Language is power:
Developing oracy across the whole school

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Speaking but not listening…

Think of a time when you felt that the person you were speaking to wasn’t listening.

Split into pairs and share stories.

Identify 3 things that demonstrated non-listening.

What was the impact on you as the speaker?

What lessons can we learn for the classroom?
Breakout outline

In this session we will explore together:

- The power of language
- Active listening
- Oracy
- How to create the right environment
- Practical classroom ideas
There are two key strands to language:

1. An ability to speak and be understood
2. An ability to listen and understand

These strands need to work together for language to be powerful.

Being a confident and effective orator is not enough – we need to develop listening skills, as well as collaborative communication skills.
Highly effective talk

Learning to talk

Learning through talk
Active listening
Active listening

How can we develop active listeners in our classrooms?

Discuss in groups.
Make listening necessary

1. Avoid repeating yourself
2. Devise activities where careful listening is necessary to complete a task
3. Make sure that learners answer the exact question which was asked
4. Encourage learners to speak audibly so everyone can hear
5. Sometimes speak quietly
Encourage active listening

1. Get learners to identify non-verbal clues such as gestures or pauses
2. Use language with prompts to support listening, such as signaling with your voice a change in focus
3. Suggest strategies to structure listening, such as questions
4. Ask learners to paraphrase what they have heard
5. Invite learners to reflect on their listening
Oracy
What is Oracy?

Oracy is to speaking what numeracy is to mathematics or literacy to reading and writing. In short, it’s nothing more than being able to express yourself well. It’s about having the vocabulary to say what you want to say and the ability to structure your thoughts so that they make sense to others.

English Speaking Union, 2019
Why does oracy matter?

“It is the bedrock of pupils’ ability to use language and communicate.” – Voice 21

“Talk is the most powerful tool of communication in the classroom and it is fundamentally central to the acts of teaching and learning.” – Prof Frank Hardman

“Real concepts are impossible without words, and thinking in concepts does not exist beyond verbal thinking. That is why the central moment in concept formation ... is a specific use of words as functional tools.” – Lev Vygotsky
Skills development

- What **skills** can be developed through speaking and listening activities?
- In groups, discuss and list the skills
- Use the handout to categorize them
- Now look at the work of other groups – did you miss anything?
# Speaking & Listening skills: Get up and go

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Further skills

- Cognitive skills – concentration, memory, processing and re-organising information
- Metacognitive skills – evaluating ideas. Setting goals and targets, offering and responding to feedback, adapting viewpoints
- Research skills – finding and selecting information and resources
- Knowledge acquisition – developing understanding
- Emotional and social skills – co-operation, empathy, tolerance
- Vocabulary acquisition
- Presenting skills – vocal and physical
- Confidence
- A growth mindset
Maximising learning through language
A dialogic classroom

- A classroom rich in talk
- Questions are planned
- Peer conversations are modelled and scaffolded
- The teacher skilfully uses talk to develop thinking
Environment
Benefits and barriers

Benefits

Barriers
Why are many teachers reluctant to use speaking & listening activities?

- Classroom management
- Students discomfort
- Culture
- Time pressures
- Assessment
How can you create the right environment?

Think about:

1. Physical environment
2. Guidelines and expectations – habits and routines
3. Teacher
   a) Planning lessons
   b) Planning questions
   c) Planning learning outcomes
Habits and routines

- How can we develop our learners’ language skills through specific habits and routines?

- Should spoken language and active listening be incorporated into every lesson?
Reflection

To create an effect environment for listening, what changes would you need to make to your:

- Classroom
- Planning
- Use of language?
Practical classroom ideas
Developing the language of learners

- Work in pairs
- Person A sit with your back to the screen, person B sit facing the screen
- An image of a landscape will appear
- Person B has 3 minutes to describe the landscape to Person A, using as much description and being as detailed as possible
- Person A looks at the image and offers feedback to Person B on how well they could picture the landscape. What was missing?
Visible thinking routines

**See:** what can you see? Describe the picture

**Think:** what do you think is happening in the picture?

**Wonder:** what bigger questions does this picture make you ask?

*Project Zero, Harvard University*
‘Marriage is a sacred bond’

‘Shaadi no longer means marriage, it means wedding… a desire to compete, boast and beat others at it.’
Slow reveal - what do you think is happening in this picture?

What do you think is happening in this picture?

What questions does this picture make you ask?
Assessing learners’ understanding through talk

What are the advantages of using speaking and listening for formative assessment?

- A presentation instead of an essay
- Role play
- Group discussion
- Audio recording
- Video recording
Resources and further reading
Thank you
Any questions?