

“[Talk is] the most powerful tool of communication in the classroom and it’s fundamentally central to the acts of teaching and learning”

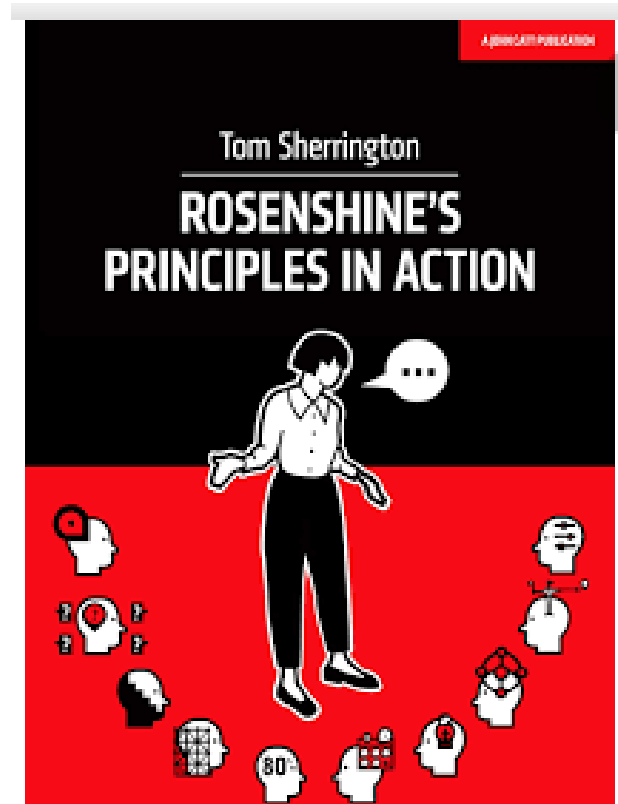
-Professor Frank Hardman

## Introducing Oracy

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# Research & CPD Resources



# What is oracy?

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**oracy**

/ˈɔːrəsi/ 

*noun* **BRITISH**

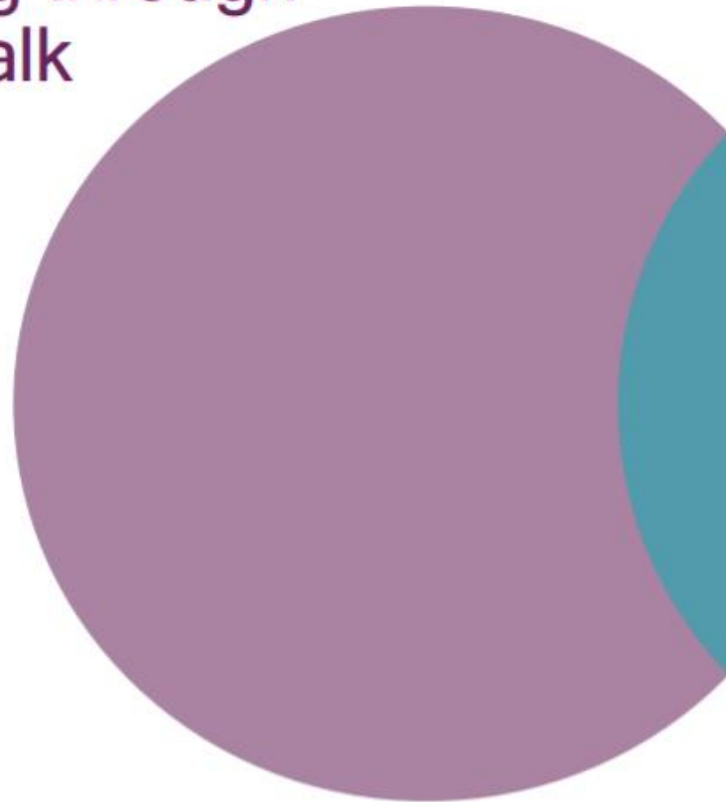
the ability to express oneself fluently and grammatically in speech.

"infant teachers will be urged to concentrate on reading, writing, oracy and numeracy"

For every child to find their voice,  
metaphorically and literally

**“[Oracy] is what the school does to support the development of children’s capacity to use speech to express their thoughts and communicate with others, in education and in life”  
-Professor Robin Alexander**

Learning through  
talk



Learning to  
talk



# Why is oracy important?

Employers rank verbal communication as the most important skill for employees

In areas of deprivation 50% of children start school with below average language skills

“Over 20 major international studies make it clear that the quality of talk within a classroom raises standards”

Prof. Robin Alexander

On average, teachers do 90% of the talking with individual students saying approximately four words per lesson

R. Page 2005

“Our research shows that when students learn how to use talk to reason together, they become better at reasoning on their own”

Prof Neil Mercer

“The capacity to display strong communication and debating skills, and act in a confident manner at interview”

SMCP Commission: ‘Non Educational Barriers to Elite Professions’

By the age of 3, children from privileged families hear 30 million more words than children from underprivileged backgrounds

“Leaving education without adequate speaking skills is a serious blight on young people's lives & a major handicap when they're looking for work.”

Katja Hall, D. Director CBI

Three in four people suffer speech anxiety

# Why is oracy important?

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# Introducing the Oracy Framework

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# Exploratory talk vs Presentational talk

## **Exploratory talk**

‘exploratory talk which is typical of the early stages of approaching new ideas [...] Exploratory talk is hesitant and incomplete because it enables the speaker to try out ideas, to hear how they sound, to see what others make of them, to arrange information and ideas into different patterns.’

## **Presentational talk**

‘The difference between the two functions of talk is that in presentational talk the speaker’s attention is primarily focused on adjusting the language, content and manner to the needs of an audience, and in exploratory talk the speaker is more concerned with sorting out his or her own thoughts.’

Barnes, 1992



# Exploratory talk vs Presentational talk

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**Exploratory  
talk**

**Presentational  
talk**

# Oracy skills framework – an introduction

We have divided oracy skills into four categories:



**Cognitive**

The deliberate application of thought to what you're saying



**Linguistic**

Knowing which words and phrases to use, and using them



**Physical**

Making yourself heard, using your voice and body as an instrument



**Social**

Engaging with the people around you; knowing you have the right to speak

# The Oracy Framework



## Voice

- Fluency & pace of speech
- Tonal variation
- Clarity of pronunciation
- Voice projection

## Body language

- Gesture & posture
- Facial expression & eye contact

Physical



## Vocabulary

- Appropriate vocabulary choice

## Language

- Register
- Grammar

## Rhetorical techniques

- Rhetorical techniques such as metaphor, humour, irony & mimicry

Linguistic



## Content

- Choice of content to convey meaning & intention
- Building on the views of others

## Structure

- Structure & organisation of talk

## Clarifying & summarising

- Seeking information & clarification through questions
- Summarising

## Self-regulation

- Maintaining focus on task
- Time management

## Reasoning

- Giving reasons to support views
- Critically examining ideas & views expressed

Cognitive



## Working with others

- Guiding or managing interactions
- Turn-taking

## Listening & responding

- Listening actively & responding appropriately

## Confidence in speaking

- Self-assurance
- Liveliness & flair

## Audience awareness

- Taking account of level of understanding of the audience

Social & Emotional

# VOICE 21 RESOURCES

## DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

WE GIVE PROOF OF LISTENING 

WE RESPECT OTHERS' IDEAS 

WE BUILD, CHALLENGE, SUMMARISE, CLARIFY, AND PROBE EACH OTHER'S IDEAS 


WE ARE PREPARED TO CHANGE OUR MIND 


WE INVITE OTHERS INTO OUR DISCUSSION 


WE TRY TO REACH SHARED AGREEMENT 




## GIVING PROOF OF LISTENING MEANS

LISTEN CAREFULLY  
TRY TO SUMMARISE WHAT HAS BEEN SAID AND ASK QUESTIONS. 

EYE CONTACT  
MAKE SURE YOU ARE LOOKING AT THE SPEAKER SO THAT THEY KNOW YOU ARE LISTENING. 

BODY LANGUAGE  
USE YOUR BODY LANGUAGE TO SHOW THAT YOU ARE CALM AND FOCUSED. 



# Scaffolds: elevating the quality of talk

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- Scaffolding is a “process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond his unassisted efforts” (Wood, Bruner and Ross 1976, 90).
- A scaffold acts as a temporary supportive structure for a student to complete a task they otherwise could not have (Graves, Watts and Graves 1994, 44). As students become more confident, scaffolds will be needed less and less, until eventually they are not needed at all.

**Sentence stems**

**Modelling**

**Key vocabulary**



## Groupings



**Nest**  
Students stand apart and whisper their ideas to themselves



**Circle (of 6 to 12 students)**  
A group of six students face each other in a circle. Pupils step inside the circle individually and speak to the group, considering their audience, maintaining good eye contact and using appropriate body language.



**Pairs**  
Two students talking together



**Onion**  
Students form an inner and outer circle. Up to six pupils stand back-to-back in the inner circle, with each facing a partner on the outer circle.



**Trios**  
Three students talking with each other. Two students have a discussion while the third observes then summarises and critiques



**Traverse**  
Pupils stand in two parallel lines opposite a speaking partner.



**Coaching Onion**  
This is a useful tool for switching discussion partners as pupils on the inner circle can rotate to face someone new. It also allows students to contribute ideas to a larger group without worrying about speaking to them all at once.

# 'No Hands Up' Culture

## **Rationale:**

- 'Hands Up' allows underachievement, opting out, passivity, avoiding thinking
- Teacher's role is to bring **everyone** into the lesson. Hands up instantly limits this purpose.
- **Inclusive:** Everyone is noticed, valued, has the best chance of keeping up and developing their thinking, oracy and listening skills.
- Improves engagement

**A difficult habit to break** (time / pace pressure) so we will do it collectively and it needs to be **everywhere and every lesson.**

# Whole class discussion strategy: COLD CALLING

## COLD CALLING

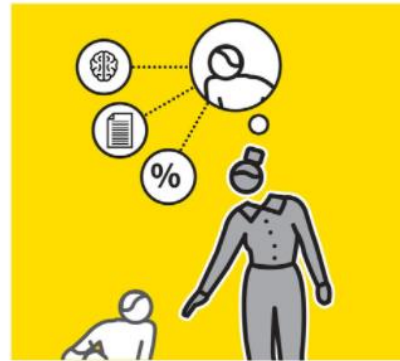
1 2 3 4 5



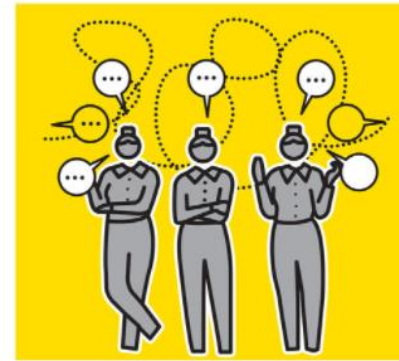
**ASK THE CLASS  
THE QUESTION**



**GIVE THINKING TIME**



**SELECT SOMEONE  
TO RESPOND**



**RESPOND TO THE  
ANSWERS**



**SELECT ANOTHER  
STUDENT AND  
RESPOND AGAIN**



# Paired Talk: THINK-PAIR-SHARE

## THINK, PAIR, SHARE

1 2 3 4 5



**ESTABLISH TALK PARTNERS  
FOR EVERY STUDENT**



**SET THE QUESTION WITH A  
GOAL AND A TIMEFRAME**



**BUILD IN THINKING TIME**



**CIRCULATE TO LISTEN AS  
PAIRS ARE TALKING**



**USE COLD CALL TO SAMPLE  
PAIRS' RESPONSES**