



CAMBRIDGE

Meaningful conversations

Developing oracy across the curriculum.

Fay Head & John Marsh

15 and 16 July 2026

Housekeeping

- Health and safety
- Fire safety
- Washrooms



Agenda

Workshop Overview & Objectives

This workshop will help you:

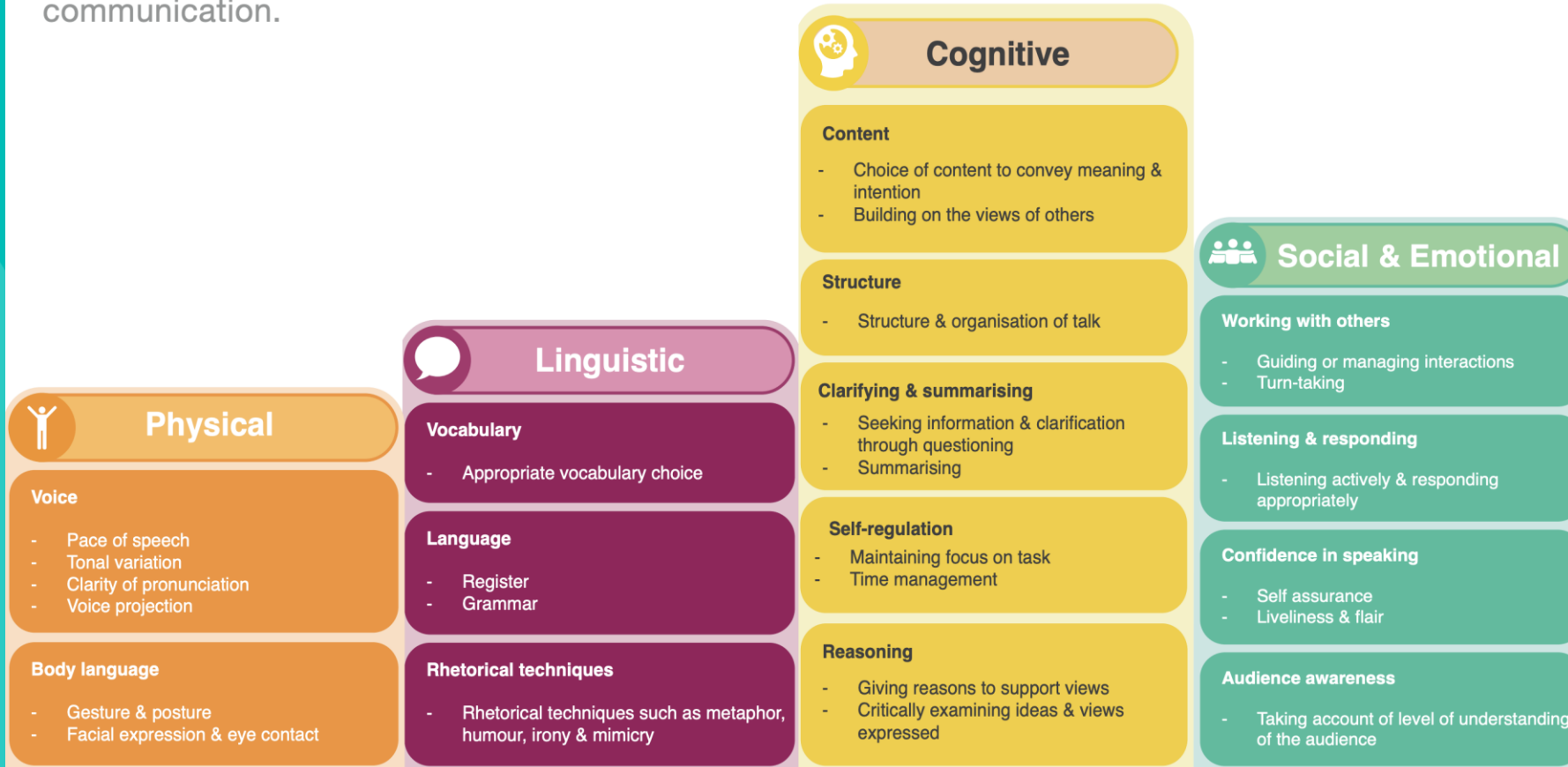
- understand how oracy improves **engagement, achievement** and **outcomes**.
- reflect on attitudes and barriers to using oracy across subjects
- identify practical strategies for integrating guided conversation into teaching
- encourage learning through talk to prepare students for future assessments and careers.

Ice breaker

Oracy in context: What is it?

The Oracy Framework

Use the Oracy Framework to understand the physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional skills that enable successful discussion, inspiring speech and effective communication.



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A curriculum rich in oracy will provide opportunities for:

- Learning **to** talk, listen and communicate
- Learning **through** talk, listening and communication
- Learning **about** talk, listening and communicating

Improving **engagement** through oracy

Engagement

Research base:

Oracy-rich environments encourage **dialogic teaching** where teachers and students engage in purposeful discussion rather than one-way instruction. Dialogic classrooms enhance students' **thinking, reasoning, and understanding**, leading to deeper engagement with the subject matter.

Alexander, A Dialogic Teaching Companion (2020)

Case study: History

Students **debate key figures' decisions, role-play scenes or debate different interpretations of sources.**

Engagement spikes because students are actively involved, thinking critically, and using their voices to explore complex ideas.

- Active participation (Physical)
- Deeper thinking (Cognitive)
- Social connection (Social & Emotional)
- Confidence building (Social & Emotional)





Improving **achievement** through oracy

Achievement

- Improved understanding and retention (Cognitive)
- Higher-order thinking skills (Cognitive)
- Support literacy (Linguistic)
- Reduces disadvantage and performance gaps (Social & Emotional)

Research base:

Pupils who participate in dialogic teacher and learning in science lessons do not only do better on standardised tests of science, but of tests of mathematics and English too [...] Dialogic discussion can support growth not only of specific disciplinary knowledge but also broader capabilities [...] which children can put to use in other subjects.

Snell, Dialogic Teaching & Learning, The Talking Point (2025)

Case study: Maths

In advance of a lesson, the teacher considers possible answers that may be given in response to a central problem. They also consider the specific misconceptions that may lead to incorrect answers. They use this pre-planning to inform a classroom discussion of the answers given by students and the concepts underpinning them, encouraging students to articulate their views and arrive at a consensus on the solution. In actively listening to multiple explanations from peers, students are more likely to achieve mastery of the key concepts rather than simply hearing that solutions are right or wrong.



Improving **outcomes** through oracy

Research base:

- Oral language interventions can result in an additional 6+ months of progress, especially in literacy-related outcomes.

Education Endowment Foundation (2025)

- Multiple studies have linked meaningful classroom talk to increased attainment in maths attainment.

Multiple sources

- 94% of employers value communication skills more than academic results when recruiting.

Confederation of Industry Report (2023)

Case study: Future-ready learners

- Clear correlation between students' communication skills and their employability status.
- Evidence of a wage premium of around 15% for school leavers with 'essential skills'.

Outcomes

- Improved literacy assessment outcomes
- Cross-curricular academic attainment
- Oral assessment
- Enhanced employability

Employability

- Being able to demonstrate knowledge orally is a key characteristic of someone who is well prepared for the world of work (APPG, 2019: 22)
- Universities may incorporate oral tests into their assessment approach because there are few concerns about plagiarism (Dobson 2023)
- 'When you go into networking opportunities ... there is a culture that you should be able to articulate yourself well' (APPG, 2021: 22)



Barriers (and solutions) to cross-curricular oracy

“Oracy can be defined as articulating ideas, developing understanding and engaging with others through speaking, listening and communication.””

Oracy Education Commission

2024

Leading, learning and teaching with Cambridge

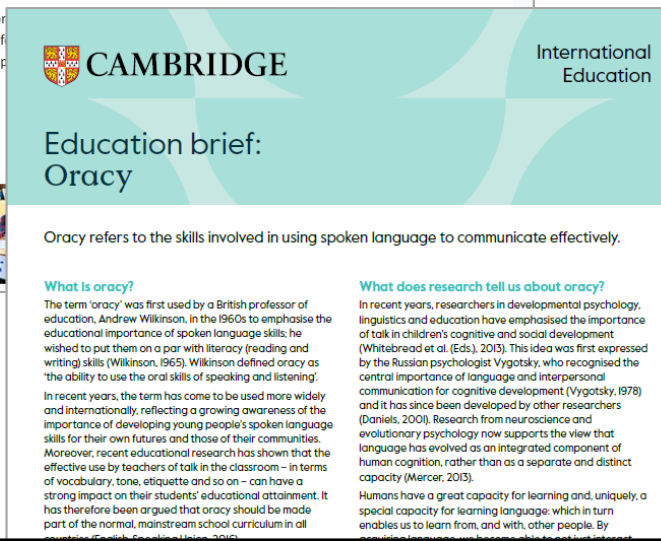
- Education brief
- Animation
- Getting started with guidance
- Conference recordings
- Podcasts
- Blogs



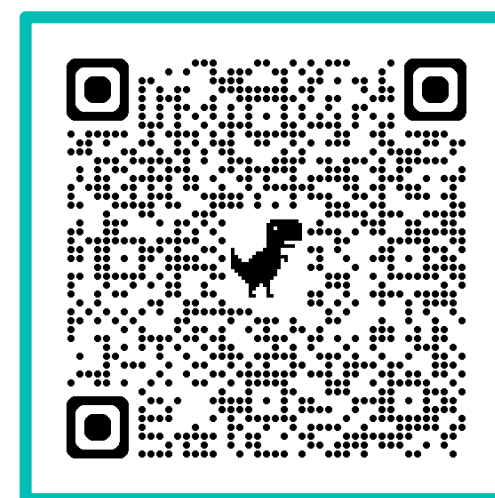
The screenshot shows the Cambridge International Education website. The top navigation bar includes links for Products and Services, About Us, Careers, Our other sites, and Global EN. The main navigation bar features links for About us, Why choose us, Programmes & qualifications, Exam administration, Support & training for schools (circled in yellow), News & blog, and Help. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'Leading, learning and teaching with Cambridge'. The content area states: 'Below you will find guidance and resources to support leadership, learning, and teaching at your school. Each theme offers resources in various formats – articles, videos, and podcasts – to suit your chosen approach.' Three featured sections are shown: 'Active learning', 'Assessment for learning', and 'Behaviour for learning', each with a brief description and a 'Read more' link.



<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/education-briefs>



The Education brief: Oracy content. It features the Cambridge logo and the title 'Education brief: Oracy'. The text explains that Oracy refers to the skills involved in using spoken language to communicate effectively. It includes two sections: 'What is oracy?' and 'What does research tell us about oracy?'. The 'What is oracy?' section discusses the term 'oracy' and its importance in education. The 'What does research tell us about oracy?' section discusses research in developmental psychology, linguistics, and education, highlighting the importance of spoken language skills and the role of teachers in developing these skills.



Feedback



Cambridge Schools Conference, July 2026
Future-ready: preparing learners to thrive

Any questions?

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Thank you!

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