An investigation into pupil oracy with Year 10 pupils studying GCSE History in an all girls' school

Clare Wagner

A Research & Development Project
Submitted for the
MSc Learning and Teaching 2015

DEPOSIT AND CONSULTATION OF THESIS

One copy of your dissertation will be deposited in the Department of Education Library via the WebLearn site where it is intended to be available for consultation by all Library users. In order to facilitate this, the following form should be completed which will be inserted in the library copy your dissertation.

Note that some graphs/tables may be removed in order to comply with copyright restrictions.

Surname	Wagner
First Name	Clare
Faculty Board	Education
Title of Dissertation	An investigation into pupil oracy with Year 10 pupils studying GCSE History in an all girls' school

Declaration by the candidate as author of the dissertation

1. I understand that I am the owner of this dissertation and that the copyright rests with me unless I specifically transfer it to another person.

2. I understand that the Department requires that I shall deposit a copy of my dissertation in the Department of Education Library via the WebLearn site where it shall be available for consultation, and that reproductions of it may be made for other Libraries so that it can be available to those who to consult it elsewhere. I understand that the Library, before allowing my dissertation to be consulted either in the original or in reproduced form, will require each person wishing to consult it to sign a declaration that he or she recognises that the copyright of this thesis belongs to me. I permit limited copying of my dissertation by individuals (no more than 5% or one chapter) for personal research use. No quotation from it and no information derived from it may be published without my prior written consent and I undertake to supply a current address to the Library so this consent can be sought.

3. I agree that my dissertation shall be available for consultation in accordance with paragraph 2 above.

Abstract

The promotion of pupil oracy is accepted as a key feature of an effective classroom. Pupil oracy has been shown to enhance learning in a wide variety of ways, notably at primary level. In addition, a potential link between the ways in which some girls speak at school and the way in which this could limit their progression in the workplace has been identified. However, there has been little research into girls' oracy in single-sex secondary schools. Oracy in History teaching has also been somewhat neglected.

This study examined which teaching strategies might encourage girls' oracy in History lessons and which factors appear to prevent girls from participating actively in History lessons. The question of whether the encouragement of girls' oracy in History lessons can improve cognition and confidence was also investigated. Case studies, semi-structured interviews with pupils and teachers, pupil observations and teaching interventions were utilised in the investigation.

Findings suggested that learning activities such as the use of role-play and whole class discussion based around historical controversies can successfully promote girls' oracy. It was also found that there is a range of factors that can prevent girls from participating actively in History lessons, such as a lack of confidence in girls' understanding and knowledge of the topics being studied and pupils being given insufficient time to prepare for discussions. The role of confidence to speak in front of peers and the impact of social relationships between girls in the classroom also emerged as highly significant. It was concluded from this small-scale study that the encouragement of girls' oracy in History lessons can improve girls' cognition and confidence. This can be done by providing girls with repeated opportunities to discuss controversial topics in whole class settings.

Table of Contents

Chapter 5: Findings and Conclusion

Supporting Materials

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Acknowledgements

With grateful thanks to my two wonderful children for their unwavering support and belief in me. In addition, much gratitude goes to my supervisor, for her help, guidance and patience. You were right about the cliff. Thanks also go to my Headteacher and the staff and pupils at my school, whose support, time, insight and enthusiasm for learning and teaching have been invaluable. Lastly, thank you to Ariane, for her limitless advice and encouragement.

Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

I became interested in the topic of pupil oracy during the course of my MSc in Learning and Teaching. As I use discussions and questioning a great deal in my own practice as a History teacher, I was curious to discover if there are ways of making oral communication in my classroom more effective for pupil learning. I found a vast body of academic research that supports the promotion of pupil oracy in the classroom. This research has led to significant developments in pedagogy in the United Kingdom, perhaps most notably and comprehensively to the creation of the National Oracy Project (Norman, 1992). Pupil oracy focuses on the use of talk in classrooms, such as in whole class discussions, during teacher questioning or when pupils work in pairs or groups, in order to convert knowledge into understanding (Norman, 1992). The work of the National Oracy Project (Norman, 1992) confirmed the role of the promotion of learning through talk and discussion as a key feature of an effective classroom.

I was also curious to see if there was research that focused exclusively on girls' oracy, as I work in an all girls' school. I discovered during my review of the literature that there is not a great deal of research on how talk can be promoted in single-sex classrooms and particularly those containing girls. This appeared to me to be a compelling area for further research for various reasons. For example, the notion exists that the language women use in the workplace can disadvantage them in their career progression. Feminist theoretical linguists such as Lakoff (2004) and Cameron (2007) point to the differences in how women speak in the workplace and the type of language they use in comparison to men, which Baxter (2010) points out can often be less confrontational and persuasive than that of male counterparts. Also of possible significance is the lack of confidence (Cameron, 2007) that deters some women from participating effectively in workplace discussions. My

interest was further piqued by literature on the current national gender gap. I found that the gender gap remains gaping within many professions in the United Kingdom (Global Gender Gap Report, 2014). Whilst girls are considered to be outranking boys at GCSE and A Level (Joint Council of Qualifications, 2014), more boys gain First Class degrees at university (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2009) and then go onto high positions within their chosen careers (Global Gender Gap Report, 2014). I felt that those involved in education should be looking at factors related to girls' oracy while they are still at school and whether teaching strategies could be developed that could lead to women communicating more effectively in the workplace.

Two questions emerged as appearing to warrant close investigation: 'what is the link the between oracy and cognition?' and 'what is the connection between oracy and confidence?'. I decided to investigate these questions by examining factors that could affect girls' oracy and teaching strategies that could promote girls' oracy in the classroom. I also wanted to examine whether the promotion of girls' oracy could be seen to enhance cognition and confidence, with the possibility that this would give them improved career chances.

These questions were of interest to me, not only as a teacher of History, but also as the Deputy Head in charge of Pastoral Care in a private all girls' school with 650 pupils on roll, situated in an affluent area close to a major English city. I felt that this research could have a significant impact upon the ways in which the girls are being taught, potentially leading to a transformation of pedagogical methods within my school and beyond. I began my research with a review of the relevant literature in order to help me to discover key relevant themes and to shape and define my research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Developing Pupil Oracy in Learning and Teaching

2.1.1 Introduction to Pupil Oracy

There is a vast body of academic research that supports the promotion of pupil oracy in the classroom. I began my literature review by reading the work of Vygotsky (1962, 1978), whose work remains seminal and relevant to the topic. Vygotsky (1962, 1978) was one of the first psychologists interested in education to focus attention on pupil language. For him, pupil language was an essential tool for the development of cognition. He placed emphasis on the role of discourse, which he defined as language that is structured and coherent. He explained that discourse in the classroom involves verbal interaction and includes the weighing up of different propositions, whose meanings are explained and connected. I learned from him that discussion is essential to the cultivation of the growth of pupils' cognition. He wrote that 'thought and word are not cut from one pattern…thought undergoes many changes as it turns into speech' (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 219).

As I was keen to investigate how teaching can promote cognitive and metacognitive development, and encourage confidence, I then turned to the work of those who have focused closely on research into these areas in the classroom. Many engaged in educational research have pointed to different ways in which oracy enhances pupil learning in the classroom, notably Alexander (2003, 2008a), Barnes (2010) and Mercer (1995, 2013). As mentioned in the introduction, the work of the National Oracy Project (Norman, 1992) brought much of the theoretical research into the classroom and also

expanded the theoretical boundaries of the topic, whilst providing teachers with practical ideas to enhance pupil oracy.

2.1.2 Oracy and Cognition

I focused on the research of Neil Mercer, one of the main researchers involved in the National Oracy Project (Norman, 1992). Mercer (1995) explains how pupil talk promotes cognition and how the cognitive development of children is 'strongly affected' (p. 4) by what is being said to them and, following on from this, by how they interpret what they have been told to do. He explains how, even though language can be seen to have two distinct functions, one to aid communication and the other to think, these functions are not entirely separate. He also expands the sphere in which pupil talk promotes cognition, not only, as Vygotsky (1962, 1978) suggests, between a pupil and a teacher, or Bruner's (1985) focus on the interaction between a pupil and a 'more competent peer' but also between a pupil and a peer who is less or equally competent. He explains that it is also beneficial for a pupil to explain his or her own ideas to another pupil 'whatever their relative ability' (p. 90). Whilst Mercer's paper contains a very detailed and comprehensive analysis of evolutionary psychology, anthropology and educational research, he does not base his conclusions on research in the classroom, so his argument remains a hypothesis rather than an empirical study and thus needs to be accepted with caution.

Barnes (1976) was a pioneer in school-based research, closely observing classroom talk between pupils in a mixed secondary school. According to Barnes (2010), when pupils discuss, new connections can be made or options considered, thus what is already known is reshaped and improved, indeed new understanding can be developed without the addition of new material. Smith et al.'s (2009) research supports this view, as it shows how peer discussion can improve cognition. The article shows how students improved their

learning through group discussion, and, of even greater interest, that having someone who knows what the correct answer is in the group is not necessary to reach a correct conclusion. Smith et al. (2009) suggest that the students in the study arrived at the correct answers and improved their conceptual understanding by debating and discussing in the group. However, Smith et al (2009) were working with undergraduates studying Science, so the pupils were older than mine who are at secondary school, at a different stage in their education and studying a different subject, so I needed to take these factors into account when applying their conclusions to my own research. For example, undergraduates studying Science could be more accustomed to attempting to solve problems independently by applying known methods and formulae, than pupils studying a humanities subject, where most topics are not taught by using problem-solving methods, but rather through pupil reading, teacher exposition and class discussion. Nonetheless, their view is supported by that of Mercer and Littleton (2007) who also promote the view that pupil-pupil discussion in schools can promote conceptual discussion.

Barnes (2010) elaborates on his view of the kind and quality of learning or cognition that can take place through pupil talk. He explains that the learning is not merely an intellectual activity and a way of acquiring knowledge or information, but it also enables pupils to be able to think for themselves and make judgments that are informed. He states that this learning is the 'richest and most valuable kind' (Barnes, 2010, p.8), as it leads to deeper understanding.

Successive UK governments have been convinced by both the philosophical arguments and more particularly by the work of educational researchers and have included a focus on pupil oracy in mainstream teaching, most notably in the National Oracy Project (Norman, 1992) and government teaching guidelines such as those issued by the Department for

Education and Employment (DfEE, 2000). However, these are directed towards only primary school teaching, so perhaps governments need further convincing that pupil oracy also promotes the cognition of secondary school pupils. This should also drive the secondary school teacher to ensure that strategies implemented in classroom teaching in order to promote discussion are specifically designed for pupils of secondary school age.

2.1.3 Oracy and Metacognition

The promotion of pupil oracy also plays a role in developing the metacognition of pupils. Flavell (1979) explains metacognition as the awareness of the individual of his or her own cognitive processes. It thus involves pupil self-reflection and the consideration of how one is thinking, along with an awareness of what is being understood as well as how this process is taking place. Bruner (1996) presents a useful summary of metacognition, which he explains as 'thinking about one's thinking' (p. 88). Having evaluated over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement, Hattie (2009) concludes that 'the biggest effects on student learning occur when teachers become learners of their own teaching, and when students become their own teachers' (p. 22) exhibiting what he refers to as 'self-regulatory attributes' (p.22), thus highlighting how important it is for pupils to think about how they learn and how they can adjust their learning to suit themselves individually.

Leat and Lin (2003) also emphasise the complex nature of metacognition and conclude that teachers find it difficult to create strategies to develop metacognition, as there is little firm ground to be found when scrutinising related research. They go on to show how teachers can, in fact, teach pupils metacognitive skills through pupil interviews after lessons, which Leat and Lin (2003) refer to as 'debriefing' (p. 388). They found as a result of their research, which includes coded summaries of different types of teacher and pupil talk as well as sections of transcribed dialogue, that 'both talking and listening are highly

valued by pupils' (p. 394) as they help pupils to improve how they learn and which learning methods suit them. The sections of transcribed dialogue that they include are useful, as pupils clearly explain how far their classroom discussion helped their learning and understanding. In addition, Jones (2007) focussing on primary pupils, points out that metacognition takes place through a complicated process and emphasises the importance of careful teacher planning. She states that pupils need to be given time during lessons in order to 'think about their thinking and to articulate thoughts about their learning' (p. 572). So it is clear that oracy plays a role in promoting metacognition in the classroom, although I found difficult to find convincing evidence of this when working with pupils of Year 10 age.

2.1.4 The Role of Teacher-Pupil Talk

Vygotsky (1962, 1978) focuses on dialogue between adults and children. Bakhtin (1981) distinguishes between monologic and dialogic talk, the former being mainly concerned with the transmission of knowledge while the latter promotes communication both with and between pupils and helps the collaborative construction of meaning. Early observation research in the UK conducted by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) indicate that most teacher-pupil talk consists of teachers asking closed questions and receiving short factual responses in return, the standard Initiation, Response, Feedback scenario (Mercer, 1995). Wolf, Crosson and Resnick (2006) show that when teachers asked pupils to expand on their answers, those pupils were developing higher-level skills of comprehension than when they were asked to merely recall facts. Alexander (2008b) spoke of how talk 'mediates the cognitive and cultural spaces between adult and child...between teacher and learner' (p. 92). The literature includes many studies that show how improved learning outcomes are evident when teachers ask pupils to explain their ideas or give reasons for their answers. This includes the work of Kyriacou and Issit (2008), who

reviewed 15 papers focussing on oracy in the teaching of Mathematics and that of Murphy (2007) on Science teaching and Wolf, Crosson and Resnick (2006) in reading comprehension teaching at Key Stages 2 and 3 in English schools. Thus there are several studies on this topic, adding weight to the value of this teaching approach. Although these studies focused their research on different age groups and subjects, and some different findings emerged relating to the types of effective strategies utilised by teachers to promote effective oracy, the common thread of improved cognition could be discerned.

The role of the adult is important not only to develop higher-order skills of reasoning and analysis, but also to allow scaffolded learning (Bruner, 1983), the co-construction of a task or topic (Mercer, 2013). Adult guidance through dialogue is also important for pupils' development of metacognition and self-regulation, as Dignath, Buettner and Langfeld, (2008) showed in their meta-analysis of self-regulation strategies in primary schools in Germany. Teachers can also model effective, reasoned discussion with the whole class, so that pupils can emulate this during group work (Webb, Nemer and Ing, 2006).

2.1.5 The Role of Pupil-Pupil Talk

There is also a strong focus in the literature on pair work or group work. Salomon (1993) explains his belief that cognition does not exist in isolation, but exists collectively between individuals and thus knowledge is constructed collaboratively, building on Vygotsky's (1978) notion of language being a cultural tool. O'Connor and Michaels (1993) demonstrate that a shared classroom culture is necessary in order for pupils to see themselves and their peers as serious learners. Smith et al.'s (2009) assertion that the group achieved more than pupils could working individually is supported by the research of Laughlin et al. (2006); who found that a group can perform with greater success than the best member of that group. A meta-analysis conducted by Hämäläinen and

Vähäsantanen (2011) supports this, as it shows that many studies include convincing evidence that 'new creative processes and outputs' (p. 172) emerge during group work. As Barnes (2010) points out 'exploratory talk' takes place between pupils. It is 'hesitant and incomplete' (p.5) and allows children to think aloud, moot ideas, sort out their thoughts and suggest solutions, without the onus of having to produce the correct answer for the teacher or the rest of the class.

However, a meta-analysis of collaborative learning conducted by Murphy et al. (2009) found that by no means all group work led to significant progress in learning. They found that increases in student talk did not necessarily result in concomitant increases in student comprehension, critical thinking and reasoning. Mercer (2013) corroborates this view, saying 'much of the group work that goes on in classrooms has little educational value' (p. 158). Interestingly for my study, Baxter (2010) has suggested that the emphasis placed upon group work by the National Oracy Project (Norman, 1992) has led to the increased development of talk that is cooperative, collaborative and consensual. Thus, Baxter (2010) suggests, girls are not being given the opportunity to learn a 'public voice' that is more competitive and 'adversarial' (p.87). She suggests that this is important because it means that women may not be able to be effective in the workplace either 'with men or managers' (Baxter, 2010, p.89) and where they may need to 'deploy the skills of discussion, argument and persuasion with larger, and unfamiliar groups of people' (Baxter, 2010, p.90).

2.2 Oracy and Confidence

The literature also suggests that pupil talk, when planned and structured carefully by a teacher, can also lead to improved confidence. This topic was of particular interest to me, as the role of women's confidence in speaking was emerging as such a strong theme in my

project. In Thompson's (2007) study, teachers reported how, in talk lessons, pupils enjoyed learning, developed greater confidence and felt motivated and excited by talk lessons, with the teachers giving reasons for this such as pupils could 'make mistakes in a safe environment' (p. 59). Jones (2010) extends this by stating that in the classroom pupils gain confidence by participating in a range of activities in which interaction is required (p.62). Hattie (2009) points out that from his study of 800 meta-analyses, the theme of confidence re-occurs and he refers to it as 'a most powerful precursor and outcome of schooling'.

It is also suggested in the literature that pupils will make use of their improved skills in other environments and their improved dispositions will stand them in good stead as they progress through their education and beyond (Wells, 1999), again, a theme that was an important impetus behind my research project. As Barnes (2010) points out, teachers are preparing pupils for a world that is complex and in which there are uncertainties. If teachers focus too closely on 'right answers' pupils are not being prepared to think for themselves, analyse uncertainties and make rational choices (Barnes, 2010, p. 8). Barnes (2010) proposes that encouraging pupils to become active learners in the classroom by fostering pupil talk is an effective way of preparing pupils for the world. This builds on Young's (2009) examination of the function of schools. He emphasises that for some pupils, school is the only opportunity they may have to acquire 'powerful knowledge' (p.13), by which he means knowledge that provides explanations that are reliable and 'new ways of thinking about the world' (Young, 2009, p. 14). Young (2009) states that powerful knowledge is acquired, through active participation in lessons rather than passively listening to the teacher. Jones (2007) states, 'children need to know that effective speakers and listeners can become powerful learners, teachers and citizens' (p. 576). Whilst Young (2009), is refers in his article to pupils that are disadvantaged due to

their low socio-economic backgrounds, it could also be argued that women are disadvantaged due to a variety of factors. Thus girls can also possibly benefit from the emancipatory potential of the promotion of pupil talk, often having what Cruddas and Haddock (2003) refer to as 'diminished voices' (p. 92) at school and beyond.

2.3 Developing Pupil Oracy in History Learning and Teaching

2.3.1 Introduction

As I am a History teacher, it was also important for me to investigate the literature that focuses on the role of pupil oracy in the learning and teaching in my subject. The researchers that place the most emphasis on this are Barton and Levstik (2004). They point out that studying the humanities plays a role in preparing pupils for 'democratic citizenship' (p.35), with History in particular encouraging 'reasoned judgements about human affairs (p.36). Students, they suggest, should be encouraged to deliberate with each other to reach their own conclusions (p.39) rather than those of their 'teachers, textbooks, historians or politicians' (p.39). Barton and Levstik (2004) are from the USA and one can sense their overt promotion of the democratic ideal, as exemplified in the title of their work 'Teaching History for the Common Good'. I found comparatively little discussion of oracy in History teaching in the key UK texts on the subject (Husbands, 1996; Davies, 2011; Kitson et al., 2011; Haydn et al., 2014; Harris et al., 2014). Nonetheless, there is some useful discussion in these texts on ways in which oracy plays a beneficial role in the effective learning and teaching of History.

2.3.2 Pupil Oracy in History Learning and Teaching

Several researchers highlight the benefits of promoting oracy in History teaching. Husbands et al. (2010) point out that teachers primarily use talk to 'mediate the past' (p.90) for their students. Harris et al. (2014) suggest that 'language is fundamental to the

study of History' (p.201) as it is used to describe, explain and organise past events and issues as well as to discuss and interpret them (Husbands, 1996). In addition, evidence that is mostly written and spoken is the source of historical knowledge and understanding. However, the language used by historians is often imprecise, complex, metaphorical and conceptual (Husbands, 1996) and this can present a challenge to learners. Teachers are not only charged with the task of instructing pupils how to construct a picture of and make sense of the past but also with how to manage and indeed master the often difficult and abstract nature of historical interpretation (Husbands, 1996). Thus, the exploration of language in the classroom is a key element of History teaching and pupil talk is one way of giving pupils opportunities to explore and gain an understanding of the ways in which language is used by historians (Husbands, 1996).

It has been found that pupil oracy helps to marshal ideas (Fullard and Dacey, 2008), build arguments (Clark, 2001) and develop their ideas (Luff, 2001). Cohen (1994) believes that it is important for pupils to learn to listen to and evaluate arguments aloud. Scrutinising, evaluating and countering arguments is a key element of the historian's work and, for pupils to be successful in their learning of History, they must develop these skills (Luff, 2001). Harris et al. (2014) also suggest that introducing activities that promote pupil talk also create cooperation and collaboration in the History classroom, 'fostering an awareness of and respect of other's opinions whilst feeling free to take these apart' (p. 207). It should be said that there is neither little large-scale research to fully support any of these claims nor have the experts in History teaching, such as Husbands (1996) or Harris et al. (2014) gone into detail about the topic.

2.4 Developing Girls' Oracy

2.4.1 Introduction

The review of literature on the benefits of developing pupil oracy with regard to cognition, metacognition and confidence relates to both male and female pupils, whilst also pointing out the potential benefits and pitfalls of Teacher-Pupil and Pupil-Pupil talk in the classroom. However, literature specifically on the topic of girls' oracy is not plentiful. I found very few studies on how girls communicate in girls' only classrooms, which gave me added impetus to focus my research on girls' oracy in an all girls' school. I drew on some relevant research examining girls' talk in the classroom, girls' confidence, female speech and the link to how women communicate in the workplace.

2.4.2 Characteristics of Female Talk and its Implications for Learning

Cruddas and Haddock (2003) looked closely at the impact of group work on girls' learning. They state that 'girls repeatedly stated that having opportunities to talk through issues helped them with the process of learning' (p. 79). However, Cruddas and Haddock (2003), like most of the researchers working on girls' oracy, undertook their research in mixed schools or in girls' state schools.

There is evidence to show that in mixed-sex school settings boys will speak more than girls in lessons. (Sadker and Sadker, 1986). Swann (2009) refers to the marked differences in the way boys and girls speak in school, most notably that boys tend to dominate classroom talk whilst girls can remain invisible. Baxter (2010) focuses on pupil use of the 'public voice' (p.82), the voice used in whole class discussions. She believes boys dominate in the use of the public voice whilst girls tend to speak in small groups. She also suggests that schools in the UK do more to develop the public voice of boys than that of girls (p.82). Swann (2009) attempts to reconcile the different analyses of girls' language in school by

proposing a middle ground that does not reject girls' language as inferior and gives girls strategies to redress imbalances both at school and beyond.

2.4.3 Girls' Oracy and Classroom Relationships

Goodwin (2006) reports that when girls were questioned about what they felt were barriers to their learning, they suggested that their relationships with other girls in the class and peer group pressure had an impact (p. 59). Goodwin's (2006) research investigated school interventions designed to improve girls learning and confidence. These included the use of group sessions with girls who were very quiet in class. The girls involved reported positive results such as 'I used to be really quiet. I'm speaking up for myself now' (p. 68) and 'I think it helped me a lot because I can actually talk to people without being shy. I could not get on with people, I would always be thinking, "what will other people say or do" (p.69)', highlighting the impact of social relationships on confidence. These findings are supported by Cruddas and Haddock (2003), who investigated the impact of friendship groups on girls' learning. They found that girls felt they learned well when they were learning collaboratively in friendship groups (p.82) and indeed friendship groups and networks led to 'friendship work' (p.82).

2.4.4 Girls' Oracy and Girls' Confidence

I could find no studies examining the relationship specifically between girls' oracy and their confidence, though I found relevant studies based in mixed-sex schools. Cruddas and Haddock (2003) report that the initiatives that are particularly effective in promoting pupil confidence to find a voice were pupil mentoring schemes (an older with a younger pupil), assertiveness focused group work and developmental group work with mentoring and counselling staff (p. 95). Again their findings show impressive results with girls reporting 'the group has helped me to feel more confident and say things out loud' (p.95), 'I was not

very confident – I hardly spoke out. I'm bright but that was my only problem' (p.96). This gives us a good insight into how girls lacking in confidence can feel, but again caution is needed as the project was again based in a mixed-sex school. Walkerdine et al. (2001) also highlight the issue of girls' confidence, pointing to their findings that 'the feeling of not being good enough was "endemic"' (p.180) among some groups of girls. They found this to be the case with specifically middle-class girls, a point of particular interest to me as all the girls in my Year 10 History group are from middle-class families.

2.4.5 Girls Oracy and Women in the Workplace

I also found much evidence in the literature, such as Morley (1999), Slater (2000) and Sealy and Vinnicombe (2012), to support the fact that, whilst girls are gaining excellent results at school and university, they are still more likely than their male counterparts to be jobless, in low paid jobs or have a male boss. In 1999, only 12 per cent of partners in solicitors' firms were women and only 15 percent of professors or senior lecturers in universities (Morley, 1999). In 2000, three per cent of company directors were women, female salaries were, on average, £7,000 a year lower than for men and three million fewer women had jobs (Slater, 2000). More recent figures reveal that in 2012, seven per cent of women were executive directors, whilst only 15 per cent of FTSE 100 board seats were held by women (Sealy and Vinnicombe, 2012). Wilson (1991) provided a potential link between oracy at school and communication in the workplace, positing that girls learn to gain the approval of teachers through demonstrating 'quiet diligence' in lessons, but later in life more 'active and assertive verbal communication' (p.53) is demanded and girls are not prepared for this. These findings give rise to several questions. The first is whether this behaviour disadvantages women in the workplace and prevents them from gaining top-level jobs. The second question is whether this behaviour is evident when girls are at

school and, if so, how can this be altered in the classroom in order to increase girls' chances of strong career progression in the future?

Lakoff (2004) discusses the issue of women's use of language, pointing out that at university 'women participate less in class discussion than men'. She examines possible reasons for this, as well as the idea that such discrepancies mean that women are 'systematically denied access to power, on the grounds that they are not capable of holding it, as demonstrated by their linguistic behaviour along with other aspects of their behaviour' (p. 42). Through close analysis of language she gives examples of how women come across as uncertain and unassertive, such as through the use of hedges such as "well" and "I guess" (p. 79). Lakoff's original work was written in 1975, and has been criticised as being based on conjecture rather than evidence. Since then, some of her wider points have been substantiated by research, notably by Tannen (1994) and Cameron (2007) who have shown that women remain both less likely to speak up in public fora and that women's language remains noticeably more imprecise, conciliatory and equivocal than men's. Baxter (2010) suggests that males will continue to dominate the 'corridors of power' (p.94) firstly because they are dominant linguistically, both in the language they use and the manner in which they use it, and secondly because, as they retain the majority of senior posts, they perpetuate the continued use of male discursive styles, notable as being argumentative, confrontational and persuasive. Baxter (2010) suggests that women will be empowered 'if they learn to speak out' (p.83), and echoes Kenway and Willis (1990) by arguing that women should be taught to 'speak persuasively and powerfully in a range of unfamiliar, formal and public contexts' (p.83).

It was thus clear to me from the literature that the promotion of oracy is beneficial for both pupil learning and also to improve levels of confidence. The former is clearly of

benefit to both male and female pupils and the latter is of particular benefit to girls, both in the classroom and beyond.

2.5 Promoting Oracy in the Classroom

2.5.1 Introduction

The potential benefits of oracy to the learner are clear. The literature also highlights ways in which teachers can promote oracy in the classroom. The themes that emerge fall into two categories, the creation of a suitable classroom environment in which oracy can be promoted and suggestions for appropriate strategies that can encourage pupil talk that is both effective and that improves pupil confidence to speak in front of peers. I also found some specific suggestions that focus on History teaching.

2.5.2 The Creation of a Suitable Classroom Environment

Jones (2010) highlights the importance of what she refers to as the 'tenor or interpersonal ambience of the classroom' (p. 64). She shows in detail how the teacher achieved this by varying the language she used with the students and by taking on more central or distant roles in the classroom in different lesson phases. She thus created stages for the pupils, so that they felt ready when it was their turn to collaborate, 'engaging collectively, critically and constructively with one another'.

Alexander (2008a) promoted the notion of the 'dialogic classroom', in which specific kinds of pupil discussion are encouraged in order to promote pupil learning, in clearly structured and focused ways. His recommendations include collective learning, in which pupils complete tasks together, reciprocal activity, in which pupils and the teacher listen to each other's ideas, discuss them and also possible alternatives, such as having a mutually supportive and purposeful atmosphere and climate, that Jones (2007) refers to as 'tenor'.

This is clearly a positive step, as Hattie (2012) suggested that teachers talk a great deal in class, with less that five per cent of class time being taken up by either teacher-pupil or pupil-pupil discussion.

2.5.3 Teaching Strategies Designed to Promote Oracy

The literature also includes many suggested teaching strategies that can be implemented in order to promote pupil talk. Researchers frequently point to the importance of careful planning for oracy. Alexander's (2003) paper analyses the findings of the Talk for Learning Project and concluded that teachers effectively utilised whole class discussion to promote oracy. Alexander (2003) states that for effective discussions to take place in class, teachers should focus on extension, as Barnes (2010) also recommends. This involves asking individual pupils to explain or expand upon their answers as well as ensuring waiting and thinking time is given to pupils (p.15) to allow them to formulate responses. Group discussions between pupils are cited as excellent methods of promoting cognition and metacognition, allowing the transformation of individual thinking via intermental activity (Mercer, 2013). We have already looked at the benefits of a debriefing activity (Leat and Lin, 2003), which can encourage pupils to not only to explain findings but also to communicate the purpose of the activity, thus promoting metacognition (Whitebread and Pino Pasternak, 2010).

Alexander (2003) also cites the value of questioning. Researchers have long been familiar with the concept of closed and open questioning (Barnes, Britton and Torbe, 1990), with open questioning being far more preferable as it offers a wide range of different possible answers. A large number of studies have shown that when teachers exhort their pupils to give reasons and explanations in their answers, this results in improved learning. The research of Kyriacou and Issitt (2008) is compelling as it scrutinises 15 studies of

mathematics teaching and highlights the positive role of extended questioning in helping pupils in their understanding. They suggest that extended questioning can enable teachers and pupils to move beyond the simple IRF (Initiation, Response, Feedback) discourse that Mercer (1995) and Alexander (2003) have shown to dominate much of teacher-pupil talk in classrooms. Kyriacou and Issittt (2008) show that 'the use of words such as "why", "if", "because" and "so" ' (p.10) can help pupils in their reasoning.

When looking at ways of implementing successful whole class teaching activities, Coles (2010) points out that although governments' National Literacy Strategies have directed both primary and secondary teachers to implement 'interactive whole class teaching' (DfEE, 2000), in practice this is very difficult to achieve. She suggests that this could be due to the poor listening skills exhibited by some pupils and also to the reluctance of some teachers to take risks by moving away from traditional teacher-led teaching. Coles (2010) mentions role-play (p 119) and small group collaborative learning (p.120) as effective methods of encouraging oracy.

2.5.4 Teaching Strategies Designed to Promote Oracy in History lessons

As discussed, there is little specific research on the promotion of oracy in History learning and teaching. But there are some useful small-scale studies that suggest strategies specifically designed to develop pupil talk. Fullard and Dacey (2008) planned a series of debates in their lessons, which included open-ended questions such a 'Why was there a Civil War in 1642' thus promoting discussion and argument. Farmer and Knight (1995) recommend a variety of activities to promote pupil talk, including a 'Question Time' activity (p. 67), in which pupils represent different people or groups eg 'a Nazi, a Nationalist, a Communist and a Social Democrat before the March 1933 election in

Germany'. A similar suggestion is the 'hotseating' of individual characters from History (Husbands, 1996, p. 95), with Kitson et al. (2011) and Haydn et al. (2014) encouraging teachers to build in 'think' time (p.91) before questions are answered. Haydn et al. (2014) suggest a range of activities to promote History talk with pupils. They advise teachers to ensure that all pupils are involved and no pupils dominate the discussion. They exhort teachers to encourage pupils to move from relying on reading from a script to 'thinking on their feet' (Haydn et al., 2014, p. 116) and emphasise the value of role play in promoting discussion (p. 119), thus utilising a similar idea to Husbands' (1996) hotseating. This also resonates with Baxter's (2010) emphasis on the importance of encouraging girls to speak 'in a variety of unfamiliar, formal or public settings' (p.95) to prepare them for the workplace. This could challenges Alexander's (2008a) suggestion that the classroom environment should have a supportive atmosphere and suggests that at times there should be an encouragement of debate and disagreement amongst pupils.

2.6 Emerging research questions

Although there is some disagreement among researchers as to the best way of promoting pupil oracy, there is little doubt that it is beneficial for pupils to speak more in class, both through teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil talk. This aids with learning, by increasing cognition and metacognition and by developing confidence, this last point being, as clearly emerges from the literature, of particular importance when teaching girls. As stated in my introduction, I was keen to investigate the link between oracy and cognition and the connection between oracy and confidence by examining factors that could affect girls' oracy, teaching strategies that could promote this in the classroom and whether the promotion of girls' oracy could be seen to enhance cognition and confidence, with the possibility that this would give them improved career chances.

As stated, there is very little research on girls' oracy in single-sex settings and also little on the benefits of promoting oracy in History lessons. This led me to investigate the factors that may affect girls' oracy, and notably for my study, how high ability girls who are very quiet in class can be encouraged to contribute more to class discussion in History lessons. Thus the following research questions emerged from the literature:

1. Which teaching strategies might encourage girls' oracy in History lessons?

2 Which factors appear to prevent girls from participating actively in whole class discussions in History lessons?

3. To what extent does the encouragement of girls' oracy in History lessons improve their cognition and confidence?

Chapter Three

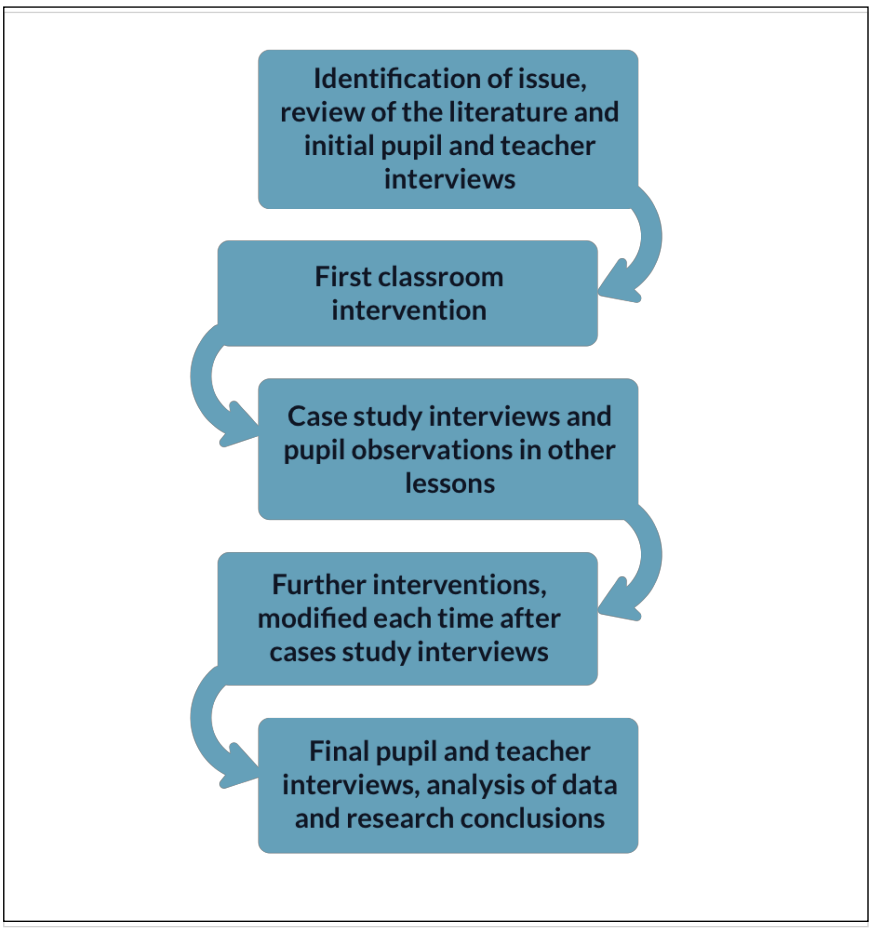
Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The literature indicated to me that my chosen topic was worthy of study, both as it is an area where there is only a limited amount of research and also as the investigation would lead to improvements in my practice. It would also allow me to be able to collaborate with colleagues and share my findings with other teachers, both within my school and beyond. I planned an action research methodology for my project. Pioneered by Lewin (1946), this research method encourages the practitioner to examine, reflect, take action, reflect further and then continue to refine and adapt in order to bring about change and improvement. As Stenhouse (1975) states, improvement in teaching is brought about by 'thoughtful refinement of professional skill' (p. 39), a 'gradual elimination of failings' (p.39) as one's teaching is studied, reflected upon and adjusted in a cyclical manner. It would thus be an appropriate approach for my investigation. I also decided that utilising qualitative research methods was suitable, as these would provide rich insight into pupil oracy and Year 10 girls, whilst indicating ways in which I can improve my practice. I designed various interventions that would allow me to investigate which factors could be preventing my pupils from participating in lessons and which teaching strategies could help them to participate more and allow me to assess the extent to which promoting oracy in their lessons improved their learning and confidence

3.2 The Research Design

Figure 1: The Action Research Design based on Lewin's (1946) 'spiral of steps' (p.206)



3.2.1 Outline of the design

I chose to design my research to include pupil and teacher interviews. The pupils are all in my Year 10 GCSE History class, which comprises 13 girls. Initially I interviewed the whole class together and then selected three pupils as case studies. I also interviewed three teachers, all of whom teach the girls chosen to be case studies. I also captured data through observations of the pupils in both History and in other subject lessons, which I wrote up in my field notes. I introduced four interventions in the girls' History lessons and conducted pupil interviews after each one. I then interviewed the teachers again at the conclusion of the project.

3.2.2 Data Gathering and Materials Used

3.2.2.1 The Use of Case Studies

I decided to conduct my research through the use of case studies. Thomas (2013) points out that the case study approach is not merely an observational exercise, but there must be a subject and an object (p. 151) – here the subject is the individual pupil and the object is developing girls' oracy. Thomas (2013) also emphasises that where more than one case study is selected it is the comparison that is made between the case studies, rather than each individual case, that is the key focus. As this is interpretative research, I am aware that the responses of the pupils chosen to be case studies may not reflect the perceptions of other pupils in the class.

I selected my case studies by examining the observations in my field notes and the pupils' attainment grades. I chose to use case studies for several reasons. Thomas (2013) indicates that utilising case studies can provide a 'rich, detailed understanding' (p. 150) while providing illumination of a theory. Geertz, (1973) corroborates this view, referring to 'thick description' when discussing the advantages of this method, meaning detailed and nuanced data can be gleaned through this method. Cohen et al. (2011) also point out several advantages of the use of case studies, such as providing 'a unique example of real people in real situations' (p. 289) and 'they observe effects in real contexts' (p.289). Thus this method of data collection seemed to suit my research better than other methods, such as using a larger-scale survey, which I felt would not provide me with the same quality of rich data.

3.2.2.2 The Use of Interviews

I chose to use interviews as the main method of collecting data for my research project. Walford (2001), Cohen et al. (2011) and Thomas (2012) point to the many benefits of using interviews. The researcher can acquire a large amount of data in a short space of time, can allow different people to express their views on a wide range of issues and the researcher can hear views that may not be expressed in any other situation that could normally occur (Walford, 2001, p. 92). Walford (2001) also comments on the immediacy and direct focus of the approach, whereas relying on observations can be much more time-consuming and there is no guarantee that data relating to the research question will manifest itself clearly, if at all. Walford (2001) provides interesting caveats about the use of interviews to gather data. He warns that what is said will be co-constructed, and that the interviewee may be affected on the day by a variety of factors such as external events. He also points out that the interviewer should be aware that what is said is the perception and opinion of the interviewee on their day, and could be inaccurate or, at worst, dishonest (p.90). However, Kvale (1996) points out that the co-construction of knowledge is the whole point of the exercise; as Cohen et al. (2011) point out, knowledge should be constructed between the participants.

I also chose to use interviews because this data collection method makes it possible to find out what an individual may know, like or dislike or think and believe, thus allowing for greater depth than other methods, such as the use of questionnaires (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 411). Cohen et al. (2011) also point out that the use of questionnaires can lead to respondents interpreting the same words in different ways, citing this as the 'heart of the problem of questionnaires' (p. 384). Walford (2001) states that questionnaires do not allow the flexibility of follow-on discussions that can take place in the semi-structured

interview. Drever (2003) also states that the use of semi-structured interviews is useful for case studies, as they provide a picture that is in-depth and rich in detail.

3.2.2.3 The Use of Pupil Observations Recorded in Field Notes

I chose to observe the pupils in other lessons in order to see how they responded and contributed when being taught a variety of subjects. I felt it was important to observe them in different subject lessons in order to assess whether or not the quality and quantity of their participation varied in different classes and contexts. This would allow me to ascertain whether the comments they made about their own participation in discussion in different lessons could be corroborated, to observe points that may have been missed unconsciously (Moyles, 2002) and also to discover elements that pupils may not have felt they could mention, such as a different teacher's classroom management or teaching style. Lastly, observing pupils in other lessons would provide another type of triangulation (Thomas, 2013) to see if there was corroboration of points made by pupils about their participation in discussion in other lessons and those made by the teachers of those lessons about the case study pupils.

I used field notes to record my observations of the case study pupils, noting their responses and contributions to discussions. For this I used an observation frame (Appendix 9) as suggested by Cohen et al. (2011, p. 460). Cohen et al. (2011) see field notes as a way of collecting observational data that is relatively unstructured in comparison with highly structured, systematic observations.

3.3 Procedure and Participants

3.3.1 Research Plan and Schedule

Figure 2: The Action Research Plan and Schedule

Step Taken
1. Gain Ethical Approval
2. Initial group interview
3. Selection of case studies
4.Initial interviews with case studies
5. Initial interviews with teachers
6. Action Research Cycle 1: Intervention and Follow-Up Interviews
7. Action Research Cycle 2: Intervention and Follow-Up Interviews
8. Action Research Cycle 3: Intervention and Follow-Up Interviews
9. Action Research Cycle 4: Intervention and Follow-Up Interviews
10. Concluding interviews with case studies
11. Concluding interviews with teachers

3.3.2 Step 1: Ethics

Throughout the conduct of the research project the anonymity of the school, staff and pupils was maintained, with all ethical considerations (BERA, 2011) taken into account. My research project gained CUREC approval from the University of Oxford Ethical Committee (Appendix 1). I wrote a letter to the Headteacher to seek permission to conduct the research in the school (Appendix 2). This permission was granted. I told the participants I was undertaking academic research and also that I was interested in the topic of pupil oracy, and girls' oracy in particular. I assured them that their anonymity would be protected throughout.

At the start of the whole class interview I repeated this and also told them that I was recording the interview. I informed them that nobody in school would hear the recording and that I would keep the sound files on a password protected computer.

When I selected the pupils to be case studies I spoke to each girl individually, without any other members of the class, other pupils or staff present. I again explained the focus of the research and gave them a letter (Appendix 3) to take home and discuss with their parents. The letter explained the nature of the research, invited the pupil to take part and asked the pupil to sign and complete a slip indicating whether or not they would like to take part. I gave them time to consider the request so that they would not feel rushed or stressed. I was aware that they may feel pressurised to take part, perhaps because of my role as Deputy Head within the school, so assured them that it was fine for them to decline the request. Once they agreed to take part, I was able to contact them individually via the school intranet, again ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. I assured them that the other girls in the class would not know they had been chosen as a case study, I would not mention this in class or refer to this in any way in front of other pupils. I also informed them that they could withdraw from the project at any time.

I worked to ensure that the case study pupils were not being given extra help or support with their learning than the other pupils in the class, so as not to unfairly disadvantage those other girls. I ensured that the activities I introduced into my teaching, such as planned discussions and debates, were the kind of activities I would usually incorporate into my teaching, so as not to give my Year 10 GCSE History class an unfair advantage over the two other Year 10 History sets, following ethical guidelines (BERA, 2011).

I gave the same assurances about anonymity and confidentiality to the teachers I interviewed. I assured them that they were under no obligation to take part in the research project and highlighted that I did not want them to feel under any particular pressure due to my position in the school. All of the teachers assured me that they were keen to take part and made themselves available for interview.

3.3.3 Step 2: The Initial Group Interview, Conducted to Select the Three Case Studies

At the outset I conducted a group interview with the whole class, the purpose of which was to select my case study pupils. I prepared a list of questions (Appendix 4), which Drever (2003) recommends in order to ensure that all key points are covered, that the interview remains focused on the research topic and that there is a degree of consistency across all interviews conducted. Following Drever's (2003) advice, I began the questions with a preamble to remind the pupils what they have agreed to and the focus of the research and the interview.

I planned the initial group interview and informed the class when and where it was going to take place. I planned the interview to take place in the school meeting room. I wanted a location that was away from the classroom in order for them to move away from focusing entirely on discussions in History lessons and consider the broader aspects of class discussions in different subjects. All the girls attended, except one, who was absent that day. I conducted the group interview using the questions I had prepared (Appendix 4). I had to be vigilant to ensure that certain individuals did not dominate the group too much and to ensure everyone who wanted to contribute had a say. (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 432) but I did not want to control the flow of discussion too much, as the goal of the group interview was to establish which pupils may be appropriate for the case studies. I recorded the interview on a password protected digital device, again, as stipulated by BERA (2011). I

then examined the data that emerged from the pupils' answers to the questions posed. I identified which girls I would use as case studies, if they agreed.

3.3.4 Step 3. The Selection of the Case Studies

After the group interview I selected three case studies by consulting my field notes, examining the responses that the girls gave during the initial whole class interview and scrutinising the pupils' written work produced since the start of the academic year as part of their GCSE History course.

Pupil 1

I selected one Pupil 1 because she appears very confident in my lessons, will almost always put her hand up to answer questions and who has shown through her written work that she has an excellent grasp of historical skills and of the material studied. She is the pupil who is most ready to answer questions or even suggest an answer when she is uncertain. She is currently one of the top four attaining pupils in the class. She was absent from school when I conducted the whole class interview, but her oral and written performance indicated to me that she would be an excellent choice of case study, as she displays an eloquence and confidence unique within the class. I felt that it would be useful to hear from her about her approach to class discussions and speaking in lessons as well as her responses to the interventions that are part of the action research.

Pupil 2

I selected Pupil 2 because she appears very reluctant to contribute in class, rarely putting up her hand to ask or answer questions. When I call upon her for a response or contribution she speaks quietly and her answers are very brief. She looks visibly uncomfortable and nervous when speaking in class. Her written work is outstanding; she

writes with flair, insight and maturity and consistently gains the top marks in the class. During the whole class interview she did not make a single contribution. She was the only one not to say anything. I felt it would be useful to hear from her about why she may be reluctant to participate in class discussions, to examine how this reticence could be overcome and that it would be interesting to analyse her responses to the interventions.

Pupil 3

I selected Pupil 3 because she makes frequent contributions to class discussions. She appears confident in class and is quick to ask me to clarify a point she does not fully understand. However, she only occasionally makes pertinent or insightful contributions about historical topics in class. Her written work is often brief and lacks sufficient complexity and depth of detail. Her current attainment level is within the bottom three of the class. During the whole class interview she made some very interesting and insightful points about class discussions. She often states that she is keen to make progress and improve. I also thought it would be valuable to examine her responses to the interventions as she appears to find aspects of studying History difficult but she is happy to ask questions to help her in her learning and is clear when explaining what she does not understand.

Thus my case studies were chosen as they all appeared to have a different approach to class discussions. They may have different reasons for their respective approaches and different responses to the interventions introduced in their lessons. A comparison between their responses may be able to shed light on my research questions.

3.3.5 Step 4. The Initial Interviews with the Three Case Study Pupils

I planned the individual interviews to take place in my office. My office does not have a central location in the school and there is very little traffic immediately outside of it, therefore pupils could feel confident that few people would know they were coming to be interviewed. Even though, due to my role as Deputy Head, it could be perceived as potentially threatening to come to my office for a discussion, I felt this was a suitable location. I also ensured that the interviews did not take place across a desk, which Drever (2003) points out could be off-putting, but rather in two arm chairs not directly facing each other, where there is also a low table, being a less formal and official setting (Drever, 2003).

When I had selected the case study pupils, I invited them separately and discreetly to come for an initial discussion of the project and gave them the permission letter (Appendix 3) to take home so that they could discuss their potential participation of the project with their parents, thus conforming to BERA (2011) guidelines. All the girls agreed to be case studies. I then conducted the initial interview, using the same questions that I used in the group interview to ensure I had their views on all aspects of pupil discussion under scrutiny (Appendix 4) and in order to gain insight into their individual views on and their approach to whole class pupil discussions in lessons.

During the initial and subsequent interviews I ensured that the pupils felt as comfortable and as at-ease as possible, focussing on building up a good rapport with them (Cohen et al., 2011) and being as 'non-threatening, friendly and personable' (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 422). I followed Tuckman's (1972) recommendation to inform the interviewees about how the interviews were to be recorded.

3.3.6 Step 5. Initial Teacher Interviews

I conducted the interviews with the teachers at the start of the research project. I used two sets of questions, one at the start of the research (Appendix 7) and one at the end (Appendix 8). I again worked to ensure that the teachers being interviewed felt comfortable and at-ease during the interviews and that we were left undisturbed. I also chose to use interviews rather than questionnaires with the teachers, as I wanted to create a personal rapport with them (Cohen et al. 2011).

I chose to interview three teachers who teach all three of the girls. I wanted to introduce triangulation into my research design in order to gain different viewpoints and perspectives of pupils' responses during discussions and establish whether there is corroborative evidence (Thomas, 2013, p. 22). I was also keen to discuss the issues that emerged from the literature with my colleagues, as I feel that it is important for them to be aware of the points about girls' oracy and confidence raised during the project. At the same time, I was aware of the possible pitfalls of attempting triangulation, which, as Walford (2001) points out, is not certain to lead to corroboration. I chose staff who teach a range of subjects to see whether the pupils behave and respond differently in discussions during different lessons. I interviewed a Chemistry teacher, a Mathematics teacher and an an English teacher, all of whom taught the three pupils chosen to be case studies.

3.3.7 Steps 6 – 9: The Action Research Cycles

3.3.7.1 The Interventions: Introduction

The Interventions were designed using recommendations drawn from the literature. Alexander (2003) recommends the use of collective discussion to promote pupil oracy (p.19), and Dawes, Mercer and Wegerif (2000) and Norman (1992) recommend whole class discussion to the same end. As I was keen to encourage all the girls in the class to

speak, I also decided on basing my interventions on whole class discussions, rather than on pair or group work. Following Fullard and Dacey (2008), I planned lessons to include debates, which included open-ended questions. I also emulated the lessons of Farmer and Knight (1995) and Husbands (1996) to include role-play in the interventions to encourage pupil participation. I felt the role-play also would make the discussions more enjoyable and engaging.

3.3.7.2 The First Intervention

The first intervention was a debate on Appeasement in the 1930s. I planned a class debate as if the girls were MPs on opposite sides of the House of Commons, using both primary and secondary sources from which to plan their arguments. I gave them the material in the first half of the lesson and the debate took place in the second half of the lesson. They were told not to write out a speech, but to make three bullet points on which they could base their contributions to the debate. The girls were told to stand when making their contributions to create a more formal tenor to the discussion and to emulate the practice of MPs speaking in the House of Commons. This would give them experience of speaking in a more public setting, albeit artificial, to potentially prepare them to speak in such an environment after they leave school, thus developing their 'public voice' (Baxter, 2010). I observed the case study pupils during the class debate and recorded the lesson. I also had a discussion with the whole class after the debate about their reaction to the debate, what they had learned and how their participation could be improved further. I then conducted separate interviews with the case study pupils about their experiences of the debate and how they felt the activity could be improved next time to enhance their participation.

3.3.7.3 The Second Intervention

I then designed a second intervention, which was a United Nations debate on who started the Cold War. They were given the primary and secondary sources to study for homework, giving them more time to prepare their arguments before the debate and they had previously. They were required to stand up when speaking during the debate, for the same reasons as in the first intervention. I also recorded the debate and made field notes about the participation of the case study pupils. After this second cycle I again interviewed the pupils. Their responses prompted me to refine the intervention still further.

3.3.7.4 The Third Intervention

I designed the third intervention in order to incorporate further refinements. I gave them a week in which to prepare the topic for the debate, again in response to feedback given by the case studies in their interviews. In this lesson the debate was to take place as if the girls were in the American House of Representative. The topic was 'American Intervention in Vietnam is justified'. The girls were again required to stand when speaking to create a formal atmosphere. I again recorded the lesson, wrote my observations in my field notes and interviewed the individual case study pupils.

3.3.7.5 The Fourth Intervention

The fourth intervention was another class designed to include all the pupils. The topic was 'The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was justified'. We had studied the topic already. I gave the pupils the first part of the double lesson to prepare for the debate. The pupils were told that this was a discussion that was taking place in a room in the UN between representatives of Saddam Hussein, putting forward the Iraqi viewpoint and representatives of the US President, George W. Bush, putting forward the viewpoint of the US-led Coalition. This time the girls were permitted to sit down. Having observed that the

debates had become, in my view, increasingly lacking in spontaneity, I felt that I would allow the girls less time to prepare for this debate and to sit for this debate and observe any resulting effects. It would also give them the experience of discussing a complex topic in an environment similar to a boardroom.

3.3.8 Case Study Interviews Conducted During the Course of the Project

I conducted individual interviews with the case study pupils after each intervention, using a second set of questions, which were more closely focused on the teaching activities (Appendix 5) than the initial questions. I conducted these in order to allow me to reflect upon the interventions and refine them as required (Lewin, 1946).

3.3.9 Step 10: Final Case Study Interviews

After the fourth intervention and follow-up interviews, I then conducted final interviews with the case study pupils in order to gain their views of the project as a whole and of the potential impact of the action research interventions. I used a third set of questions for this (Appendix 6).

3.3.10 Step 11: Final Teacher Interviews

I then concluded the Action Research by interviewing the three teachers to establish whether they had perceived any difference in the participation of the three case study pupils during the duration of the project and to complete the triangulation process (Thomas, 2013). I used a second set of questions for these interviews (Appendix 8).

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Four presents the research data I gleaned from observations of pupils in my field notes, the interviews with the pupils chosen to be case studies and interviews with three teachers. I transcribed the interviews and then analysed the content, using coding, in order to translate the responses into specific categories (Kerlinger, 1970), and looking for key words, phrases, terms and themes that emerged. Once I had extracted the main relevant themes I was able to look at the evidence collected, compare and contrast data, look for patterns in the responses and compare them with the findings from the literature reviewed.

4.2 Research Results from Case Study Data

4.2.1 Case Study 1

I recorded observations of Pupil 1 in my History lessons and in her Mathematics, Chemistry and English lessons in my field notes. I noted that in all of her lessons Pupil 1 readily 'puts up her hand, asks questions and participates in class discussions'. These observations were corroborated by the comments of Teacher A in his initial interview, who said that she *'is very keen to answer a question…she is always very much jumping in her chair wanting to answer and very keen to volunteer, even if it is not going to be the right answer'*. Similarly Teacher B noticed that Pupil 1 is *'very engaged. She asks lots of questions, not with confidence, but she is very happy to try and answer questions in class discussions'*. Teacher C concurred with these thoughts to an extent saying '*she always has lots of good things to say*'. These views were corroborated by my observations of Pupil 1's level of participation in her Maths, Chemistry and English lessons. She confirmed to me in

interview that she felt less confident in her understanding in Chemistry and Physics lessons than she was in English and History. Her views on her own participation were revealed in our initial interview in which she said '*In lessons I understand more, I feel more confident. I ask more questions and talk more and the lessons where I don't, I sit back and let the people who understand more answer the questions so that I can learn off them'.*

When asked about the balance of pupil and teacher talk, Pupil 1 felt that there was a good balance of pupil and teacher talk in our History lessons, whereas, in her other lessons there was a lack of balance. She said '*In your lessons we definitely have a good balance…..sometimes in lessons where you don't understand, the ones who do understand are asking all the question'.*

When asked about whether she felt that participating in whole class discussions in a variety of lessons helped her in her learning and understanding, she said that it did, adding '*I think that it is one of the most important things because when you are answering questions you are proving both to yourself and to the teacher that you understand'.* It was interesting for me that she highlighted the importance of her understanding, as this was a key area in which I was interested.

When asked specifically about whether class discussions help her to unpick historical data she said that she felt they did, saying '*I think discussion is good, speaking it and then putting it down in writing, so that you know you fully understand it….I think it could help in that you heard someone say it kind of how we speak in class,…I think when you write an essay you write posher, you use better language'.* Thus Pupil 1 was also highlighting that discussions and putting arguments together orally in class helped her to formulate her writing in a more sophisticated way. In our final interview she restated her view that the

discussions had helped her in her learning and understanding and in her writing of History, saying they gave her '*a deeper understanding'* of the topic being studied.

With regard to factors that may prevent pupils from contributing to class discussions, Pupil 1 felt this could happen when pupils had not been given enough time to understand what was being discussed. She recommended that the teacher '*let people read up the night before so that everyone feels they know what we are talking about'.*

Pupil 1 said that she felt pair work and group work were useful but also said *'I am a bit talkative, so I get a bit sidetracked'*. She said she thought it was more useful than pair and group work for her learning when the whole class was discussing together. The issue of how pupils behave in lessons towards each other is a factor that, certainly in the view of Pupil 1, has an impact on pupil participation. She said that '[*in whole class discussions] people feel more inclined to listen to other people and not to speak over them, whereas when you are in your pair you can just say 'no, no, no, that's wrong'. I think it is better when the teacher is there to say 'ok, that's your opinion, now speak yours'.* This view challenges the view of Coles (2010) that whole class discussion can be jeopardised by pupils' poor listening skills and that for this reason group work can be preferable when promoting pupil oracy.

Pupil 1 referred to the role of confidence before I explicitly asked her about it. I have already noted that she said she felt more confident in lessons where she understood more. I wrote in my field notes that in History and English lessons '*she appears confident in class and will almost always try to participate in discussions*', but she does not always appear confident in her understanding. She looked '*less confident'* in her understanding in her Physics and Mathematics lessons. I inferred this lack of confidence from her facial

expressions, which '*displayed uncertainty'*, and through the way in which she put up her hand when she was uncertain of the accuracy of her reply, which was '*tentative'* . Both Teacher A and Teacher B said that she often claimed not to be confident in their subjects. Teacher A said that *'she cheerfully admits she is not good at Science and she struggles at Chemistry*'. Teacher B corroborated this observation, noting that *'if you talk to her she says "I am not good at Maths", which is why she is always asking questions….she is massively lacking in confidence, that hinders her in Maths'*. Thus Teacher B felt strongly that Pupil 1 is confident to participate in class, but not confident in her own ability, and the latter was holding her back in her learning. Teacher C's view of Pupil 1 corroborated this. He said that *'she doesn't mind talking in front of others….she might apologise a little bit and look around and go red if she said something she felt did not actually suit the moment*'.

In the interview conducted after the third intervention she said that she was enjoying the class discussions more now than she did in the first intervention on the subject of Appeasement. She said '*I think I enjoyed this one more because at the beginning you are a bit nervous but the last we did I was not so nervous. I [also] noticed some people in our lesson were speaking more'.* Here she appears to be suggesting that she and others had become accustomed to speaking during the class debates and had thus become more confident and less nervous, as they were more familiar with the type of classroom activity.

Pupil 1 was able to provide some valuable insight into possible factors that prevent pupils from contributing to whole class discussions. She indicated that she felt that she, and possibly others, were prevented from contributing in class by being concerned about the negative reaction of others. She said that being confident about her understanding in class was not the only reason that she sometimes appeared reluctant to contribute in class. She

said that she did not want to appear to look '*stupid*' by asking a question that has already been asked. I asked her to expand on this:

Researcher: '*Look a bit stupid to…'*

Pupil 1: '*Look a bit stupid to the teacher and the girls'*

Researcher: '*Which one are you more worried about?'*

Pupil 1*: 'The girls'*

Pupil 1's views about how she feels in the class were supported by those of Teacher B in the latter's concluding interview. She felt that Pupil 1's participation had changed during the duration of the project, explaining that initially *'she was not so willing to risk it, but as she trusts the class and I suppose me as a teacher, [now] she is happier to answer something which she might not get right'*. In our second interview I asked her if other girls ever said anything disparaging to her if she contributed in lessons. She replied '*Not necessarily to me, but people have made snide comments…there was a class where if someone said something, people made nasty comments'.*

The potential impact of the relationships between the girls on Pupil 1 was strongly emphasised by Teacher C who said *'She is very easily set back by friendship problems. She is keen to be in with the most popular girls, but she had problems with those girls further down the school, girls she now wants to be friends with'.*

Pupil 1 seems to lack some confidence in class because she is worried about the possible judgement of her peers. With regard to her confidence in her understanding, she will put up her hand to ask questions and to participate in class discussions, even if she does not have a strong understanding of the topic. Teacher B felt this was because '*she is very conscientious and very focused on doing her best*'. It was interesting that both Teacher A and Teacher B noted that she has often said overtly that she is not '*good*' at their respective subjects, again highlighting her lack of confidence in her ability and understanding.

The data suggested that the classroom environment and social relationships are important to Pupil 1, but they do not appear to prevent her from participating in whole class discussions. Her contributions to class discussions and levels of confidence reveal a complex set of factors, such as her apparent desire to learn and make progress and her relationships with the other girls in the class. In her final interview I asked Pupil 1 about the project as a whole and whether it had helped her in her learning and understanding of History. She replied '*yes probably, I like discussions and debates and I sit with another pupil [not a case study pupil], who also does, so we enjoy them together*'. This again suggests the links for Pupil 1 between her learning and her relationships with the other girls in the class. Whilst it appears that Pupil 1 is strongly affected by these relationships, this does not seem to impede her willingness to participate in class. However, the data suggests that she is possibly more adversely affected than she may realise. These factors could be preventing her from participating more actively, which, in turn, could be limiting her own learning at times and preventing her from building up her confidence more effectively.

4.2.2 Case Study 2

I identified Pupil 2 in my case study notes as a girl who *'appears to lack confidence, rarely puts up her hand and seems reluctant to be involved in class discussion'*. I also wrote that '*when asked a question she blushes and seems very hesitant*'. When I asked her to be a case study for this research she asked if she could see the questions and write her answers, rather than take part in interviews, which perhaps revealed the degree to which she felt uncomfortable discussing her ideas with a teacher and was possibly an example of a girl lacking confidence and wishing to be 'invisible' as suggested by Swann (2009). My observations of Pupil 2 were corroborated by the observations of Teacher A, who said she '*always sounds surprised…she is always taken aback'* when she is asked a question. After he said this I noted the same reaction from her in my field notes. Teacher B did not mention this, but did confirm that in her Mathematics lessons '*she will never volunteer…she will never put herself out there*'. Teacher C's initial comments about Pupil 2 were in some ways very different. He agreed that Pupil 2 appears '*anxious*' and she did not like to be '*put on the spot*'. But Teacher C then went on to say that she '*complains a lot'* and is a bit '*teenagerish'* [sic]. He placed a great deal of emphasis on her relationship with the other girls, saying '*she wants to be popular'* and that she tries '*to appeal to girls in the group who may not be as cooperative as her*'. This was a side to Pupil 2 that I had not seen and which the other teachers did not mention. It corroborated Pupil's 1 emphasis on the importance that social relationships have on girls in the classroom. The observations also indicate how pupils can behave differently in different lessons, due to perhaps the teacher or the mix of pupils in a particular group or set. Teacher C agreed with Teacher A and B, and my own assessment, that she is '*very able'*. When I observed Pupil 2 in her English lesson, she behaved very much as she did in my lessons, that is, quiet, well behaved and not putting up her hand to volunteer answers. When I asked her about her behaviour in that lesson she said that it had been because I was there, showing the potential impact

upon a pupil of an observer, and this case a known observer, who is also the Deputy Head, in a lesson. Overall, despite some discrepancies in teacher perceptions, it could be concluded that she is a very able pupil who appears reluctant to speak in class for several reasons mainly due to her social relationships in different lessons.

Pupil 2 said she felt comfortable with the balance of teacher and pupil talk generally in her lessons and specifically in her History lessons. She said that the amount of discussion depended on the subject, explaining '*we discuss more in lessons like RS and English because there are much more debatable topics than we have in Maths and Physics'*.

Pupil 2 said that found whole class discussion very helpful in her lessons generally. She saw classroom discussion as a way in which she could learn from her ideas and also saw it as a means of communication between pupil and teacher, a way that the teacher could ensure the pupil understood the topic. She also saw it as a means by which she could improve her learning and understanding. She said '*It is definitely something I find very beneficial – hearing other people's ideas. I feel that when I put up my hand and share my ideas it consolidates my knowledge…. I [also] think it is a good way for teachers to know who is comfortable with what is being covered.* Here is was interesting that she highlighted the importance of her consolidating knowledge, whereas Pupil 1 had pointed to the benefits of discussion for her understanding.

Pupil 2 also found discussion helpful when unpicking and understanding Historical data. She said, '*I think it is very useful….it helps the students to hear what the teacher has to say, what other students have to say'.* When interviewed after the first debate she said that sharing ideas and working together with her partner had been useful. She said the same after the fourth debate. I told her that I had given them less time to prepare for the fourth

debate as I had felt that the third debate had been lacking in energy and spontaneity, perhaps because the class had been given a week to prepare. When discussing the fourth debate she said *'I really researched it, but not for a long amount of time, which meant you had to learn it and you had to prepare and know it off by heart. I feel like now I know it'*. So although she had initially said that she liked to have time to prepare before whole class discussions, she could see the benefit of having to do this quickly so as to add energy and dynamism to the activity. She also reiterated the importance of knowing the material, rather than understanding it.

When asked about factors that may prevent pupils from contributing to whole class discussions, Pupil 2 felt that it was easier to take part if she had been given time to prepare in advance of the lesson. She said *'We read pages in the textbook before and we come into the class more confident, it makes it easier to discuss and we are not starting from the beginning..I find it more enjoyable'.* These comments support Bakhtin's (1981) suggestion that dialogic talk promotes the collaborative construction of meaning for pupils.

With regard to the advantages and disadvantages of pair work and group work, Pupil 2 said that she could become disengaged when taking part in pair and group work and it could also lead to a lack of balance between pupil contributions to the task. *'I do find it very enjoyable but I think sometimes it can lead to going off topic or the group is very unbalanced, so some people are working quite hard and some are not contributing as much. It is very enjoyable, but I don't know if it is always as effective'.*

Pupil 2 mentioned the issue of confidence before I specifically referred to it. She brought it up when discussing whether the amount of class discussion she had engaged in had

changed during the course of her education. She said *'I think I have gained more confidence, especially when I am more comfortable with teachers I know. That it is a friendly relationship in the classroom and I feel I can contribute comfortably….so I definitely feel that I have developed more and contribute more over the years'..*

Her views were interesting, as they challenged the views of Teacher A and Teacher B , who both said she was very quiet in lessons and rarely contributed in lessons without being explicitly invited to participate.

Pupil 2's comments about how she felt during the actual debates provided interesting insight into the pupil experience. In her second interview she described how she felt during the class discussion on Appeasement '*...standing up, everyone looking at you, arguing out a point, being passionate and trying to get across everything without reading off the page, which is what I am used to doing – I found it quite pressurising, but I am sure it is good for my confidence to practice those kind of exercises'.*

After the next intervention, the debate on the start of the Cold War, she said that her confidence had increased, explaining '*you really ease into it…the more we got into it, the much more fun it was and the much more educational it was…I felt in the last one I was forced to stand up, the girls in my team were saying 'come on!, but this time I chose to stand up, I stood up more than once. I felt more comfortable'.* Her comments suggest that her confidence increased exponentially during the series of debates. Pupil 2's use of the word '*comfortable*' suggests that how she feels in the classroom is important to her. She did not mention that she was concerned about the views of her peers, apart from when she talked about standing up in the class with '*everyone looking at you'*. From these comments and from the observations of Teacher A and Teacher B is appears that she

prefers to work in small groups and not speak in front of the whole class. As Teacher B said, '*she would rather the class got started and then me to go to her to give her another explanation*' rather than ask or answer a question in front of the whole class. Teacher C placed much more emphasis on the social make-up of the class and felt that this had a significant impact on her participation. He said that when she was giving a speech in one of his lessons she '*wanted to signal to the girls that she was not good enough at it, that she shared all of their qualms and reservations*'. He felt that this had led to her intentionally underperforming, thus inhibiting her learning.

During the final interview Pupil 2 looked back at her participation in the project and particularly at the issue of her own confidence. She said '*it is weird to know that at the beginning of this year, before standing up and doing it, I would get so nervous and worked up about it….I have definitely broken through this and am trying to ignore feelings that are just unhelpful*'. When I asked her if she thought it would help her in the future she said that she thought it would, '*definitely, for interviews, for work in general, talking to people you don't know, deals or business, anything, just helpful with confidence'*.

The data collected from the interviews with Pupil 2 suggested that she had grown in confidence during the course of the project. There was also evidence of this from my field notes. During the final debate on the invasion of Iraq, she was joining in frequently, adding points, even becoming '*quite animated whilst defending Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait*'. I particularly enjoyed her final comments in her concluding interview '*I am definitely much happier walking into History lessons now and most lessons*'.

4.2.3 Case Study 3

The data from my field notes on Pupil 3 indicate that she '*will put up her hand to answer questions and ask if she does not understand. She does not seem confident in her understanding but is focused and on task. Sits up/takes notice'*. Her written work is not strong. She appears ready to ask and answer questions in class if she does not understand but will not always offer contributions to class discussions. These observations were supported by Teacher A, who said '*she will answer if she is asked, but will not be jumping out of her chair to answer….she is not eager to put her hand up'*. Teacher B's observations were different '*her hand is straight up – she is always one of the first ones'*. Teacher B commented that Pupil 3 '*finds Maths quite easy and has more confidence in it than some of the other girls'*. Thus it appeared that Pupil 3's levels of participation varied in different lessons. Teachers A and B both felt that she was confident and able in their subjects, whereas I did not feel this was the case for Pupil 3 in History. Teacher C painted a more complex picture of Pupil 3 saying that '*she does not say an awful lot voluntarily in class…she is hard working and does all of her work*'. He also said that '*she can be withdrawn because it suits her….she only puts her hand up 20% of the time*'.

Towards the end of the project Pupil 3 did not attend the interview slots we arranged and did not respond to my messages on the school's intranet and I chose not to discuss this with her in our lessons. I believe that she withdrew *de facto* from the project, as she was not gaining high marks in her written work and also gained a low mark in her end of year History examination. In the last debate, despite gentle encouragement from me, she doodled in her homework diary for the whole lesson. It was difficult for me to discuss this with her, as she was absent from school with illness for two weeks. I also wanted to tread carefully, as I could tell she was upset and I did not want her to feel in any way pressurised to take part in the project interviews. For this reason I decided to discuss the matter with

her gently after the end of the project. When I went through her examination paper (as I did individually with all my pupils) she was tearful and said that she was very worried about her History. She also said that she had not looked at the school's intranet for a while, which I felt was her way of saying that she was sorry she had not felt able to take part in the two final project interviews. Although I was disappointed that she had withdrawn from the project, I saw this as a potential hazard of action research and of working with individual case study pupils. It also revealed more possible connections between learning, confidence and participation. As her confidence declined, so did her participation in our activities and her willingness to be part of the project.

When asked about the balance of pupil and teacher talk in a variety of lessons Pupil 3 said **'***there is too much teacher talk and it causes me in particular to get bored easily because there is nothing keeping me motivated to focus. …it depends on the teacher. In History I like how we do a lot of the teacher talking but we also have a bit of discussion and we have games and stuff where we discuss and then we present'*. This was also interesting, as she was also the only pupil to make frequent reference to finding it difficult to focus in lessons and to focus on the impact of teacher talk.

Pupil 3 suggested several benefits of whole class discussion, such as *'you can get other people's point of view', 'you can develop your own answers more when you are talking rather than writing about them'* and *'if you have not understood what was said maybe someone else will put it in different terms, then you understand*'. She also said that it was a way of the teacher identifying who had understood, saying *' if you answer a question and it is wrong the teacher will point it out then and there'.* Thus Pupil 3 corroborated Pupil 1's focus on the importance of understanding in her lessons.

With regard to the specific benefits in relation to learning and understanding of History, she reiterated her point that discussion was beneficial in History lessons, as the pupil could hear others' ideas, saying that *'sometimes I won't understand it just from the data and with everyone else's ideas about this then it is more helpful than just by itself'.* She said that during the debates on Appeasement and the start of the Cold War, the discussions had helped her in her understanding, as the discussions *'put both sides in easy terms, it split them apart and showed who thought what and developed the answers*'. This was interesting as discussion being a potential means of developing multiple perspectives was not highlighted in the literature.

When asked about factors that could prevent pupils from participation in class discussions, Pupil 3 said that she found whole class discussions '*difficult to find points well backed-up and to present the full argument*'. When I asked how she felt she could improve she said that she could '*maybe try to write points in more detail instead of just writing them in note form, maybe fully write the answer out separately and practise speaking them'.* When I observed her in her Chemistry lesson I noted that she *'is always on task but she did not put up her hand at any point during the lesson, either to contribute an answer or ask for help*'. In her Maths lesson she was much more willing to participate and offer solutions, as Teacher B had suggested. Pupil 3 also said that it would help her to participate more in class if she were given more time. She said '*me personally I need quite a lot of time to get my head around it, sort it all out*'. This view corroborated Barnes' (2010) view that pupils should be given time in order to formulate their thoughts and comments in preparation for a discussion.

Pupil 3 said that she did not always enjoy pair and group work. She felt that it depended on how well she felt she knew the topic. She said '*I feel if I don't know it well I won't really*

contribute to the discussion…I would rather let other people in the group who actually know more about it take over….but when I contribute it keeps me focused and actually listening and I think I have got better and better at that'. Her comments corroborated those of Teacher A, who had noted about Pupil 3 that '*she will get the right answer but will be quite happy to let someone else get the right answer first'*.

Pupil 3 spoke about being confident in her understanding when working on her homework but not about being confident about speaking in whole class discussions. She also did not highlight the matter of the classroom environment or speaking in front of her peers. However, Teacher B noted of Pupil 3 '*she takes time to warm up to people'*, citing this as a reason why Pupil 3's participation has increased since September and once again pointing out the potential link between participation and there being a classroom environment conducive to pupil discussion taking place. Unfortunately I did not have the chance to discuss the issue with her in a final interview.

The data suggests that Pupil 3 felt that the most important factor affecting her participation was the extent to which she understood the topic. The data collected from my interviews with teachers and from my field notes suggest that Pupil 3 acts very differently in different lessons and indeed does not always act consistently within the lessons of a specific subject, as revealed in my own experiences of her in my lessons and the observations of Teacher C. As Teacher B said '*It depends on which Pupil 3 arrives at the lesson that day*', indicating that she is erratic in her moods and that possibly there are factors both within and external to the classroom that can affect her participation.

4.3 Case Study Data Measured Against the Literature Reviewed

4.3.1 Introduction

A scrutiny of the data collected sheds light on my research questions. Several significant themes emerged in relation to girls' oracy and cognition and to girls' oracy and confidence.

Key themes that emerged in connection with girls' oracy and cognition relate to the balance of pupil and teacher talk in lessons, the generic benefits of whole class discussion and specific benefits in relation to learning and understanding in History.

A clear link also emerged between girls' oracy and confidence. The impact of social relationships and the classroom environment also appears to be of crucial importance to girls and is linked to the issue of confidence.

Interesting data on the topic of pair and group work shed light on matters related to both cognition and pupil confidence.

4.3.2 Girls Oracy and Cognition

4.3.2.1 The Balance of Pupil and Teacher Talk in Lessons

All three case study pupils agreed that some, but not all, teachers create a good balance between pupil and teacher talk in lessons, thus creating the conditions necessary for a 'dialogic classroom' (Alexander, 2008a). Thus the role of the teacher emerged as significant: if the teacher does not allow talk to take place then it simply will not. Their views support Thompson's (2007) view that teachers are often unaware of how much of

the lesson is dominated by their talk, thus preventing effective pupil discussion from taking place.

4.3.2.2 The Generic Benefits of Whole Class Discussion

All three case study pupils said that they enjoyed class discussion. They highlighted several benefits of whole class discussion in their lessons. They said that it is fun and they enjoy the lessons in which it takes place. They also said it helped them in their learning and consolidating their understanding. This mirrors both Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) ideas of the value of talk between a teacher and a pupil and Mercer's (1995) emphasis on that of the value of talk between peers. Both Vygotsky (1962, 1978) and Mercer (1995) felt that such talk promotes cognitive development and this is confirmed by several comments made by the pupils. In addition, several pupils said that the discussions helped them to remember material, which Mercer and Littleton (2007) point to as being an important type of learning but they distinguish this from intellectual progression, and this distinction is also made by the pupils, thus corroborating Mercer and Littleton's (2007) view as well as Smith et al.'s (2009) conclusion that students improve their conceptual understanding by debate and discussion. The literature does not focus on the link between lessons being fun or enjoyable and pupil cognition, but all three pupils clearly felt this was an important for them.

4.3.2.3 Specific Benefits in relation to Learning and Understanding in History

The case study pupils stated that discussion helps them to consolidate their understanding when studying History. Pupils also pointed out that it helped to build their arguments, supporting the view of Clark (2001) who said that speaking and listening in History lessons helps pupils to construct arguments.

Pupils also claimed that discussion helped them to understand the different viewpoints of historical debates and arguments, corroborating Fullard and Dacey's (2008) point that pupil talk helps with the marshalling of ideas and listening to and evaluating historical arguments (Cohen, 1994).

In addition, the pupils said it helped them when they were writing. Pupil 1's specific explanation of how, whilst not particularly well expressed, illustrated how she remembered what was said in class and then honed the analysis ('write posher…use better language') when she was writing about the topic. This observation goes some way to supporting Husbands' (1996) point about the complex and difficult nature of the language used by historians and the importance of exploring language in the History classroom. Pupil 1's comment is also interesting as she made the link between her oral and written skills, a link which Fullard and Dacey (2008) found to be important and valuable, with the former leading to improvement in the latter, as confirmed by Pupil 1, whilst at the same time corroborating Luff's (2001) view that speaking and listening helps pupils develop their ideas when they then go on to write.

All three pupils pointed to a variety of different strategies that helped them to improve the quality of their discussions, notably giving pupils sufficient time to prepare, working with a partner before the whole class discussion, taking part in frequent discussions to build confidence. Kitson et al. (2011) and Haydn et al. (2014) both recommend giving pupils 'thinking time' and all three pupils confirmed the value and importance of this. However, I found that the lengthy preparation time I gave to the class before the third intervention resulted in a debate that was lacklustre and predictable. I therefore reduced the preparation time for the last debate in order to inject some energy and dynamism into the fourth debate. Both Pupil 1 and Pupil 2 said that they enjoyed the last debate the

most, both using the word '*fun*'. They said it was the most enjoyable debate because they were used to speaking in whole class discussion and because the discussion became quite '*rowy'* [sic] (Pupil 2) and '*there were lots of like arguments going on at the time*' [sic](Pupil 1). Again, fun is not mentioned in the literature, but appears to be of significance to two of the case study pupils.

It can also be suggested that the activities recommended in the literature to promote oracy were successful. I chose activities that always involved the whole class, as suggested by Haydn et al. (2015) so that all are involved and specific pupils do not dominate. In my field notes I observed that all pupils took part in all the discussions, with all individuals contributing several times in each separate activity. I also created activities that involved the whole class in role play, a technique recommended to generate oracy by Husbands (2010) and ensured that the activities involved the discussion of key historical debates, following the suggestion of Fullard and Dacey (2008) who set up their debates using questions such as 'Why was there a Civil War in 1642?'. These are topics that have led to debates amongst historians, particularly the first three.

4.3.2.4 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Pair Work and Group Work

The case study pupils highlighted some of the advantages and disadvantages of pair and group work. Pupil 2 felt it helped her to prepare for the first and fourth debates. Overall, the case study pupils saw more disadvantages than advantages to group or pair work. Pupil 3 felt that it sometimes led to an imbalance, with more pupils being involved in the task than others. It is interesting that the data would indicate that pupils value whole class discussion over pair or group work. This again challenges the assertions of Smith et al. (2009), Mercer (2013) and several other researchers, including the findings of Hämäläinen and Vähäsantanen (2011) in their meta-analysis that highlight the benefits of group work.

Yet this data does support Mercer's (2013) view that it can have little educational value. It could be that these pupils in my school have not been taught how to work effectively in groups or could indicate an issue connected to pupil relationships in my school and is thus possibly linked to the issue of social relationships and their impact on oracy.

4.3.3 Girls' Oracy and Confidence

4.3.3.1 The Role of Confidence

The importance of confidence arose in my field notes, in my case study interviews and in my interviews with teachers. Case study pupils highlighted a lack of confidence as being a factor that prevented them from taking part in class discussions. They also thought that it was possible to develop confidence by building in repeated activities to promote whole class discussion and creating a classroom environment that promoted pupil confidence to speak in front of peers.

The inclusion of whole class discussions in lessons was seen by Pupils 1 and 2 as a way in which pupil confidence could be increased. This supports Jones' (2010) findings that pupils gain confidence in the classroom by participating in a range of activities in which interaction is required and Thompson (2007) who more specifically pointed to talk lessons enabling pupils to develop greater confidence.

Both Teacher A and Teacher B referred to confidence when discussing the levels of participation of all three pupils, suggesting there were links between the two. Pupil 1 and the teachers differentiated between confidence in understanding and confidence to speak in whole class discussions. Although Pupil 3 did not overtly discuss confidence, there was a thread running through her interview data that indicated she did not feel confident in either her performance in, or her understanding of, History and, when this was the case,

she tended to sit back and let others do the work. Compared to Pupils 1 and 2, Pupil 3 displays the greatest variety in her levels of participation. Thus confidence, whether it be confidence in understanding or confidence to speak in front of peers, emerged as a key factor affecting pupil participation.

When asked in their concluding interviews if the participation of the case study pupils in whole class discussions had changed during the duration of the project, the three teachers did not agree with each other. Teachers A and C agreed that Pupil 1's participation had remained at a consistent level, whilst Teacher B said that she felt it had increased as Pupil 1 had got to know her during the year. All three teachers agreed that Pupil 2's participation levels had discernibly, if not drastically, increased and also that Pupil 3's levels were erratic. The reasons for these changes in the levels of Pupil 2 and Pupil 3's participation was not clear from the data. Pupil 1 said that she had become more confident in History, but in her other lessons her participation still depended on her understanding and progress in each subject. Pupil 2 said that she felt more comfortable and confident to participate in History and in other lessons due to her participation in the project, thus supporting the views of the teachers. Pupil 3 was not available for comment on this point.

4.3.3.2 The Role of Social Relationships and the Classroom Environment

Pupils 1 and 2 and the teachers discussed the role of the classroom environment and social relationships between pupils in lessons. Even though these could be seen to be distinct topics, the data shows strong links between the two. Pupils 1 and 2 often used the word '*comfortable*', illustrating the importance of the classroom not being an oppressive space, as Barnes (2010) emphasises. Again we see the value of creating a mutually supportive atmosphere, as propounded by Alexander (2008a) and the potential impact of

how the pupil feels in the classroom. Pupil 2 highlighted the impact of everyone looking at her and how she became more used to speaking in front of the class. Thus the data indicates that girls see the classroom environment as having a significant impact on how comfortable they feel about participating in whole class discussions and it is thus a factor of which teachers should be aware.

Pupil 1 seemed most affected by the environment in the classroom and the possibility of other pupils making unkind comments when she spoke in whole class discussions. She spoke of being 'judged' by her peers. Pupil 2 only mentioned this in passing and Pupil 3 did not allude to this at all. Teacher C brought this up as a factor affecting all three pupils, in different ways and from the data it emerged as a key element affecting pupil participation. It also could be seen that the pupils developed certain 'survival strategies' in lessons, such as Pupil 1 possibly being more confident about how she could make progress that she portrayed in class, Pupil 2's signal to other girls that she lacked confidence and shared their 'qualms and reservations' and Pupil 3's tendency to 'withdraw because it suits her'. This revealed a factor not highlighted in the literature but showing that pupils possibly adapt their behaviour in ways that can affect their participation in class.

Pupil 1's worry about making a mistake and looking stupid challenges Barnes' (1976) view that it is the teacher's presence that alters the way pupils participate and that pupils are trying to gain the teacher's approval in lessons. Whilst this may well be a valid point, the pupils here suggest that speaking in front of their peers significantly affects their participation. They did not mention trying to gain the approbation of their teachers. However, it is clear from the data that there are links between understanding, confidence, the environment in the classroom and the relationships between the pupils themselves.

The responses of the girls supported the suggestions in the literature that girls' oracy is affected by the environment in the classroom and their concerns about their relationships with other girls in the lessons (Goodwin, 2006; Cruddas and Haddock, 2003). It would appear that teachers should work to create a supportive learning environment, which includes being watchful of any relationships between girls or the development of pupils' 'survival strategies' that could impede learning.

Pupil 1 and Teacher C's comments also highlighted the complex nature of the participation of girls in class discussions and brought to my attention the possible need to investigate the nature of pupil relationships within my school, a topic outside the boundaries of this research, but of importance to me in my role as pastoral Deputy Head. It is a something not specifically raised in the literature, although Cruddas and Haddock (2003) refer to research indicating that girls learn better when they are working with their friends. It is an aspect of girls' behaviour that could warrant further investigation, with potential strategies implemented to reduce this apparent barrier to girls participating in lessons.

Chapter Five

Findings and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The final section contains a summary of the results of the research, focusing on providing answers to the three questions which emerged from the Literature Review, commentary on the limitations of the evidence collected and conclusions reached from the research findings.

5.2 Question 1. Which Teaching Strategies Might Encourage Girls' Oracy in History Lessons?

It emerged that there is a range of teaching strategies that can encourage girls' oracy in History lessons such as whole class discussions based around topics that have proved to be controversial in nature and have led to considerable historical debate, as suggested in the literature (Fullard and Dacey, 2008). Role-play was also woven effectively into the interventions in order to add interest and engagement to the activities, again as recommended in the literature (Husbands, 1996). The data Illustrates that the pupils enjoyed the debates and that they became more confident after each debate, showing again how confidence and thus participation can be built by the teacher.

The evidence also strongly points to the importance of pupils being given time to digest topics to be discussed and to prepare for such activities. Several pupils said that they need time in order to participate more actively. If they had time to prepare, they were more likely to participate. This did not mean that they wanted to read their contributions from prepared scripts, but that they were prepared to be put on the spot and think on their feet if they had time to understand the topic for themselves. Thus the teacher should ensure that the pupils are given that time, either as part of a homework exercise or built into

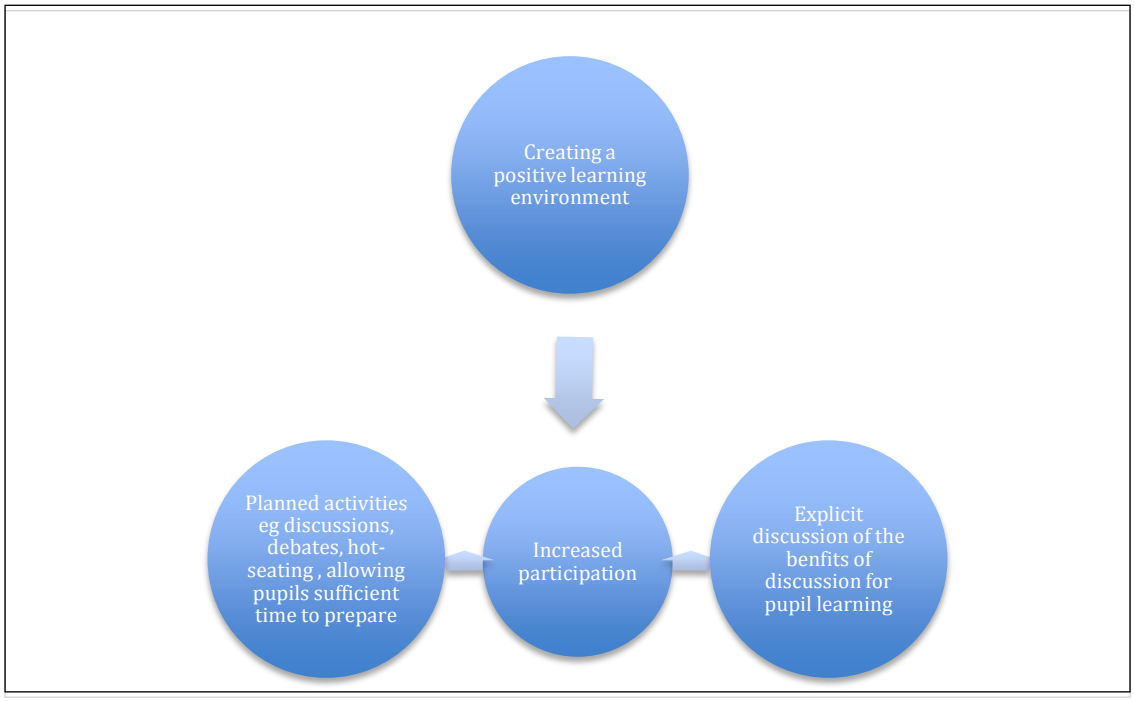
lesson time. Only Pupil 1 felt confident enough to look over material quickly and contribute to the whole class discussion. The evidence also points to the value of giving pupils time to talk in pairs before trying out their ideas in front of the whole class, thus corroborating this suggestion of Mercer and Littleton (2007). It is also important to consider Baxter's (2010) recommendation to give girls practice in speaking in unfamiliar contexts. This potential clash in the literature can possibly be resolved by the suggestion that it is beneficial for girls to learn how to speak effectively when they are 'put on the spot' and that by initially giving them time to prepare and opportunities to practice, they will in time improve and feel more confident to speak in a wide range of different contexts and before familiar and unfamiliar audiences.

In addition, the evidence points to the importance of the teacher creating a positive learning environment in the classroom. The evidence indicates that pupils contribute more when the environment is comfortable, so the teacher should ensure that she or he models effective, reasoned discussion with the whole class, as recommended by Webb, Nemer and Ing (2006), promoting learning as Alexander (2008a) suggests through dialogue where teacher and students listen to each other and consider different ideas and options.

It is also clear that explicitly discussing the role played by discussion is valuable. The data collected confirms that when the pupils were informed about the project and when the topics of pupil participation and class discussions were spoken about with the case study pupils, they became more aware of their value to pupil learning. It was clear that the case study pupils, especially Pupil 2, made considerable effort to participate more. Pupils 2 and 3 felt that it was actually taking part in the series of debates that had improved their confidence and participation.

The findings can be summarised as follows:

Figure 3: Teaching strategies that encourage oracy in History lessons.



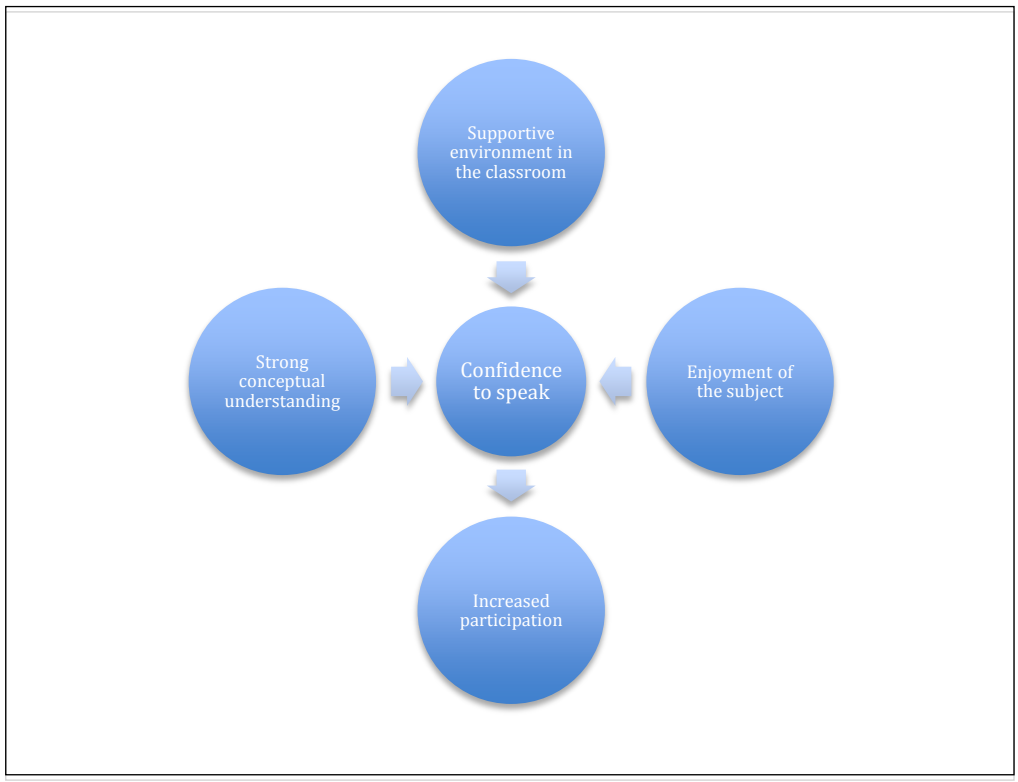
5.3 Question 2: Which Factors Appear to Prevent Girls From Participating Actively in Whole Class Discussions in History Lessons?

The evidence collected pointed to a range of factors that prevent girls from actively participating in whole class discussions. It can be suggested that there are three main factors that limit girls' confidence and consequently their participation in class discussion, as it appears that there is an inextricable link between the two. These limiting factors are the lack of a supportive environment in the classroom; the lack of a strong conceptual understanding of the topic under discussion; and a lack of personal enjoyment of the subject. If these factors are lacking, it appears that the pupil does not feel sufficiently confident and is reluctant to participate and may develop certain 'survival strategies' to mask a lack of confidence. The evidence suggests that, once the pupil feels more confident, she is more likely to participate actively in whole class discussions. Thus the

onus on the teacher to build pupil confidence, by ensuring that the atmosphere in the classroom is conducive to whole class discussion (Barnes, 2010; Jones, 2010) and that risk-taking, disagreement and inaccuracy are not only permissible but are encouraged (Harris et al., 2014). The teacher should also ensure that pupils have been given time and support so that they have a strong conceptual understanding of the topic (Kitson et al., 2011; Haydn et al., 2014). The evidence collected indicates that once the pupil has gained the confidence to speak, she is more likely to participate more actively in whole class discussions, thus confidence can be seen to be a prerequisite of active, voluntary participation. Then the onus is again on the teacher to set up activities such as debates, discussions and role plays in order to promote oracy, which in turn improves pupils' learning and understanding in History.

The findings can be summarised as follows:

Figure 4: Factors leading to increased pupil participation in whole class discussions



5.4 Question 3: To What Extent Does the Encouragement of Girls' Oracy in History Lessons Improve their Cognition and Confidence?

The evidence indicates that pupils found whole class discussion helped them to improve their cognition, both generally and specifically in History. They commented on how it helped them to remember the material as well as to cement and consolidate their understanding. Thus the data collected supports the many claims in the literature of the benefits of promoting pupil talk in order to improve cognition in learning generally (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; Mercer and Littleton, 2007; Barnes, 2010; Alexander, 2008b) and in History specifically (Husbands, 2010; Fullard and Dacey, 2008; Harris et al., 2014). This was apparent not only in the responses to the interviews, but also in my observations of the pupils participating in class discussions recorded in my field notes. The evidence also shows that promoting oracy helps pupils to construct historical arguments (Clark, 2001).

However the evidence also suggested that promotion of pupil oracy only improves learning and understanding to an extent. The evidence also indicated that this is the case when the discussion and the preparation thereof involves a range of different learning activities, such as reading, note-taking, pair work and pupil preparation. It can be less effective when introduced quickly and undertaken as a quick lesson exercise, thus corroborating the importance once again of building in thinking time for pupil talk exercises in History (Kitson et al., 2011 and Haydn et al., 2015). This would suggest that the thinking and preparation time is also key to the promotion of pupil learning and understanding as well as the actual performance of the discussions, although the reduction of preparation time before the final debate seemed to create a more dynamic and enjoyable debate for Pupils 1 and 2.

The evidence collected also indicates that pupils notice that taking part in class discussions helps them when they come to writing answers to questions set. It helps them in their understanding of topics and to remember pertinent details. But the evidence did not convincingly show that it helped them to structure their ideas well or produced clear, well-supported arguments and this area thus warrants further investigation.

5.5 The Limitations of the Research Project

Whilst the evidence collected sheds useful and valuable light on the role of pupil oracy in the learning and teaching of Year 10 girls studying History GCSE, it was unable to corroborate some of the wider questions posed in this research. Firstly, whilst the evidence corroborated the findings of researchers who focus on girls' oracy, it was impossible to compare the experiences and reactions of the girls with those of boys involved in similar learning activities, as there are no boys in the single-sex school. Secondly, it is impossible to measure whether, after the intervention, the girls will develop their experiences further in other subjects and also beyond school and will find a more strident public voice than some of their female counterparts who are currently struggling for a variety of reasons to redress the gender gap in the workplace in the United Kingdom. Nonetheless, Pupil 2 felt optimistic that it would help her with this. In addition, the withdrawal of Pupil 3 meant that the data collected contained some gaps. Despite these limitations, the evidence can be used to illustrate to teachers how to promote pupil oracy in History lessons and the value that this can have in promoting pupil understanding and individual confidence and willingness to contribute to discussions, perhaps not only in History lessons but in other lessons and beyond.

5.5 Next Steps

At the conclusion of the research project I shared my findings with colleagues, notably the Heads of Year and Department Heads, and collaborated with them to introduce a whole school focus during the next academic year entitled 'Powerful Language and Public Voice'. Built on my research findings, a programme of assemblies, PSHE modules and a bank of teaching strategies has been compiled, which focus on encouraging the girls in my school to speak with greater confidence in a wide variety of situations and environments. I am launching the programme at the start of the school year with an INSET to staff, an article in the school's Teaching and Learning newsletter and a whole school assembly. I am also scheduled to speak on this topic at the London ResearchEd conference in September, where teachers from many schools will be present. Thus I feel that my research will lead to some further valuable teacher collaboration and pedagogical innovation, both in my school and beyond.

The project also raised a further set of research questions. I was concerned about the potentially negative impact of some social relationships within the school. This issue warrants further investigation. The links between girls' oracy, women's language and confidence to speak in the workplace remain unclear, but remain highly pertinent; I would like to undertake further research on this topic. I would also like to investigate the nature of the language girls and women use in more depth. This small-scale study focused on only one class and thus more wide-scale research could shed further light on the topic of girls' oracy. Lastly, it would be interesting to undertake further research into the potential links between pupil oracy and pupil writing in History.

Nonetheless, I feel much has been learned that adds to my understanding of the factors affecting girls' participation in lessons. I conclude with the words of Pupil 2:

'*I am much happier walking into History lessons now and most lessons. I used to feel a bit uneasy. I always felt like it was going to be a tiny bit on the spot. Now I am more comfortable with being on the spot and I definitely think I need to raise my voice a bit more when I speak and even if I am feeling more confident, I need to act more confident*'.

References

Alexander, R.J. (2003) *Talk for learning project: the first year*. Northallerton, North Yorkshire Education Service.

Alexander, R.J. (2008a) *Towards Dialogic Teaching: rethinking Classroom Talk*. 4th ed. York: Dialogos.

Alexander, R.J. (2008b) *Essays in Pedagogy*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. In M. Holquist (ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barnes, D. (1976) *From Communication to Curriculum*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Barnes, D. (2010) Why talk is important. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 9, pp. 7 - 10.

Barnes, D., Britton, J.N. and Torbe, M. (1990). *Language, the learner and the school.* 4th ed. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook and Heinemann.

Barton, K.C. and Levstik, L.S. (2004) *Teaching History for the Common Good*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Baxter, J.A. (2010) Teaching Girls to Speak Out: The Female Voice in Public Contexts. *Language and Education*, 13 (2), pp. 81-98.

Bernstein, B. (2000) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique.* 2nd ed. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield.

British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research.* Available at http://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf [accessed 01.10.2014]

Bruner, J.S. (1983) *Child's Talk: Learning to use language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bruner, J.S. (1985) Vygotsky: A historical and conceptual perspective. In J. Wertsch (ed.) *Culture, Communication and Cognition: Vygotskian Perspectives,* p.24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bruner, J.S. (1996) *The Culture of Education*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Cameron, D. (2007) *The Myth of Mars and Venus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Clark, V. (2001) Illuminating the shadow: making progress happen in causing thinking through speaking and listening. *Teaching History,* 105, pp. 26 – 31.

Cohen, E.G. (1994) *Designing Groupwork: Strategies for the heterogenous classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2011) *Research Methods in Education*. 7th ed. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Coles, J. (2010) Strategic Voices? Problems in developing oracy through 'interactive whole-class teaching'. *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education*, 12 (1), pp. 113-123.

Cruddas, L. and Haddock, L. (2003) *Girls' Voices: supporting girls' learning and emotional development.* Stoke on Trent: Trentham.

Dawes, L., Mercer, N. and Wegerif, R. (2000) *Thinking together: a programme of activities for developing speaking, listening and thinking skills for children aged 8-11*. Birmingham: Imaginative Minds Ltd.

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (2000) *English in the National Curriculum*. London: DfEE.

Dignath, G., Buettner, G. and Langfeldt, H-P. (2008) How can primary school students learn self-regulated learning strategies most effectively? A meta-analysis of self-regulation training programmes. *Educational Research Review*, 3, pp. 101-129.

Drever, E. (2003) *Using Semi-Structured Interviews in Small-Scale Research: a teacher's guide.* Edinburgh: SCRE Centre.

Farmer, A. and Knight, P. (1995) *Active History in Key Stages 3 and 4*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Flavell, J. (1979) Metacognition and cognitive monitoring. *American Psychologist*, 45, pp. 906-911.

Fullard, G and Dacey, K. (2008) Holistic Assessment through speaking and listening. An experiment with causal reasoning and evidential thinking in Year 8. *Teaching History*, 131, pp. 25-9.

Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Global Gender Gap Report, 2014, World Economic Forum http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR14/GGGR_CompleteReport_2014.pdf [accessed 1.2.15].

Goodwin, M.H. (2006) *The Hidden Life of Girl*s. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hämäläinen, R. and Vähäsantanen, K. (2011). Theoretical and pedagogical perspectives on orchestrating creativity and collaborative learning. *Educational Research Review*, 6(3), pp. 169–184.

Harris, R., Burn, K. and Woolley, M. (eds.) (2014) *The Guided Reader to Teaching and Learning History*. Oxon: Routledge.

Hattie, J. (2009) *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London: Routledge.

Hattie, J. (2012) *Visible Learning for teachers: Maxmizing Impact on learning*. London: Routledge.

Haydn, T., Stephen, A., Arthur, J. and Hunt, M. (2014) *Learning to Teach History in the Secondary School: A companion to school experience***.** London: Routledge.

Higher Education Policy Institute (2009) *Male and Female Participation* http://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/41Maleandfemaleparticipation.pdf [accessed 01.02.15].

Husbands, C. (1996) *What is History Teaching? Language, ideas and meaning in learning about the past.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Husbands, C. (2010) What do history teachers need to know? In I. Davies (ed.) *Debates in History Teaching.* London: Routledge, pp.84-95.

Joint Council of Qualifications (2014) *GCSE and Entry Level Certificate Results Summer 2014* http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/gcses/gcse-and-entry-level-certificate-results-summer-2014 [downloaded 1.2.15] and *A, AS and AEA Results, Summer 2014* http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/a-levels/a-as-and-aea-results-summer-2014 [accessed 01.02.15].

Jones, D. (2007) Speaking, listening, planning and assessing: the teacher's role in developing metacognitive awareness. *Early Child Development and Care*, 177 (6-7), pp. 569-579.

Jones, P. (2010) Talking and Learning, in English Teaching. *Practice and Critique*, 9, pp. 61-80.

Kenway, J. and Willis, S. (eds.) (1990) *Hearts and Minds. Self-esteem and the schooling of girls.* Lewes: Falmer

Kerlinger, F.N. (1970) *Foundations of Behavioral Research*. New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston.

Kitson, J., Husbands, C. and Steward, S. (2011) *Teaching & Learning History 11-18: Understanding the Past*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Kvale, S. (1996) *Inter Views: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kyriacou, C and Issit, J. (2008) *What characterizes effective teacher-pupil dialogue to promote conceptual understanding in mathematics lesson in England in Key Stages 2 and 3? EPPI-Centre Report no. 1604R.* London: Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

Lakoff, R. T. (2004) *Language and Woman's Place: Text and Commentaries*. In M. Buckholtz (ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Laughlin, P.R., Hatch, E.C. Silver, J.S. and Boh, L. (2006) Groups perform better than the best individuals on letters-to-numbers problems: Effects of group size. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, pp. 644-651.

Leat, D. and Lin, M. (2003) Developing a pedagogy of metacognition and transfer: some signposts for the generation and use of knowledge and the creation of research partnerships. *British Educational Research Journal*, 29, pp. 383-416.

Lewin, K. (1946) Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues*, 2 (4), pp. 34-46.

Luff, I. (2001) Beyond 'I speak, you listen, boy!' Exploring diversity of attitudes and experiences through speaking and listening. *Teaching History*, 105, pp. 10-18.

Mercer, N. (1995) *The Guided Construction of Knowledge: Talk Amongst Teachers and Learners*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Mercer, N. (2013) The Social Brain, Language, and Goal-Directed Collective Thinking: A Social Conception of Cognition and Its Implications for Understanding How We Think, Teach, and Learn, *Educational Psychologist*, 48 (3), pp. 148-168.

Mercer, N. and Littleton, K. (2007) *Dialogue and the Development of Children's Thinking: A sociocultural approach*. London: Routledge.

Morley, L. (1999) *Organising Feminism: The Micropolitics of the Academy*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Moyles, J. (2002) Observation as a research tool. In M. Coleman and A. J. Briggs (eds.) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership*. London: Paul Chapman.

Muller, J. (2000) *Reclaiming knowledge: Social Theory, Curriculum and Education Policy*. London: Routledge Farmer.

Murphy, P., Wilkinson, I., Soter, A., Hennessy, M. and Alexander, J. (2009) Examining the effects of classroom discussion on students' comprehension of text: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101, pp. 740-764.

Murphy, P.K. (2007) The eye of the beholder: the interplay of social and cognitive components in change. *Educational Psychologist*, 42 (1), pp. 41-53.

Newton, P., Driver, R., & Osborne, J. (1999) The Place of Argumentation in the Pedagogy of School Science. *International Journal of Science Education, 21* (5), pp. 553-576.

Norman, K. (Ed.) (1992) *Thinking voices. The work of the National Oracy Project*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

O'Connor, M. C., and Michaels, S. (1993) Aligning academic task and participation status through revoicing: analysis of a classroom discourse strategy. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 24* (4), pp. 318-335.

Sadker, D. and Sadker, M. (1986) Sexism in the Classroom from Grade School to Graduate School. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 67 (7) pp. 512-515.

Salomon, G. (1993) Editor's Introduction. In G. Salomon (ed.) *Distributed Cognitions: Psychological and Educational Considerations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sealy, R. and Vinnicombe, S. (2012) *The Female FTSE Board Report 2012: Milestone or Millstone?* Cranfield International Centre for Women Leaders (Cranfield, England: Cranfield University School of Management, 2012), http://www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/dinamiccontent/research/documents/2012femalftse.pdf [accessed 02.01.2015].

Sinclair, J.M. and Coulthard, R.M. (1975) *Towards an analysis of discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Slater, J. (2000) Girls Face Career Handicap, *The Times Educational Supplement* 8.9.2000 https://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=338165. [accessed 02.01.2015].

Smith, M.K., Wood, W.B., Adams, W.K., Wieman, C., Knight, J.K., Guild, N. and Su, T.T. (2009) Why Peer Discussion Improves Student Performance on In-Class Concept Questions. *Science.* 323, pp. 122-124.

Stenhouse, L. (1975) *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*. London: Heinemann.

Swann, J. (2009) What do we do about gender? *Language and Education*, 6 (2-4), pp. 249-258.

Tannen, D. (1994) *Gender and Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thomas, G. (2013) *How to do your research project*. London: Sage.

Thompson, P. (2007) Developing classroom talk through practitioner research. *Educational Action Research*, 15 (1), pp 41 – 60.

Tuckman, B.W. (1972) Conducting Educational Research. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962) *Toward a Theory of Instruction*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in Society: the development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Walford, G. (2001) *Doing Qualitative Educational Research: A Personal Guide to the Research Process.* London: Continuum.

Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H. and Melody, J. (2001) *Growing Up Girl*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Webb, N., Nemer, K. and Ing, M. (2006) Small group reflections: Parallels between teacher discourse and student behaviour in peer directed groups. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 15, pp. 63-119.

Wells, G. (1999) *Dialogic Inquiry: Towards a Sociocultural Practice and Theory of Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Whitebread, D. and Pino Pasternak, D. (2010) Metacognition, self-regulation and meta-knowing. In K. Littleton, C. Wood, and J. Kleine Staarman (eds.) *International Handbook of Psychology in Education,* pp. 615-713. Leeds: Emerald.

Wilson, M. (ed.) (1991) *Girls and young women in education. A European perspective*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Wolf, M., Crosson, A. and Resnick, L. (2006) *Accountable talk in reading comprehension instruction. CSE Technical Report 670*. Pittsburgh PA: Learning and Research Development Centre, University of Pittsburgh.

Young M. (2009) What are schools for? In H. Daniels, H. Lauder and J. Porter, with S. Hartshorn (eds.) *Knowledge, Values and Educational Policy: A Critical Perspective*. Oxon: Routledge.

Appendix 1
CUREC Ethical Approval

University of Oxford
CENTRAL UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (CUREC)
CUREC/1A Checklist for the Social Sciences and Humanities

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 clearance procedures have been established to ensure that the University is meeting its obligations as a responsible institution. They start from the presumption that all members of the University will take their responsibilities and obligations seriously and will ensure that their research on human subjects is conducted according to the established principles and good practice in their fields and in accordance, where appropriate, with legal requirements. Since the requirements of research ethics review will vary from field to field and from project to project, the University accepts that different guidelines and procedures will be appropriate. Please check the CUREC website to ensure that you have the correct form for your project.

This form does not cover research governance, satisfactory methodology, compliance with the requirements of publishers when administering their tests or questionnaires, or the health and safety of employees and students. As principal investigator, it is your responsibility to ensure that requirements in these areas are met. Please carry out a risk assessment of the project, in consultation with all researchers involved, using the checklist and CUREC's other documentation.

The use of an asterisk in this form indicates a phrase defined in the glossary. The glossary and further information on the University's research ethics procedures are available from the CUREC website:

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec

This form is designed largely for research that falls within the Divisions of Social Sciences and Humanities and which does not involve a high level of risk to the subjects. Elite interviews, field work and oral history are included in the CUREC process. Please take a moment to read through it and if you have any questions or doubts as to whether it is the appropriate form, please review Section A or consult the CUREC website.

Note on anonymised data and audit: you do not need to obtain ethical approval for your study if:

- you are using previously collected **anonymised data** about people which neither you nor anyone else involved in your study can trace back to the individuals who provided them (e.g. census data, administrative data, secondary analysis). Please refer to the definition of *personal data in the glossary and FAQ A4 for further guidance; or
- you are conducting research on behalf of or at the request of a service provider that matches the definition of *audit in the glossary.

If your research is audit or uses prior-anonymised data, please check this box: ☐

You do not need to seek ethical approval from CUREC, and you do not need to complete any more of this form. However, please check with your department's requirements, as some departments require you to lodge this form with them.

Office use only: IDREC Ref. No. _____

Date of confirmation that checklist accepted on behalf of IDREC: // //

SECTION A	Yes	No
1) Are you using research methodologies commonly used in biomedical or behavioural laboratory sciences?		☐
2) Is there a significant risk that the research will induce anxiety, stress or other harmful psychological states in participants that might persist beyond the duration of any test or interview in which they are participating?		☐
3) Will the research involve human participants recruited by means of their status as present or past NHS patients or their relatives or carers?		☐
4) Does the research involve *human participants aged 16 and over who do not have *capacity to consent for themselves? See the Mental Capacity Act 2005		☐
5) Is the study to be funded by the US National Institutes of Health or another US federal funding agency?		☐

If you answered 'yes', please **stop** work on this checklist and
for questions 1 and 2, complete CUREC/1 instead (available from www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec);
for questions 3 and 4, submit your proposal to the appropriate NHS ethics committee (see www.nres.nhs.uk and http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/ctrg/ for further information);
for question 5, or **if you answered 'yes' to questions 1, 2 or 4 and your research will take place outside the EU and is a biomedical study**, submit your proposal to OXTREC, which uses separate documentation. **Applications to OXTREC using this form will not be accepted.** If your research is not a biomedical study and does not have US funding, but will take place outside the EU, you may use this form to submit your application for approval to the Social Sciences and Humanities IDREC.

If you have answered 'no' to all questions in Section A, please complete Sections B-E. This form and any supporting materials should be typewritten.

SECTION B

****Principal investigator/ supervisor/student researcher (title and name):***	[redacted]
Name of supervisor (STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS ONLY):	***Gill Boag-Munroe***
Degree programme, e.g. DPhil, MPhil, MSc (STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS ONLY):	***MSc Learning and Teaching***
Department or institute:	***Department of Education***
Address for correspondence (if different):	[redacted]
Email and phone contact:	[redacted]
Title of research project:	***An investigation into pupil oracy with Year 10 pupils studying GCSE History in an all girls' school.***

Title and brief lay description of *research (about 150 words), plus description (about 200 words) of the nature of participants (including the criteria for inclusion/exclusion & method of recruitment, how professional guidelines are being applied (if applicable) and use to which the results/data will be put.

Please describe how you will obtain informed consent, citing and attaching, where applicable, documentation produced in support of your application such as generic recruitment and advertisement material, participant information sheet(s), consent form(s) and defriefing document(s).

Title: An investigation into pupil oracy with Year 10 pupils studying GCSE History in an all girls' school.

Brief description of the research: I am an MLT (Masters in Learning and Teaching) student writing my dissertation on the subject of girls' oracy in the context of GCSE History. The study I intend to conduct is a small scale research and development project. The two main research questions are 1) What factors can be identified which make Year 10 girls reluctant to participate in discussions in History lessons? 2) What strategies might be useful to assist them to participate more actively in discussions? This research will look at related issues, such as why some girls are reluctant to discuss in class and what measures can be introduced that can lead to them becoming less reluctant to discuss in class. I plan to undertake the research with 13 Year 10 pupils who began their study of GCSE History this academic year. The research will be undertaken using a variety of methods. I will keep a reseach diary which will include field notes of observations of the class as a whole and of individual pupils. I plan to interview the class all together, asking them how they feel about discussing issues and answering questions in class. From the whole class interview I aim to select three pupils who will be case studies for the research project. I aim to capture interview data on a portable recording device, and store the data on a password-protected computer which remains in my possession.

I am to carry out this research in collaboration with two other teaching colleagues, including interviews in order to ascertain their opinions on these issues. I am to ascertain their views on why they think generally some girls do not discuss frequently in class and also specifically about the pupils who have been selected as case studies. I plan to observe the girls who have been chosen as case studies, both in the History lessons in which I teach them and in other lessons taught by these colleagues who have been interviewed in order to see if there are similarities or differences in behaviour in other lessons.

From a scrutiny of the interview data and lesson observations, as well as of the relevant literature on pupil oracy, I am to develop strategies that could be implemented to develop girls' oracy: these will be implemented during their lessons with me. Following each trial strategy, I plan to conduct a follow-up interview and observation to ascertain how far the strategy has been successful in drawing the girls into more active and fruitful discussions. Scrutiny of this data will lead to adaptation of the measures as necessary, and possibly a further round of Action Research to nuance and secure any successful strategy.

Throughout the research process I will store all written and spoken data securely on my password-protected laptop or locked in a drawer at school.

The nature of the participants: The pupils involved are all members of the same History teaching group in the same selective girls' private school in which I teach. They have been selected as I have been timetabled to teach them. There are thirteen members of the class. They all selected History as an option subject they wanted to study for GCSE. The History groups are not set within the school. Consent for the research will be gained from the Headmistress of the school . Once the CUREC form has been completed and permission given for the research to take place, I will ask permission from the Headmistress to conduct the research with the pupils. This conforms to the Modus Operandi for the MLT. Once this has been granted I will ask the pupils if they are happy to participate in the research project, both as a class and also I will also speak discreetly to the pupils who have been selected as case studies and gain their written consent to be part of the research project. The pupils cannot opt out of any measures or changes I will make to my teaching in their lessons, though they will be allowed to opt out of any research process that goes beyond my usual classroom practice, such as conducting interviews during the lunch break. All of the pupils and teachers can refuse their consent to participate in the research. BERA (2011) guidelines and ethical procedures will be strictly followed. The data emerging from the research will be used to complete the dissertation for the MSc in Learning and Teaching. It will also be used to inform and improve learning and teaching within the school and possibly beyond the school to other professionals who may find the data useful, ensuring that strict ethical guidelines and procedures, notably with relation to ensuring the anonymity of the pupils, are followed.

List actual or probable location(s) where project will be conducted, if known:	[redacted]
If your research involves overseas travel or fieldwork, have you completed and returned a travel risk assessment form? (Bear in mind that this may be necessary to ensure that the travel or fieldwork is covered by the University's travel insurance – see http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/insurance/travel/.)	**N/A**
Anticipated duration of project:	10 months
Anticipated start date:	1 / 12 / 2014
Anticipated end date:	1 / 9 / 2015
Name and status (e.g. 3rd year undergraduate; post-doctoral research assistant) of others taking part in the project:	**N/A**
Please indicate what training on research ethics the researchers involved with this study have received, e.g. the title of the online or in-person course, and date completed (online training available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/integrity/human/):	I have received training on research ethics as part of my Masters in Learning and Teaching (MLT) at the Department of Education, University of Oxford.

SECTION C

Methods to be used in the study (**tick** as many as apply: this information will help the committee understand the nature of your research and may be used for audit).

	Please tick
Interview	☐
Questionnaire	
Analysis of existing records	
Participant performs verbal/paper and pencil/computer based task	☐
Measurement/recording of motor behaviour	
Audio recording of participant	☐
Video recording or photography of participant	
Physiological recording from participant	
Participant observation	☐
Covert observation	
Systematic observation	
Observation of specific organisational practices	

Other (please specify)	

SECTION D

Have you read one or more of the following professional guidelines and do you undertake to use the principles listed there as a guide for your own work? Please note that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Links to the guidelines listed below are included on the CUREC website.

	Please tick
***British Society of Criminology: Code of Ethics for Researchers in the Field of Criminology* [http://britsoccrim.org/new/?q=node/22**	
British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research [www.bera.ac.uk/guidelines]	☐
Academy of Management's Code of Ethics [www.aomonline.org/aom.asp?ID=&page_ID=242]	
Association of American Geographers Statement on Professional Ethics [www.aag.org/cs/resolutions/ethics]	
Oral History Society of the UK Ethical Guidelines http://www.ohs.org.uk/ethics.php	
American Political Science Association (APSA) Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science (Section H) [www.apsanet.org/content_9350.cfm]	
Political Studies Association Guide to Good Professional Conduct [www.psa.ac.uk/psa]	
British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct [www.bps.org.uk/what-we-do/ethics-standards/ethics-standards]	
Ethics Guidelines of the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth [www.theasa.org/ethics/guidelines.shtml]	
Social Research Association: Ethical Guidelines [http://the-sra.org.uk/research-ethics/ethics-guidelines/]	
Statement of Principles of Ethical Research Practice from the Socio-Legal Studies Association [www.slsa.ac.uk/content/view/247/270/]	
Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association [www.britsoc.co.uk/about/equality/statement-of-ethical-practice.aspx]	
Other professional guidelines (please specify):	

SECTION E

Please put a tick in the yes/no column as appropriate to indicate your response.

	Yes	**No**
1) Will you obtain informed consent according to good practice in your discipline before participation?	☐	
2) Will you ensure that *personal data collected directly from participants or via a *third party is held and processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act?	☐	
3) Does the research involve as participants *people whose ability to give free and	**Yes**	**No**

informed consent is in question? ***Note: participants aged under 16 are generally considered to require consent of a parent or guardian (only answer 'no' to this question if you can cite one of the protocols listed under 'children'). For participants aged 16-17, consult FAQ C13***	☐	
4) As a consequence of taking part in the research, will participants be at serious risk of rendering themselves liable to criminal prosecution (e.g. by providing information on drug abuse or child abuse)?	**Yes**	**No**
		☐
5) Does the research involve the *deception of participants, as part of the investigation/experiment?	**Yes**	**No**
		☐
If any of your answers above are in a shaded box, please indicate whether those aspects of your project are fully covered by the following.		
6) Research protocol(s) which has/ve received IDREC/CUREC approval?	**Yes**	**No**
<u>The protocol is the Modus Operandi for the Masters in Learning and Teaching</u> ***If yes, please give protocol number(s):***	☐	
7) Professional guidelines that you will be following, as noted under Section D?	**Yes**	**No**
	☐	

If any of your answers in Section E are in a shaded box and are not covered by a protocol or by professional guidelines, please complete CUREC/2, available to download from the CUREC website. Then submit both this form (you need not complete section F) and the CUREC/2 to the Social Sciences and Humanities IDREC.

If all your answers in Section E are in the unshaded boxes or your answers in shaded boxes are covered by a protocol or professional guidelines, complete Section F and submit this form and any accompanying documents to the Social Sciences and Humanities IDREC or to the relevant officer/committee at departmental level (see notes and address below).

FINAL CHECK

Please check each of the following before submitting the checklist. **If the appropriate supporting documentation is not included with your application, you will then be asked to provide this separately. This may well delay the ethical review process, and thus the start of your research.**

Have you completed Sections A-E? ☐

Have you defined all technical terms and abbreviations used? ☐

If you have produced any documentation in support of your application (which might include questionnaires, participant information, consent forms/form or note of procedure for recording oral consent, advertisements and surveys), have you attached a copy of these? ☐

Are all pages (including appendices and attachments) numbered? ☐

SECTION F

You can submit this checklist by email and/or as a signed hard copy; if it is being sent by email only, the checklist, and any email from the head of department or nominee separately endorsing its submission, must be sent from a University of Oxford email address (i.e. as a minimum, the checklist and supporting documents must be submitted by the head of department or nominee indicating his/her approval from a University of Oxford email account).

Complete this section only if you do not need to submit form CUREC/2.

I understand my responsibilities as principal researcher/supervisor/student researcher as outlined in the CUREC glossary and guidance on the CUREC website.

I declare that the answers above accurately describe my research as presently designed and that I will submit a new checklist should the design of my research change in a way which would alter any of the above responses so as to require completion of CUREC/2 (involving full scrutiny by an IDREC). I will inform the relevant IDREC if I cease to be the principal researcher on this project and supply the name and contact details of my successor if appropriate.

Signed by principal researcher/supervisor/student researcher:……[redacted]

Date:……28th October 2014……

Print name (block capitals)……[redacted]

Signed by supervisor:……(for student projects)

Date:……

Print name (block capitals)……

I understand the questions and answers that have been entered above describing the research, and I will ensure that my practice in this research complies with these answers, subject to any modifications made by the principal researcher properly authorised by the CUREC system.

Signed by associate/other researcher:

……

Print name (block capitals)……

Date ……

Appendix 2
Letter Seeking Approval from the Head Teacher

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY
Tel: +44(0)1865 274024 Fax: +44(0)1865 274027
general.enquiries@education.ox.ac.uk www.education.ox.ac.uk

Director Professor Ernesto Macaro

[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

I am writing to enquire about conducting research in school this academic year. As you know, I am studying for the Master's in Learning and Teaching at Oxford University, supervised by Dr. Gill Boag-Munroe. In my final research project, *An Investigation into pupil oracy with Year 10 Pupils studying GCSE History in an all-girls' school,* I will explore pupil talk in the classroom and examine possible ways that this can be improved in order to enhance learning as well as pupil confidence and self-esteem.

The research will take place with my Year 10 History set working towards GCSE. I am developing ways of encouraging student discussion, both in my lessons and with colleagues. My research focus is on students' discussion in class, and how teachers can develop this.

By participating in the research, the school would be contributing to a project that will deepen understanding of pupil oracy and possibly why some girls do not take part frequently in class discussions, and so contribute towards developing ways of improving the learning and possibly the confidence and self-esteem of similar students in the school in the future. It will also contribute to the development of girls' oracy more widely.

I hope to conduct this research between December 2014 and April 2015. I would conduct interviews with the pupils, audio-record students engaged in whole class discussion, observe and take notes during lessons.

Oxford University has strict ethical procedures on conducting ethical research with teachers and young people, consistent with current British Educational Research Association guidelines. As practitioner research however, the University recognises that schools have the highest ethical standards in any event. Therefore only your

consent is necessary, and not that of parents. Throughout the research, students and other teachers will be able to refuse to participate in any research activities at any time.

All participants, including students, teacher and the school, would be made anonymous in all research reports. The data collected would be kept strictly confidential, available only to my supervisor and myself, and not used other than specified without further consent. All recordings would be destroyed at the end of the research period, and kept in locked conditions until then.

If you feel you would like to take part in the study, or need more information about what is involved, please contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Appendix 3
Letter Seeking Pupil Agreement

[redacted]

Dear Year 10 Pupil,

I am writing to you about a learning project I am undertaking with our Year 10 History GCSE class. This is part of the research project that I am undertaking at the University of Oxford, entitled 'An investigation into pupil oracy with Year 10 pupils studying GCSE History in an all girls' school'. The research project involves the whole class, but it also includes additional interviews with some individual pupils.

The project involves me using some specific teaching activities, many of which I would use in the ordinary course of my teaching. The project will run alongside our GCSE study and will not involve any additional lessons or homework. It will have no negative impact on our course whatsoever; we are covering the same material, at the same pace, as the other Year 10 GCSE classes. I will be asking you to give up some of your free time to take part in the interviews during the course of this academic year, but there will not be many of these.

I would be most grateful if you would consider my request, talk it over with your parents and let me know your thoughts. I would like to emphasise that your contributions will remain anonymous when I write up my research findings.

I would like you to take part in the individual interviews, but you are under no obligation to do so. You may also make a start with the project and then decide to withdraw at a later date. When you have considered my request, please complete the form below and return it to me.

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me about the project and to read and respond to this letter,

Yours sincerely,
[redacted]

Pupil Consent Form
Year 10 History GCSE Research Project

Name…… Form……

Please tick one box in the chart below

	Please tick one box
I would like to take part in the project	
I am not sure, I would like some more information	
I would prefer not to take part	

Signed _____ Date _____

Appendix 4
List of Questions Used for the Whole Class Interview and Initial Pupil Case Study Interviews

Preamble: I want to talk through with you the question of class discussions to try to understand why some might be enjoyable and some more uncomfortable. To begin with:

1. How do you feel about the balance of pupil and teacher talk? Do you feel that we get it right? What might you prefer?

2. Do you discuss more in some lessons than others? Why do you think that might be?

3. Is class discussion something you find helpful to you? In what ways?

4. Talk me through what you understand the purpose of class discussion to be. Do you think that's the best way to achieve what the teacher might be aiming for?

5. How far would you agree that answering questions and contributing in lessons helps me to improve your learning and understanding? Could you say more about that?

6. How enjoyable do you find it to take part in pair or group work in lessons? Why do you feel that way?

7. How far do you think that the amount of class discussion that you engage in has changed during the course of your education? Why might that be?

8. Do you find discussion the most helpful way to unpick and understand historical data? What other ways might we try?

9. What do you think I could do to help the class participate more in discussions about historical data?

Appendix 5
List of Questions for Interviews with Pupils after Each Intervention

Interview Questions

1. Talk me through your experience of our recent lesson during which we had a debate/discussion on……..

2. How did you feel during the discussions during the exercise?

3. Did you find the discussion in the lesson useful in understanding the topic? If so, in what ways?

4. What could I have done to help you to participate more in the discussions?

5. Do you think it helped you in your writing?

Appendix 6
List of Questions for Final Interviews with Case Study Pupils

Final Interview Questions

1. Is there anything you have learned from taking part in the project?
2. Have you noticed any difference in the way you contribute in other lessons?
3. Has taking part in the project helped you in your learning and understanding in History?
4. Has taking part in the project helped you with your confidence to participate in lessons?
5. Do you have any further thoughts about the project, the topic or your own experiences, having come to the end of the project now?

Appendix 7
List of Questions for Teachers (Initial Interviews)

Questions for Initial Teacher Interviews

1. **What is the nature of pupil discussion in your lessons?**

2. **I am going to ask you to describe the was in which some of your pupils take part in class discussions.**

   a. **How does** [redacted] **take part in class discussions in your lessons?**
   b. **How does** [redacted] **take part in class discussions in your lessons?**
   c. **How does** [redacted] **take part in class discussions in your lessons?**

3. **Do you have any further thoughts on this topic?**

Appendix 8
List of Questions for Teachers (Final Interviews)

Final Teacher Interview Questions

1. Have you noticed any changes to the ways in which [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted] participate in lessons since the start of the project?

2. Do you have any further thoughts about this project or the topic?

Appendix 9
Frame for Observing Pupils in Lessons

Pupil:	History	English	Chemistry	Maths
Hands up (ask)				
Hands up (answer)				
Any other oral contribution?				
Indicators of confidence in understanding/to speak in front of peers?				
Appears engaged?				
Any other observations?				