addressed in the alterations for the school's oracy programme for next year, to ensure that staff and students feel safe to express and model their ideas in a productive, inclusive and fruitful way.

6.2 Implications and Future Practice

In my presentation of the findings of the study to the school and during the adaptation of next year's oracy lessons, working alongside the tutor teams, we will reflect upon and implement some changes to the school's oracy tutor time programme in light of several of these findings. First and foremost, we will continue to allocate 30 minutes of tutor time a week to oracy sessions since the study highlights the short-term benefits of the sessions and over time, the long-term benefits may be measured too. However, the following alterations will be made: a review of the number of, and the complexity of, the academic talk sentence starters, considering which students they are most suitable for and when; a session at the start of the next academic school year where students choose the topics that they want to debate; implementation of training sessions for staff on modelling high-quality oracy, ensuring that staff insist on correct usage and full sentences in oracy discussions, and finally, training sessions for staff on how to cover any contentious topics in classroom talk. Developments are also underway to create a set of clearer planned oracy outcomes, so that we can use these as benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of the school program next year.

In addition to this, we, as an English team are looking to make alterations to our practice in light of these findings. We will begin by embedding some sentence stems for targeted questions and think, pair, share in our schemes of work, to ensure that classroom talk is purposeful. Moreover, to ensure that students are practising these debating skills outside of tutor time, once a week per class, I am going to trial starter debates in my English lessons. Based on the chapter or topic that we have discussed in the previous lesson, there will be a statement on the board for students to discuss in pairs using the provided sentence stems to encourage collaborative, exploratory talk. These slides will be emailed out to all staff in the department and covered in the September inset day to see if other departments could embed oracy teaching into their teaching too. Some further research to see if embedding oracy skills more explicitly into all subjects has an impact in aligning the quality of students' written experience with the quality of their spoken language would be useful and essential to ascertain the importance of scaffolding and teaching oracy skills explicitly.

In time, I and the school's tutor team may need to review the long-term effects of teaching oracy on students' academic engagement, community cohesion and literacy–based outcomes. Since this study did not encounter this but a plethora of research looks at the impact of gender-dominated classrooms, some further research looking at the impact of certain gender dominated classrooms in terms of classroom talk, would be interesting to see if this significantly alters the academic attainment for male and female students and if so, how this can be addressed to close the gender-attainment gap.

After years of conflicted research and government initiatives which have overlooked and side-lined oracy, it seems that for the first time, oracy is being viewed as an essential skill that needs to be taught to students, inextricably bound to students' literacy-based outcomes, students' confidence levels and their academic attainment overall. The academic demands of the current curriculum requires our students to have oral competence, to engage with their learning and meet these demands. Not only this, but this study, and a plethora of studies explored in the literature review, continue to remind us as educational professionals that oracy is not only an educational imperative but a social imperative too, if we are striving for social democracy and community cohesion.

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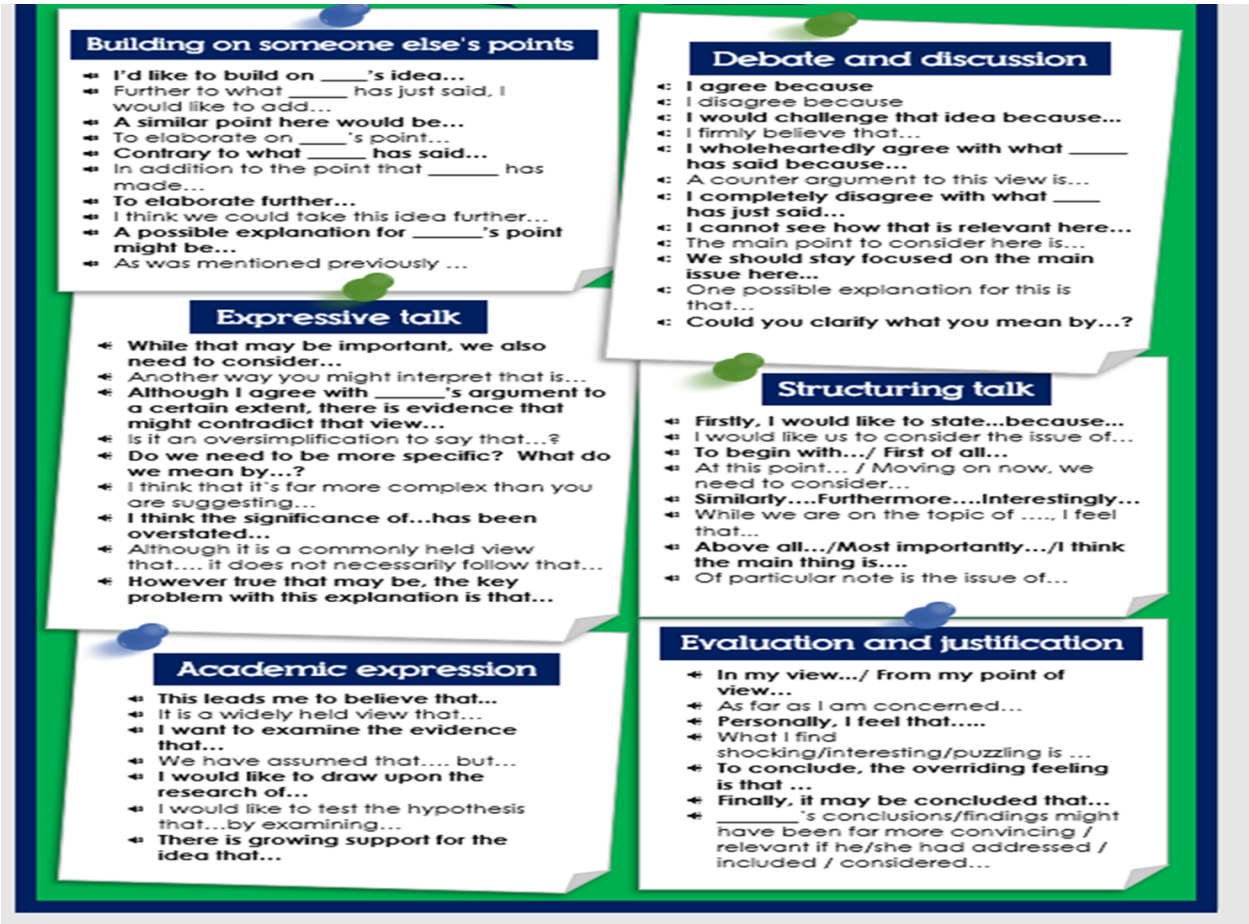
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8. Appendices

Appendix A- Academic Talk Sentence Starters



Building on someone else's points

- **I'd like to build on _____'s idea...**
- Further to what _____ has just said, I would like to add...
- **A similar point here would be...**
- To elaborate on _____'s point...
- **Contrary to what _____ has said...**
- In addition to the point that _____ has made...
- **To elaborate further...**
- I think we could take this idea further...
- **A possible explanation for _____'s point might be...**
- As was mentioned previously ...

Debate and discussion

- **I agree because**
- I disagree because
- **I would challenge that idea because...**
- I firmly believe that...
- **I wholeheartedly agree with what _____ has said because...**
- A counter argument to this view is...
- **I completely disagree with what _____ has just said...**
- **I cannot see how that is relevant here...**
- The main point to consider here is...
- **We should stay focused on the main issue here...**
- One possible explanation for this is that...
- **Could you clarify what you mean by...?**

Expressive talk

- **While that may be important, we also need to consider...**
- Another way you might interpret that is...
- **Although I agree with _____'s argument to a certain extent, there is evidence that might contradict that view...**
- Is it an oversimplification to say that...?
- **Do we need to be more specific? What do we mean by...?**
- I think that it's far more complex than you are suggesting...
- **I think the significance of...has been overstated...**
- Although it is a commonly held view that.... it does not necessarily follow that...
- **However true that may be, the key problem with this explanation is that...**

Structuring talk

- **Firstly, I would like to state...because...**
- I would like us to consider the issue of...
- **To begin with.../ First of all...**
- At this point... / Moving on now, we need to consider...
- **Similarly....Furthermore....Interestingly...**
- While we are on the topic of ...., I feel that...
- **Above all.../Most importantly.../I think the main thing is....**
- Of particular note is the issue of...

Academic expression

- **This leads me to believe that...**
- It is a widely held view that...
- **I want to examine the evidence that...**
- We have assumed that.... but...
- **I would like to draw upon the research of...**
- I would like to test the hypothesis that...by examining...
- **There is growing support for the idea that...**

Evaluation and justification

- **In my view.../ From my point of view...**
- As far as I am concerned...
- **Personally, I feel that.....**
- What I find shocking/interesting/puzzling is ...
- **To conclude, the overriding feeling is that ...**
- **Finally, it may be concluded that...**
- _____'s conclusions/findings might have been far more convincing / relevant if he/she had addressed / included / considered...

Appendix B- Pre and Post Intervention Student Questionnaire

MSc Part 3: 10 Minute Questionnaire

Research Focus: How confident are you at speaking up during class discussions or debates?

Instructions:
Please do not put your name on this questionnaire; your responses are completely anonymous, unless there is information in your responses which I believe may put you or others at risk.

There are 4 compulsory questions and you must select one answer per question by circling your answer, except on question 4, where you will put a cross in the appropriate box.

All questions are compulsory, unless it says 'OPTIONAL' before the question.

You will complete the same questionnaire just before the Easter holidays, after some paired oracy tutor-time sessions.

You may withdraw from completing this questionnaire at any time during the tutor-time session and another task will be given to you. However, once your responses have been analysed and anonymised, you will not be able to withdraw your data.

1. During class discussions or debates, how confident are you at expressing your ideas?

Very confident

Confident

Not confident

Very unconfident

OPTIONAL: Could you briefly explain your answer to the previous question?

……..
……
……
……
……..

2. How do whole-class discussions or debates make you feel?

Very nervous

Nervous

Confident

Very confident

None of the above

OPTIONAL: If you selected ‘none of the above’ to the previous question, or if you have another feeling about whole-class discussions or debates, could you briefly explain how whole-class debates make you feel?

……..
……
……
……
……..

3. To what extent do you agree that having sentence starters, or examples of how to say your ideas, might help your confidence at speaking up in the classroom?

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

OPTIONAL: Could you briefly explain your answer to the previous question?

……..
……
……
……
……..

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? **Please put a cross (x) in one box per statement.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am confident when I speak up in class discussions or debates.				
I feel nervous when I have to speak during whole-class discussions or debates.				
Some sentence starters would help me to phrase my ideas better verbally.				

Appendix C- Student Interview Questions

1. In your opinion, do you think that there are any benefits of completing oracy practise in tutor-time?

Prompt question: Do you think that the sessions have improved your confidence?

Why/ why not?

2. Is there anything that you would change about the oracy sessions?

3. Why do you think that we are teaching oracy explicitly in schools?

Appendix D- Staff Interview Questions

1) Do you think that the oracy tutor time sessions helped your tutor group to expand on their verbal reasoning?

2) Do you think that there were any benefits of teaching oracy intervention in those tutor time sessions?

Prompt question: Do you think that any students gained confidence, as a result of the oracy tutor time programme?

3) Do you think that there were any issues with teaching oracy intervention in those tutor time sessions?

Appendix E- Completed CUREC 1a Form

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC)

CUREC 1A Form for Application form for research projects in the social sciences and humanities with less complex ethical issues

The University of Oxford places a high value on the knowledge, expertise, and integrity of its members and their ability to conduct research to high standards of scholarship and ethics. The research ethics review process has been established to ensure that research involving human participants is conducted in a way that respects the dignity, rights, and welfare of participants, and minimises risk to participants, researchers, third parties, and to the University itself. It is assumed that all members of the University will take their responsibilities and obligations seriously, and will ensure that their research involving human participants is conducted according to established principles and good practice in their field and in accordance, where appropriate, with legal requirements.

Before completing this form, please refer to the guidance and flowchart on the Research Support website. Only type-written forms will be accepted. Completed application forms should be emailed, along with relevant supporting documents, to your Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) or to ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk from your ox.ac.uk email address.

Please contact your DREC or the SSH IDREC if you have any questions about completing this form or the review process.

SECTION A: Filter for CUREC 2 application		
This section determines whether the application for ethics review should be made using the this form (CUREC 1A) or the CUREC 2 form (for research with more complex ethical issues).		
Please indicate with an 'X'.	**Yes**	**No**
1. Does the research involve the deception of participants?	☐	☒
2. Are the research participants vulnerable in the context of the research, or classed as people whose ability to give free and informed consent is in question? For example, ● Participants aged 16 or under (also answer question A5); ● Participants aged 16 – 18 (refer to competent youths for guidance); ● adults at risk; Note the University's Safeguarding Guidance and Code of Practice and its implications for researchers involving young people or adults at risk.	☒	☐
3. By taking part in the research, will participants be at risk of criminal prosecution or significant harm?	☐	☒
4. Does your research raise issues relevant to the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (the Prevent Duty), which seeks to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism? Best Practice Guidance 07 on the Prevent Duty provides further guidance.	☐	☒

If you answered **'No'** to all the questions above, go to Section B. If you answered **'Yes'** to any question above, continue to question 5 below.		
5. Is your project covered by a CUREC Approved Procedure?	☒	☐
If yes, list the CUREC Approved Procedure(s) you will follow	**Modus Operandi for the MSc (Learning and Teaching). I.E AP15**	
If you answered '**Yes**' to ANY of questions 1-4, and answered '**No**' to question 5, **stop** completing this form and do not submit it for ethical review. You will instead need to submit a CUREC 2 application form. If you answered '**Yes**' to **any** of questions 1-4, and your project is covered by an Approved Procedure, **go on to Section B**. If more than one Approved Procedure applies, contact the SSH IDREC or your DREC for advice on whether a CUREC 2 form should be submitted instead.		

SECTION B: Researchers		
1. Name of Principal Investigator or student's supervisor	[redacted]	
2. Department or Institute	Department of Education	
3. University of Oxford telephone number	[redacted]	
4. University of Oxford email address	[redacted]	
Copy and paste the following six rows as necessary to complete for each additional researcher who will be involved in this study, including student(s) and those external to the University.		
5. Name of researcher or student	[redacted]	
6. Department or Institute	Education	
7. University of Oxford telephone number	[redacted]	
8. University of Oxford email address	[redacted]	
9. Role in research	Researcher/ Teacher	
10. Degree programme, if student research	MSc Learning and Teaching	
The whole research team		
11. Have the researchers undertaken research ethics and integrity training?	**Yes** ☒	**No** ☐
12. Please provide details of any research ethics and integrity training undertaken, including the dates of the training. Alternatively state relevant research experience.	Research methods training that covered ethics during Part 2 of the MSc, and discussions with my supervisor.	
13. State any conflicts of interest and explain how these will be addressed.	My dual role as teacher and researcher. Students will submit the questionnaire anonymously and online, to address this. I will investigate my topic in some classes that I do	

	not teach, to eradicate my dual role as teacher and researcher.

SECTION C: The research project	
1. Title of the research project	
1) 'An exploration of the impact of oracy intervention on the quality of Key Stage Four students' classroom talk and students' confidence levels when talking in the classroom.'	
2. Anticipated start date of the aspect of the research project involving human participants and/ or personal data (**dd/mm/yy**).	26/11/21
3. Anticipated research end date (**dd/mm/yy**).	01/04/22
4. Provide a brief lay summary of the aims and objectives of the research. This should cover the questions it will answer and any potential benefits. (max 300 words)	

Aim: To explore the impact of explicit oracy intervention on the quality of classroom talk and subsequently, students' confidence when talking in the classroom.

Research Questions:
-Can oracy intervention help students to expand on their ideas and improve the quality of their classroom talk?
-Can oracy intervention improve students' confidence with their classroom talk?

The Intervention:
-30 minute tutor time oracy sessions are a mandated whole-school initiative which I am evaluating as part of my MSc research.
-Each week, students read the statement and watch a video or read information which provides them with some information about the topic. Students choose the topic from a list of topics on the board. Students are put into pairs (one for and one against the topic on the board). Using academic talk sentence starters (in their planners), students will practise debating their topic for 5 minutes and then they will conduct a formal debate for five minutes. I will record the formal debate for the pre and post intervention.
-8 interventions will take place where students will be put into pairs and they will debate for or against the topic, using their academic talk sentence starters in their planners.

-What am I measuring?
1. The number of words that they speak (length of verbal reasoning)
2. Students' confidence levels

-Benefits: The project will deepen the school's understanding of the ways in which we can teach oracy and promote academic talk in the classroom; in turn, this may contribute towards the development of ways of improving oracy in the school in the future.

5. Please indicate the methods to be used (indicate with an '**X**'):	
Analysis of existing records	☐
Snowball sampling (recruiting through contacts of existing participants)	☐
Use of casual or local workers e.g. interpreters (refer to guidance in BPG 01: Researcher safety)	☐
Participant observation	x☐
Covert observation	☐
Observation of specific organisational practices	☐
Participant completes questionnaire in hard copy	x☐
Participant completes online questionnaire or other online task (refer to guidance in BPG 06: Internet-mediated research)	☐
Using social media to recruit or interact with participants (refer to guidance in BPG 06: Internet-mediated research)	☐
Participant performs paper and pencil task	☐
Participant performs verbal or aural task (e.g. for linguistic study)	x☐
Focus group	☐
Interview (refer to guidance in BPG 10: Conducting research interviews)	x☐
Audio recording of participant (you will generally need specific consent from participants for this)	x☐
Video recording of participant (you will generally need specific consent from participants for this)	☐
Photography of participant (you will generally need specific consent from participants for this)	☐
Others (please specify below)	☐
1. Provide a brief summary of the research design and methods. What will research participants be asked to do? (max 300 words) Please also submit a copy of the questions participants will be asked, if applicable, or some information about the sorts of topics that will be covered.	

Pre-Intervention
-Four question questionnaires (students' confidence levels). Pairs for the recording will be selected based on the questionnaire data.
-During the first two 30 minute tutor time oracy sessions, I will record two pairs of students within my tutor group who are: quiet and low in confidence and mid confidence.
-This recording will be analysed for the number of words spoken by each student.
-Recording will be done on MS Teams, in line with the school policy.
-In line with the school's policy, I do not need to obtain written consent because my research is part of our everyday educational provision.

Intervention
-30 minute tutor time oracy sessions, as part of the school curriculum. Students read the statement and watch a video or read information which provides them with some information about the topic. Students choose the topic from a list of topics on the board. Students are put into pairs (one for and one against the statement on the board). Using academic talk sentence starters (in their planners), students will practise debating their topic for 5 minutes and then they will conduct a formal debate for five minutes.
-8 interventions will take place where students will be put into pairs and they will debate for or against the topic, using their academic talk sentence starters in their planners.

Post-Intervention
-On the 9th and 10th oracy session, I will record the same two pairs of students within my tutor group who are: quiet and low in confidence, and mid confidence.
-This recording will be analysed for the number of words spoken by each student.
-To measure students' confidence levels, the same questionnaire from the pre-test will be distributed.
-Follow up interviews may be used for any students with interesting questionnaire data.
-To gather staff perspectives on the impact of the oracy intervention in other KS4 classrooms, I will interview two other members of staff about their students' experiences with the oracy intervention. One tutor will be a Year 10 Humanities teacher and one tutor will be a Year 11 PE teacher.

2. List the location(s) where the research will be conducted, including any other countries.	[redacted]		
3. Clarify which parts of the research will be conducted in-person and which will take place remotely, e.g. online.	Pupil recording and observation- in person Questionnaires- in person Interviews- in person		
4. If your research involves fieldwork or travel and your department requires a travel risk assessment, will you have completed and returned a risk assessment form beforehand? Please indicate with an '**X**'. (This must be approved by your department before you travel. If you are travelling overseas, you are advised to take out University travel insurance.) Refer to guidance available from your Department, the Safety Office, the		Yes	☐
		No	☐
		Not required in this instance	X

Social Sciences Division, and the Humanities Division, and on travel for University business.		
5. In the case of international or collaborative research, explain how you will address any ethical issues specific to the local context. Please provide details of the local review, approval or permission obtained or required. Refer to the BPG 16: Social science research conducted outside the UK. If there will be no local review, explain why not. Please also address any physical or psychological risks for Oxford researchers and local fieldworkers in Section G.		
N/A		
6. Name of departmental/ peer reviewer (if applicable)		
7. External organisation funding the research and grant reference (if applicable)		
8. Please refer to the CUREC Best Practice Guidance and list any that have been used to develop your research.	BPG04- Competent Youths BPG06- Internet-Mediated Research BPG09- Data collection, protection and management BPG10- Conducting Research Interviews	

SECTION D: Recruitment of research participants	
1. Number of participants	90
2. How was the number of participants decided?	I will be gathering data from three tutor groups all in KS4, to measure the impact of oracy on KS4 students, so I need three classes of 30 (Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11). I will also interview two other members of staff attached to those tutor groups.
3. Age range of participants	13-40
4. Inclusion criteria	KS4 students (Year 9, Year 10 or Year 11). Tutors of KS4 students
5. Exclusion criteria	KS3 students Non-verbal students

6. Indicate with an '**X**' all intended recruitment methods **Please submit copies of the recruitment material that will be used, e.g. advertisement text, introductory email text.**	Poster advert	☐
	Flyer	☐
	Email circulation	☐
	Social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)	☐
	Website	☐
	In-person approach	X ☐
	Snowball sampling	☐
	Recruitment sites (e.g. Mechanical Turk)	☐
	Existing contacts or volunteer database	☐
	Other (please specify):	☐
7. How will potential participants be identified and approached?	Students will be asked during my tutor time sessions with them. Students will also be aware of the research taking place due to the information letter that will be sent home.	
8. Will informed consent be obtained from the research participants or their parents/ guardians? If not, please explain why not.	Written consent will not be obtained by the parents/ guardians of the students because the intervention is part of the everyday educational provision that the school provides. In line with the school's policy, I am able to record my students on MS Teams for educational purposes without written consent, as long as the recording is deleted after transcription and it is not shared with anyone else. Email evidence from my school's GDPR manager has been saved to support this. Additionally, students will consent by choosing to take part in the questionnaire and I will obtain written consent from any students that I interview.	
9. For each activity or group of participants, explain how informed consent will be obtained from the participants themselves and/ or their parents/ guardians, if applicable. How will their consent be recorded?	1.Recorded oracy intervention Written consent will not be obtained by the parents/ guardians of the students because the intervention is part of the everyday educational provision that the school provides. In line with the school's policy, I am able to record my students on MS Teams for educational purposes without written consent, as long as the recording is deleted after transcription and it is not shared with anyone else. Email evidence from my school's GDPR manager has been saved to support this.	

	2. Pre and post intervention questionnaires Students will consent by choosing to take part in the questionnaire but they will be notified of their right to withdraw and an alternative task will be provided for those students during tutor-time. 3. Student/staff interventions I will obtain written consent and save these consent forms onto my school's OneDrive, before attaching these documents to the Appendices of my assignment.
10. Provide details of any payments and incentives and the rationale for providing these. Further guidance in Best Practice Guidance: 05 Payments and incentives in research.	N/A
11. Describe how participants • may withdraw from the study • may withdraw any personal information they have provided from the study State any limits to withdrawal, for example once the data has been anonymised or at some other specified stage prior to publication. Make sure participants are aware of any withdrawal limits.	Participants may withdraw from the audio recording by sitting on the other side of the classroom, where the audio recorder cannot pick up their sound. Students may withdraw at any point during the intervention sessions. Students may choose to complete the questionnaire or interview. Students may not withdraw their data once it has been anonymised and analysed.

SECTION E: Research data

All information provided by participants is considered research data for the purpose of this form. Any research data from which participants can be identified is known as personal data; any personal data which is sensitive is considered special category data. Management of personal data, either directly or via a third party, must comply with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, as set out in the University's Guidance on Data Protection and Research.

In answering the questions below, please also consider the points raised in the Data Protection Checklist and Data Protection Screening Assessment and whether, for higher-risk data processing, a separate Data Protection Impact Assessment may also be required for the research. Advice on research data management and security is available from Research Data Oxford and your local IT department. Advice on data protection is available from the Information Compliance team.

For guidance on conducting internet-mediated research, refer to CUREC's Best Practice Guidance 06: Internet-mediated research.			
1. What data will be collected? (Indicate with an '**X**')			
Screening documents	☐	Task results (e.g. questionnaires, diaries)	x☐
Consent records (e.g., written consent forms, audio-recorded consent, assent forms)	x☐	IP addresses (refer to Best Practice Guidance 09: Data collection, protection and management for guidance)	☐
Contact details for the purpose of this research only	☐	Field notes	☐
Contact details for future use (guidance)	☐	Photographs	☐
Opt-out forms	☐	Information about the health of the participant (including mental health)	☐
Audio recordings	x☐	Previously collected (secondary) data	☐
Video recordings	☐	Data already in the public domain. Specify the source of the data:	☐
Transcript of audio/ video recordings	x☐	Other, please specify:	☐

2. During the course of the research, where will **each type of** research data be stored?	Nexus 365 OneDrive for Business, SharePoint, University servers). Protected USB drive.		
3. Who will have access to the research data during the project?	Student and staffs' names will be anonymised in my data by referring to them as 'Student A', 'Teacher B' etc. My supervisor, [redacted] , at the University of Oxford, will have access to my data. My school, particularly our teaching and learning lead, will have access to my anonymised write up.		
4. Please complete this section if your research involves the use of secondary (i.e. previously collected) data.	**Please indicated with an 'X'.**	**Yes**	**No**
	Are data access agreements in place for access to and use of this secondary data? (If so, please attach these.)	☐	☐
	Did the individuals agree that their data could be used for this purpose?	☐	☐
	Could anyone (including members of the research team) link the data back to an individual or individuals? If this is a	☐	☐

	possibility, please explain how the associated ethical issues will be addressed:	
5. How do you intend to share the research data at the end of the project?	Depositing in a specialist data centre or archive	☐
	Submitting to a journal to support a publication	☐
	Depositing in an institutional repository	x☐
	Dissemination via a project or institutional website	☐
	No plans to share the data	☐
	Other (please specify):	x☐
	Sharing findings verbally with the teaching staff at school.	
6. How do you intend to report and disseminate the results of the research? (Indicate with an 'X')	Thesis publication	☐
	Publication in a peer reviewed journal	☐
	Publicly available report	☐
	Conference presentation	x☐
	Publication on a website	☐
	Report to a research funder	☐
	Providing participants with a lay summary of the results	☐
	Submission for academic assessment	x☐
	Other (please specify):	☐

7. Explain what will happen to the data at the end of the research project.
This question must be answered for each type of data, including completed consent forms.

I will store the research data safely for three years after my final assessment submission. The data will be stored on my school's OneDrive account.

The personal data from my report will be destroyed after three years if it does not hold academic value. In order to comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act, all identifiable data will be removed from laptops and desktops by clearing the items into the recycle bin and then clearing the recycle bin, so that it is not recoverable.

SECTION F: Protection of research participants and their personal data		
1. How identifiable will the participants be from the **research outputs**?	Directly identifiable from the information included	☐
	Pseudonymised/ indirectly identifiable	x ☐

(Indicate with an 'X')	Not identifiable – data is anonymous	☐
	Other, please specify:	☐
2. To what extent will the **data** be de-identified? How identifiable will any individuals be from the research data? Describe any measures you will take towards assuring confidentiality, potential risks to confidentiality.	Student and staffs' names will be anonymised in my data by referring to them as 'Student A', 'Teacher B' etc.	
3. How will you ensure that third parties (e.g., interpreters and transcribers) are aware of and adhere to the measures described in this form?	If third parties view my research, then confidentiality agreements will be given to them and signed beforehand.	

SECTION G: Risks and benefits of the research
1. Will the research involve topics that could be considered sensitive? If so: a. Please provide more detail or supporting information (such as the interview questions) to show the range of questions; b. Explain what steps will be taken to reduce risk of distress; c. Consider seeking advice from within your Department or from the ethics committee including whether the application might benefit from additional ethics review (e.g., via a CUREC 2 application).
Some questionnaire and interview questions will get students to discuss their confidence levels as a result of the oracy intervention. Some students, who are low in confidence, may touch upon information that is personal and sensitive to them. In order to mitigate the effects of this, I will use my relationship with the students to reassure them when they speak. In case any students make any disclosures during the interviews or questionnaires, I will also remind the students that the data will not remain anonymous or confidential because I have a duty to pass on that information using CPoms (the school's safeguarding platform). In order to ensure that I am not burdening the students by using their free time, the questionnaires will take place during tutor time and the interviews will be optional and conducted during the school day.

In order to mitigate the pressure and stress that some students will feel when debating a topic, I have designed the intervention so that the students are in pairs and their views will therefore not be heard by the whole-class.

2. Describe any additional burden or risks to the participants and the steps you will take to address these.

Burden- giving up their personal time to complete possible interviews. This part of the methodology is optional and it will take place during the school day.

3. Describe any physical or psychological risks to the researcher(s) (including local fieldworkers or research assistants) and the steps you will take to address these.

There are no physical risks in this study.

Psychological risks:
Some questionnaire and interview questions will get students to discuss their confidence levels as a result of the oracy intervention. Some students, who are low in confidence, may touch upon information that is personal and sensitive to them. In order to mitigate the effects of this, I will use my relationship with the students to reassure them when they speak. In case any students make any disclosures during the interviews or questionnaires, I will also remind the students that the data will not remain anonymous or confidential because I have a duty to pass on that information using CPoms (the school's safeguarding platform).

In order to ensure that I am not burdening the students by using their free time, the questionnaires will take place during tutor time and the interviews will be optional and conducted during the school day.

In order to mitigate the pressure and stress that some students will feel when debating a topic, I have designed the interview so that the students are in pairs and their views will therefore not be heard by the whole-class.

4. Describe any benefits of the research, both to participants and to others.

The project will deepen the school's understanding of the ways in which we can teach oracy and promote academic talk in the classroom; in turn, this may contribute towards the development of ways of improving oracy in the school in the future, which students will benefit from.

5. Give details of any other ethical issues or relevant information.

Confidentiality- all intervention transcriptions, questionnaires and interview transcriptions will remain anonymous and the participants' names will be removed and pseudonyms will replace them. Despite this, in case any students make any disclosures during the interviews or questionnaires, I will also remind the students that the data will not remain anonymous or confidential in this instance because I have a duty to pass on that information using CPoms (the school's safeguarding platform).

Consent- whilst I do not need to obtain written consent for this study. I will obtain assent by ensuring that I talk to my students and staff about the nature and purpose of the study, before the research begins. If I do need to complete any student interviews, following the post-intervention questionnaire, I will create a written consent form and obtain written consent from the students. In this instance, I will go through the relevant Curec procedures again.

Right to withdraw- student participants may withdraw from the audio recording by sitting on the other side of the classroom, where the audio recorder cannot pick up their sound. Whilst the students cannot withdraw from the intervention sessions, because they are a mandated whole-school initiative, students may choose to complete the questionnaire or interview and therefore, they can withdraw from this part of the methodology. However, students may not withdraw their data once it has been anonymised and analysed.

SECTION H: Professional guidelines		
Please indicate with an '**X**' at least one set of professional guidelines you will follow.		
Research specialism/ methodology	**Association and guidance**	
Anthropology	Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK	☐
Computer Science	ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct	☐
Criminology	British Society of Criminology Statement of Ethics	☐
Education	British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research	X ☐
Geography	American Association of Geographers Statement on Professional Ethics	☐
History	Oral History Society of the UK Ethical Guidelines	☐
Internet-mediated research	Association of Internet Researchers Ethical Guidelines British Psychological Society: Ethics Guidelines for internet-mediated research Association for Computing Machinery Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct	☐
Management	Academy of Management Code of Ethics	☐
Political Science	American Political Science Association (APSA) Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science	☐
Politics	Political Studies Association. Guidelines for Good Professional Conduct	☐
Psychology	British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct	☐
Social research	Social Research Association: Ethical Guidelines	☐
Socio-legal studies	Socio-Legal Studies Association: Statement of Principles of Ethical Research Practice	☐

Sociology	The British Sociological Association: Statement of Ethical Practice	☐
Visual research	ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper: Visual Ethics: Ethical Issues in Visual Research	☐
Other professional guidelines	List any other guidelines used here.	☐

SECTION I: Endorsements and signatures

Please ensure this form is endorsed by the Principal Investigator (or student's supervisor), the Head of Department (or nominee) and, if student research, by the student themselves.
The SSH IDREC Secretariat accepts either option below. If you have a DREC, check which signature option it prefers.

- **Option 1: direct email endorsements**
  Each of the signatories should submit an email from a University of Oxford email address, indicating their acceptance of the responsibilities listed below.
- **Option 2: signatures**
  Please scan the signed form and email it to us as a PDF. Pasted images of signatures cannot be accepted.

Endorsement by the Principal Investigator/ student supervisor and student, if applicable

I/ we the researchers understand my/ our responsibilities as Principal Investigator (and student, if applicable) as outlined in the guidance on the CUREC website. I/ we declare that the answers above accurately describe the research as presently designed, and that the ethics committee will be informed of any changes to the project which affect the answers to this form.
I/ we will inform the relevant IDREC if the Principal Investigator changes.

Name of Principal Investigator	
Principal Investigator's signature	
Date	
Name of student (if applicable)	[redacted]
Student's signature	[redacted]
Date	01/11/21

Departmental endorsement – from the Head of Department or nominee
(Another senior member of the department may sign where the head of department is the Principal Investigator, or where the Head of Department has appointed a nominee. Example nominees include Deputy Head of Department, Director of Research, or Director of Graduate/ Undergraduate Studies.)

I have read the research project application named above. On the basis of the information available to me, I: ● consider the PI and student researcher (if applicable) to be aware of their ethical responsibilities in regard to the ethical issues associated with this research; ● am satisfied that the proposed design and methodology are sound; the research has been subject to appropriate peer review and is likely to contribute to existing knowledge and/ or to the education and training of the researcher(s) and that it is in the public interest.	
Signature	
Name	
Role	
Date	

Appendix F- Email to Collaborating Form Tutors

Hi [redacted],

I hope your first week back has been ok.

Sorry that this email may feel very out of the blue but I am doing some research this academic year into the benefits of the oracy tutor-time programme at [redacted]. As part of that research, I am recording several members of my Year 9 tutor group pre and post three half terms worth of oracy work. I am also asking them to complete questionnaires about their experiences with oracy in tutor-time. In order to gather a wider spread of data, I am also looking to conduct some informal conversations with other Year 10/ Year 11 tutors about their perspectives on how the oracy tutor-time programme has been going this year.

The conversation would take between 5-10 minutes and it would be very informal. This discussion would take place just before the Easter holidays and I would record it, to transcribe it and use it as part of my research write up for my MSc.

I fully understand how busy the school week is so this is totally optional but it would be massively appreciated if you would be able to spare 5-10 minutes to have a conversation about it. I have attached some information about the purpose and the nature of the study below, so that you can give it some thought.

Once again, there's no pressure but, if you would be willing to participate, please could you let me know?

Thank you,

[redacted]

The purpose and nature of this study:

An exploration of the impact of oracy intervention on the quality of Key Stage Four students' classroom talk and students' confidence levels when talking in the classroom.

This study seeks to explore the impact of the tutor-time oracy sessions and the academic talk sentence starters on two measures: students' ability to expand on their ideas using academic talk and students' confidence levels at speaking up during class discussion.

The research will take place with my Year 9 tutor group but I would like to collaborate with two other Year 10 and Year 11 tutors through an informal interview, to help me to gather some information on how other Key Stage Four tutor groups respond to the oracy intervention.

By participating in the research, the school would be contributing to a project that will deepen our understanding of the ways in which we can teach oracy and promote academic talk in the classroom; in turn, this may contribute towards the development of ways of improving oracy in the school in the future.

I would be interviewing you, as a Key Stage Four form tutor, to find out about how your tutor groups responded to the oracy tutor time sessions, and to gather your thoughts and perspectives on the use of tutor time for oracy intervention.

Appendix G- PowerPoint Slides Outlining the Research to Students

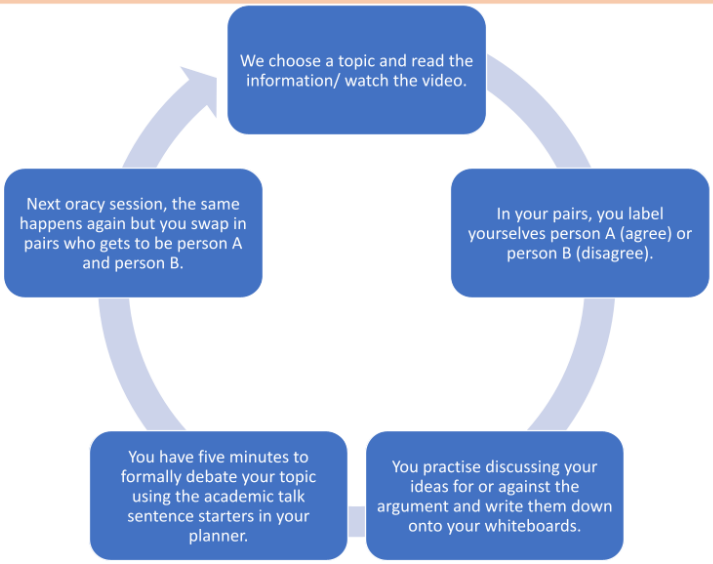
What am I looking at?

- Do these sessions help you to expand on your ideas verbally?
- Do they make you feel more confident about speaking up about your ideas?

How will I find this out?

1. Questionnaires (completed in tutor-time).
2. Some recordings between now and Easter- I may ask you to swap seats with one another.
3. Some observations.
4. Another questionnaire (completed in tutor-time).
5. Maybe some interviews.

The Layout of the Oracy Session (after today)



Fully Anonymous



Not in your own time



