

LEARNING TO TALK TALKING TO LEARN

Developing Oracy Skills in the EFL Class

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Professional Development Group – Recanati - 2017

Learning to talk



“Classroom talk is not merely a conduit for the sharing of information, or a means for controlling the exuberance of youth; it is the most important educational tool for guiding the development of understanding and for jointly constructing knowledge.”

Neil Mercer (Cambridge University)



Literacy, numeracy and...what is oracy?

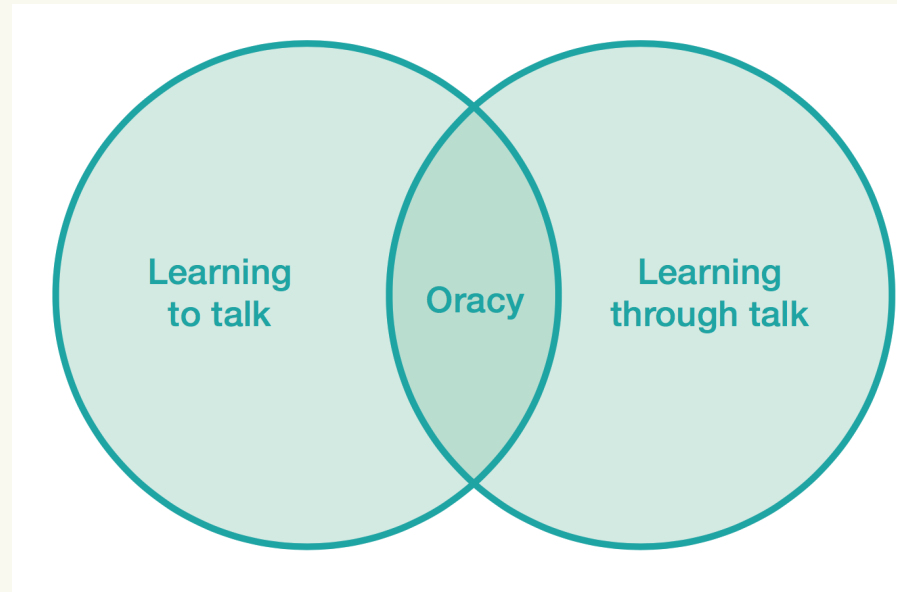
Oracy is the ability to use spoken language effectively.

Oracy → Speech

Literacy → Reading and Writing

Numeracy → Maths

“Oracy” as a word implies that spoken language is an acquired, **teachable** skill, one that enables students as much as literacy does.



Talking to learn – learning through talk

- Talk supports learning and can result in **improved writing, greater critical thinking** and a **deeper understanding** of a topic.

"Dialogic teaching...explores the learner's thought processes.

It treats students' contributions, and especially their answers to teacher's questions, as stages in an ongoing cognitive quest, rather than terminal points.

And it nurtures the student's engagement, confidence, independence and responsibility"

Robin Alexander, Emeritus Professor of Education
University of Warwick, 2004

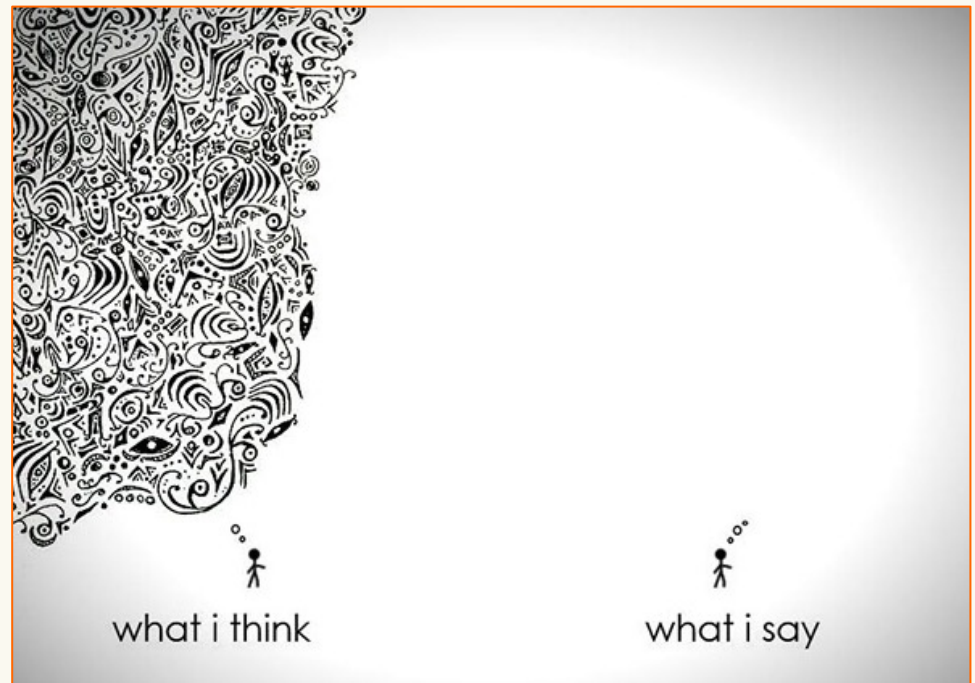
Who cares about oracy?

- “...the ability to use spoken language effectively (oracy) **has to be learned**; and even highly intelligent people may not have learned how best to use talk to get things done.”

EDUCATION

EMPLOYMENT

WELL-BEING



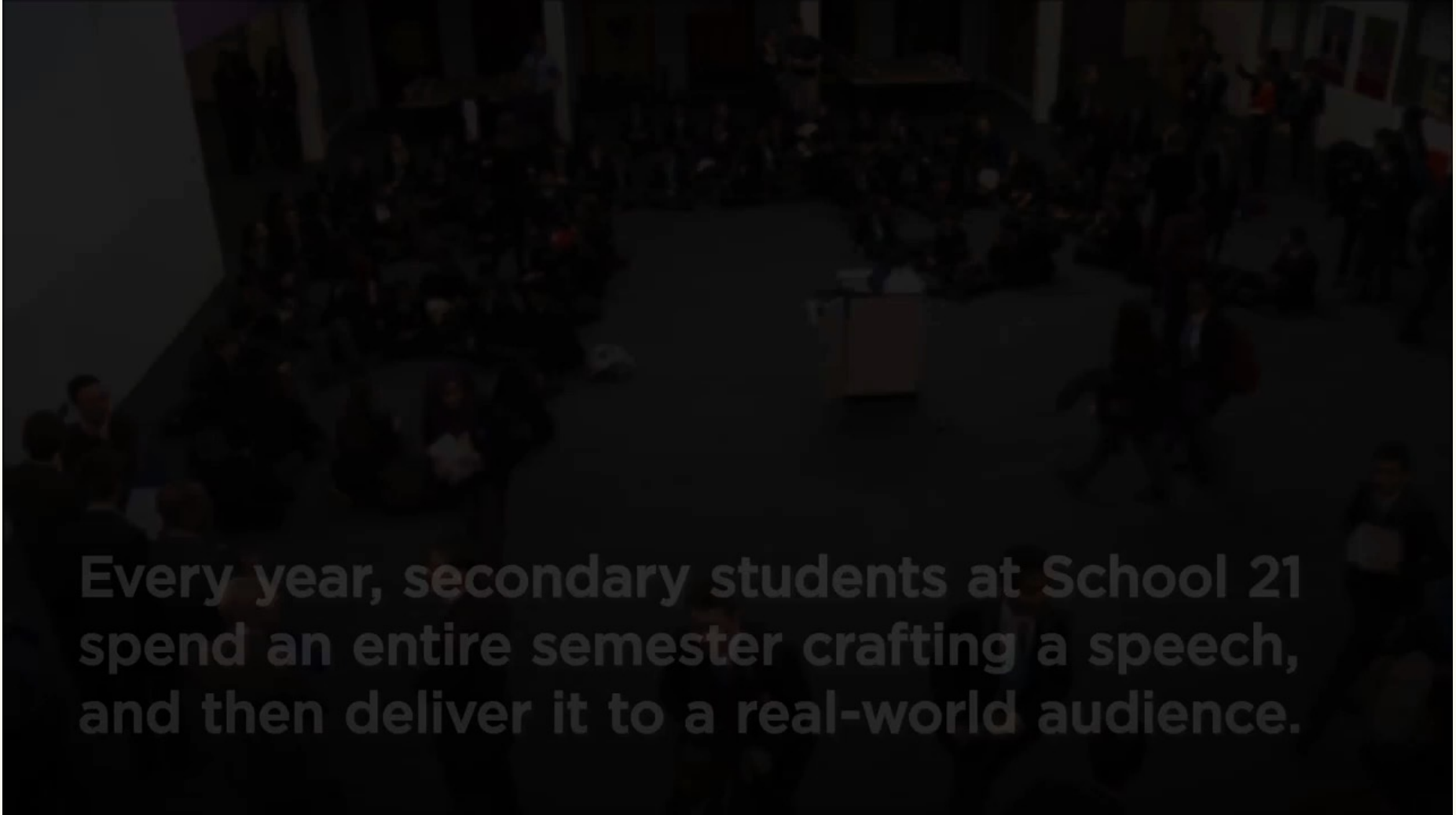
Never mind the gap?

On average, teachers do **90%** of the talking with individual students saying approximately **four words** per lesson; the idea that if students are talking they are not learning is unfortunately still prevalent.

50% of young people from **areas of disadvantage** suffering from language delay

All students should benefit from a focus on improving oracy, not just the most vulnerable.

charity ICAN, UK



Every year, secondary students at School 21 spend an entire semester crafting a speech, and then deliver it to a real-world audience.

Physical? Linguistic? Cognitive? Social & Emotional?

Task: THINK – PAIR – SHARE

audience awareness	rhetorical techniques	language
content	listening and responding	body language
structure	clarifying & summarizing	voice
working with others	vocabulary	confidence in speaking

Oracy: The Four Strands

- **Physical**
voice, body language
- **Linguistic**
vocabulary, language, rhetorical techniques
- **Cognitive**
content, structure, clarifying & summarizing
- **Social & Emotional**
working with others, listening and responding
confidence in speaking, audience awareness

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Oracy: The 4 Strands:

- **Physical, Linguistic, Cognitive, Social and Emotional**
- The *oracy framework* outlines the elements which underpin **successful communication skills** and provides a useful **tool for analysing speech**.
- The framework enables students and teachers to understand what **effective communication looks like** and to **put strategies in place** to improve specific speaking and listening skills.

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Talking points (3 mins, 3 people)

1. Money does not make people happy.
2. Some people, like footballers, get paid too much.
3. There is never a good reason to steal money.
4. Whatever job they do, people should get the same pay.

The Teen Brain...



Not about hormones it is about the brain developing and changing

They are not limited...their creativity is magnificent!

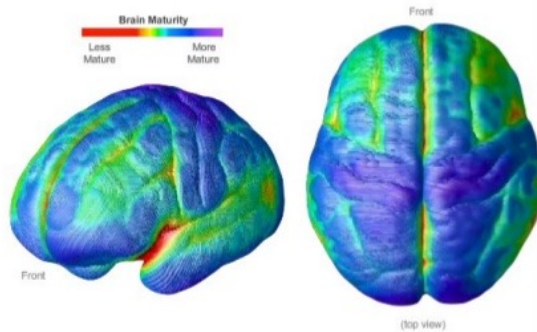
The teenage brain...

massive pruning, sculpting and modelling of the brain takes place....

15 year old brain

SPECIALIZATION

In the teen years, an abundance of neural links continue to be discarded. Underused connections will die to help more active connections thrive. As a result, the child's brain will become more specialized and efficient.

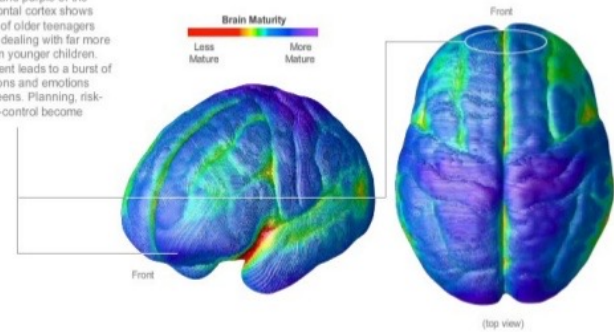


15 years old

17 year old brain

ABSTRACT THOUGHT

The deep blue and purple of the maturing prefrontal cortex shows why the brains of older teenagers are capable of dealing with far more complexity than younger children. This development leads to a burst of social interactions and emotions among older teens. Planning, risk-taking and self-control become possible.



17 years old

Screenagers...

40.000 word vocabulary

800 words used a day

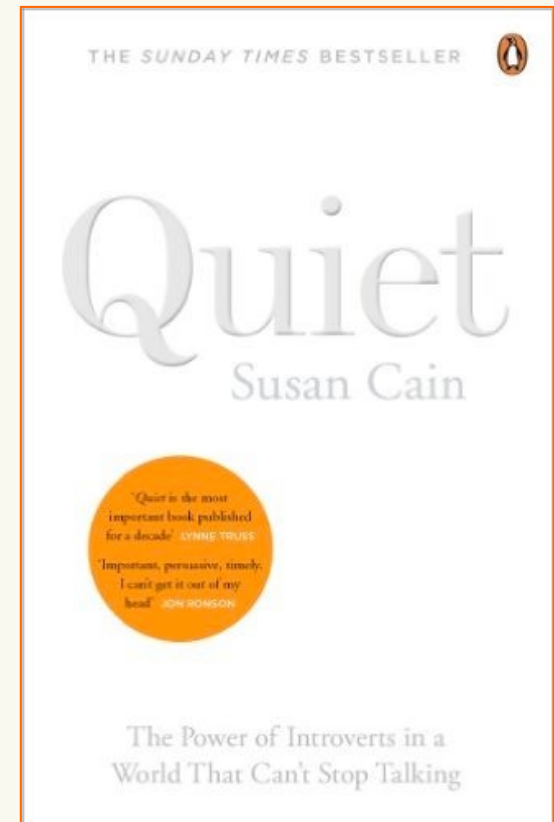


Introverts vs. Extroverts

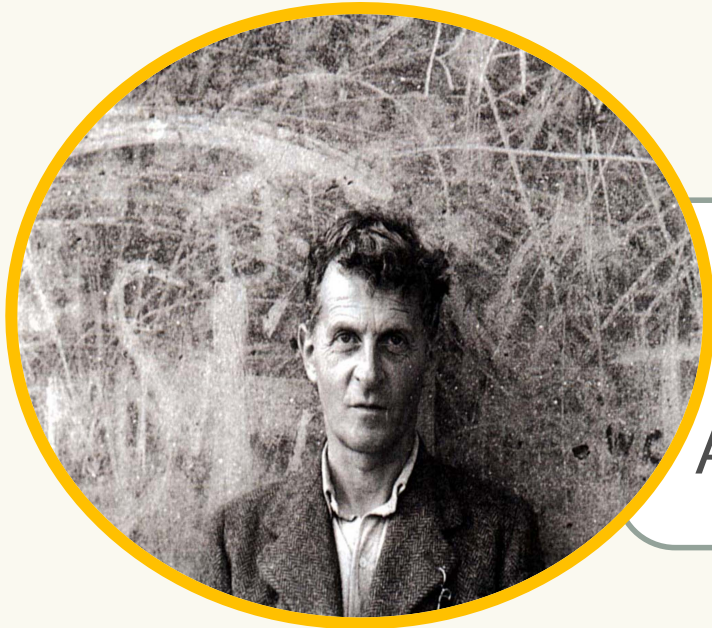
'Small Talk: Making Introverts'
Voices Heard in the EFL
Classroom'

Alastair Roy

"Quiet
*The Power of Introverts in a
World that Can't Stop Talking*"
Susan Cain



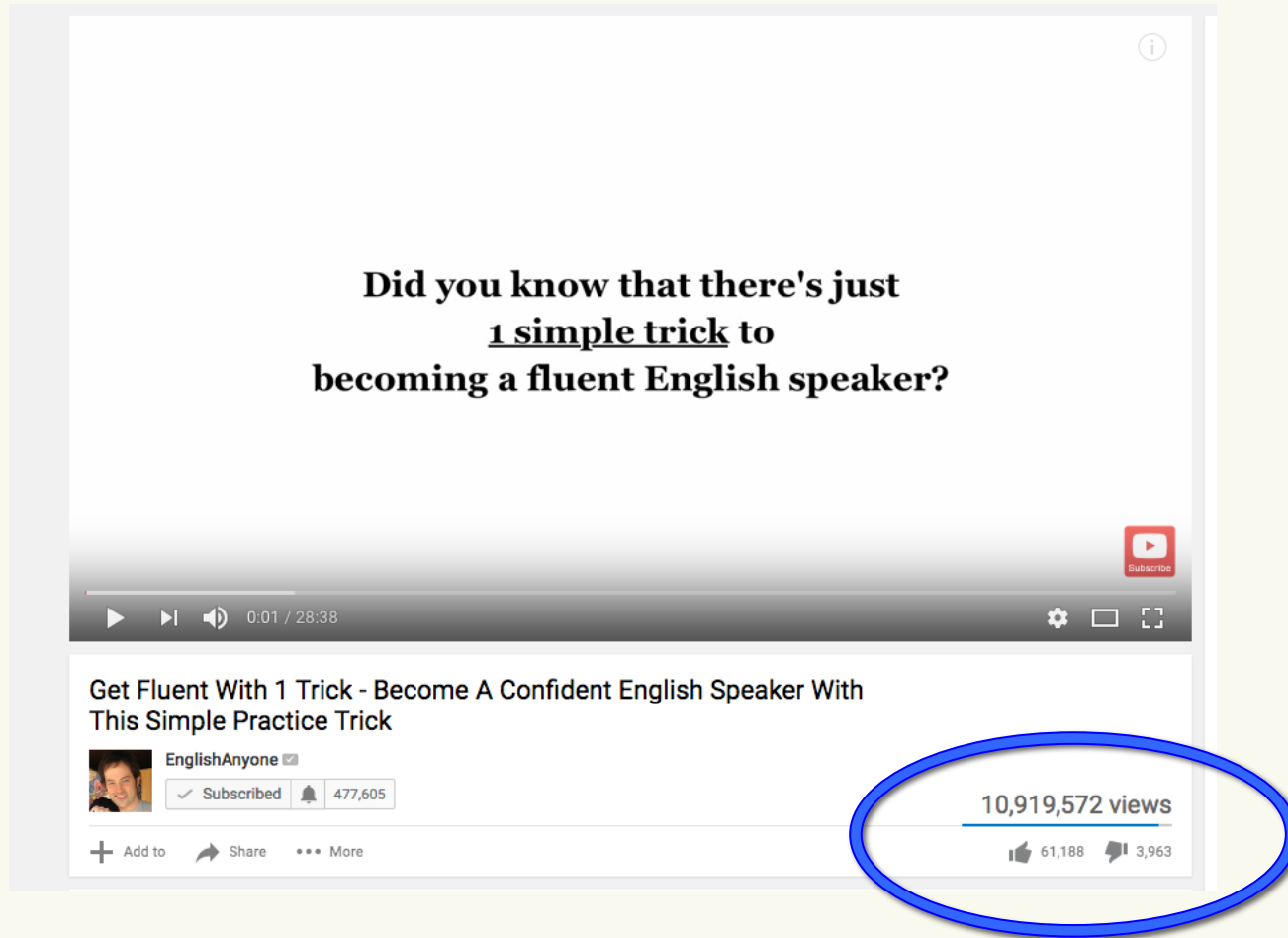
Task: THINK – PAIR – SHARE
What does Wittgenstein mean?



“The limits of my language
means the limits of my mind.
All I know is what I have words for”

Ludwig Wittgenstein

English Rocks!!!



“Obviously you native English speakers still don't get it. It's not about understanding English while reading or listening to something, there might be a few words you have to google but it's actually pretty easy.

It's really not about writing either, I know how to form sentences and I think people will understand me even if I make a few mistakes.

The talking to someone in real life is the hard part. I'm not a native English speaker and I can read a whole book in English and understand it completely, or watch a tv show without subtitles.

Still I totally panic if I have to simply buy a coffee when I'm in another country. My mouth just isn't used to all the sounds so my talking sounds really weird and broken.”



Developing or **killing** oracy in schools?

- safety
 - challenge
 - authentic participation
 - ownership
-
- **Misconception 1. Only the "advanced" learners can drive discussions.**
 - **Misconception 2. Silence should be avoided at all costs.**

Elizabeth A. City and Michael S. Hale, *The Teacher's Guide to Leading Student-Centered Discussions: Talking About Texts in the Classroom* (Corwin, 2006),

The **nation** needs **young people** who have the **confidence** to use their voice, who are **eloquent** and can **communicate their ideas**;

young people need **teachers** who are prepared to support them to improve their **speaking skills** and in order to achieve this, teachers will need **oracy** to become an **educational priority**.

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What are we **already** doing?

- Key competences
- Compiti di realtà
- Language competences
- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Functional language
- Academic Skills
- Social Skills
- Life skills
- Teen topics
- Literature / ESP
- Culture
- Clil
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Decision makers



More?

- Group guidelines
- Types of Talk
- Sentences / thinking stems
- Thinking routines

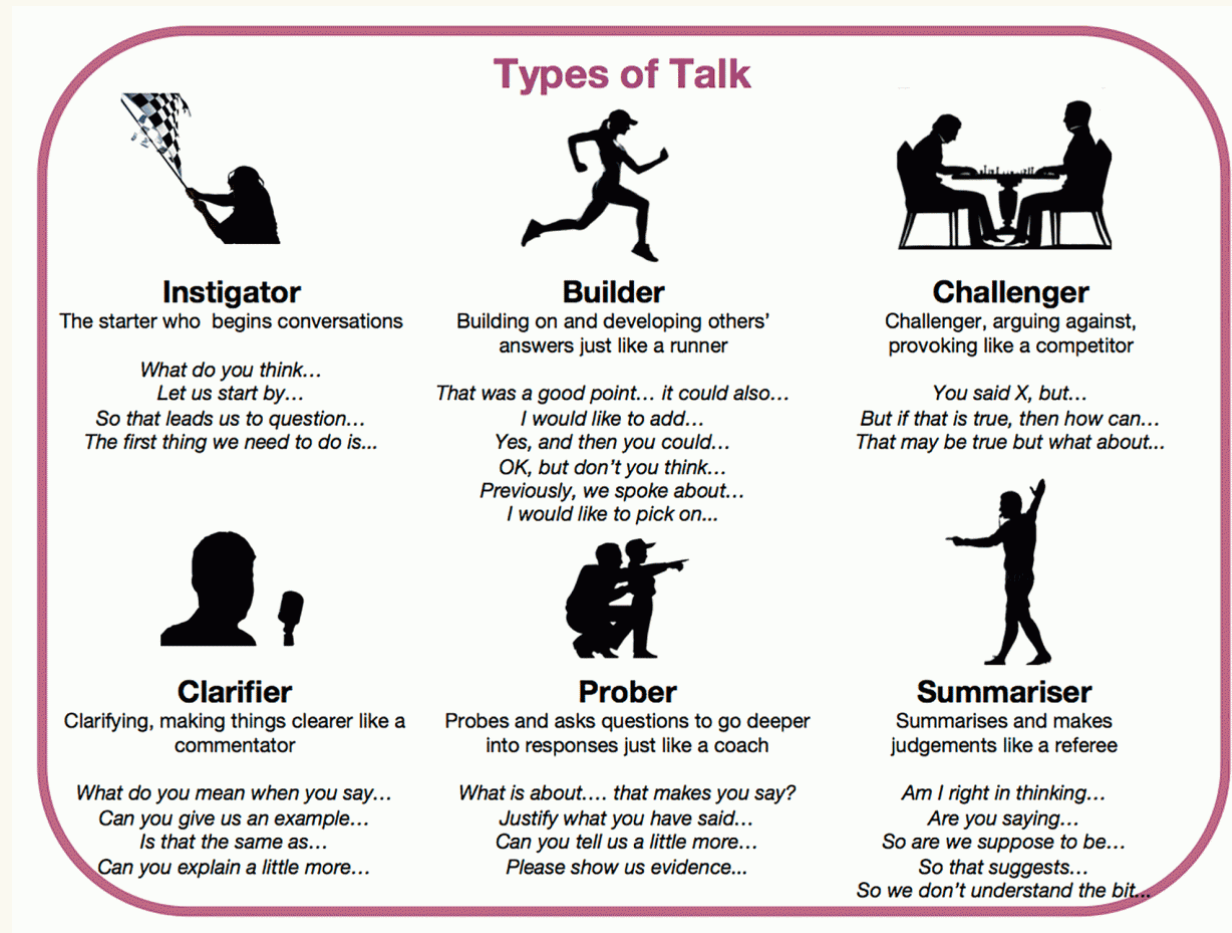


Group guidelines

Task: Come up with five guidelines for your group

- Always respect each other's ideas
- Be prepared to change your mind
- Come to a shared agreement
- Clarify, challenge, summarize, and build on each other's ideas
- Invite someone to contribute by asking a question
- Show proof of listening

Types of talk



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Sentence Stems

- A technique that gives students the opportunity to **respond in the form of a complete sentence** to effectively communicate.
- Sentence stems provide **scaffolding** to help students get started in speaking or writing **without the added pressure** of thinking about how to correctly formulate a response.

Sentence / thinking stems



Comparison/contrasting

- _____ is similar to / reminds me of _____
- The similarities/ differences between _____ and _____ are _____
- Additionally,... / In addition,... / Furthermore,...
- The pattern I noticed is _____
- I compared _____ to _____ and noticed _____
- An experience I've had like this is _____
- On the other hand,... / Alternatively,... / On the contrary,... /

Predictions

- I believe this will happen/is true because _____
- I predict/hypothesize that _____
- Since _____ happened, I believe the next thing to happen will be _____
- Reading this makes me think that _____
- I wonder if _____

Recount

- Firstly, / Secondly, / Lastly, ...
- I figured out _____ by _____
- I solved this problem by _____
- I noticed _____
- The strategy I used was _____ because _____
- I was surprised that _____
- _____ led to _____
- I observed / witnessed _____

Persuasive

- I agree with _____ as a result of _____
- I would like to add _____
- I disagree with _____ because _____
- I respect your opinion but _____
- I know my answer is reasonable because _____
- _____ is important due to _____
- The most likely reason for _____ whereas _____

Evaluating

- I disagree/agree with because _____
- Something new I learned _____
- Something I don't understand _____
- This reminds me of _____ because _____ Consequently, _____
- Something important to remember is _____
- Another strategy you could use would be to _____
- When I checked my work, I _____

Analysing

- Couldn't it also be that _____?
- I noticed/observed _____
- The model shows _____
- I wonder _____
- The benefits of _____ include/are _____
- Before _____, I had never considered _____

Summarizing

- The main ideas are _____
- My key findings suggest _____
- I learned _____
- The cause/effect of _____ was _____
- Based on _____, I can conclude that _____

Synthesize

- Initially, I thought _____, as a result of _____
- At first I thought _____, but now I'm thinking _____ because _____
- My thinking has changed because _____
- This challenged my thinking/understanding due to _____
- These events/this process caused me to believe _____
- Another _____ you could use would be _____

Seeking clarification

- Can you tell me more?
- Can you give me another example so I can understand?
- Can you give me a "real life" example?
- Can you give me example from the text?
- Where can I find that in the text?
- Why do you think that?

Oracy building activities

- Group Talk
- Instruction
- Debate
- Presentation
- Drama
- Role-play

Sarah Howell - Professional Development Group
– Recanati - 2017



Voice warm-up

I did not say you stole my red hat.

I **did** not say you stole my red hat.

I did **not** say you stole my red hat.

I did not **say** you stole my red hat.

I did not say **you** stole my red hat.

I did not say you **stole** my red hat.

I did not say you stole **my** red hat.

I did not say you stole my **red** hat.

I did not say you stole my red **hat**.

Group activity

- *Think – Pair – Share*
- Visualisation
- *Connect – Engage – Challenge*

Think – Pair – Share

- **Think**
- Think about your first day at school?
- And about primary/middle school? What do you miss?
- Do you know anyone who is going to a new school for the this year? How do they feel?
- What things might be worrying for a child going to school for the first time?

Listen to the poem by Roger McGough

First Day at School

First day of school

A millionbillionwillion miles from home
Waiting for the bell to go. (To go where?)
Why are they all so big, other children?
So noisy? So much at home they
Must have been born in uniform
Lived all their lives in playgrounds
Spent the years inventing games
That don't let me in. Games
That are rough, that swallow you up.



And the railings.
All around, the railings.
Are they to keep out wolves and
monsters?
Things that carry off and eat children?
Things you don't take sweets from?
Perhaps they're to stop us getting out
Running away from the lessins. Lessin.
What does a lessin look like?
Sounds small and slimy.
They keep them in the glassrooms.
Whole rooms made out of glass. Imagine.

I wish I could remember my name
Mummy said it would come in useful.
Like wellies. When there's puddles.
Yellowwellies. I wish she was here.
I think my name is sewn on somewhere
Perhaps the teacher will read it for me.
Tea-cher. The one who makes the tea.

Roger McGough

Connect – Extend - Challenge

- CONNECT

How are the ideas and information presented **CONNECTED** to what you already knew?

- EXTEND

What new ideas did you get that **EXTENDED** or pushed your thinking in new directions?

- CHALLENGE

What is still **CHALLENGING** or confusing for you to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?

<http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/>

CONNECT	EXTEND	CHALLENGE

Presentations (public speaking)

- Presentation tasks should give students the opportunity to present information, viewpoints and ideas appropriately for a specific audience.

- control the fluency and pace of their speech
- project their voice and vary their tone
- use gesture, posture and eye contact
- use appropriate vocabulary
- organise talk content to convey meaning
- manage time
- take account of the level of understanding of the audience, where this is appropriate to the activity
- use metaphor, humour, irony, mimicry and other rhetorical devices
- display self-assurance, liveliness and flair in speaking.

Assessment:

Teacher

Self

Peer

<https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/oracytoolkit/>

Presentation framework

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ORACY FRAMEWORK for Student Presentations

PHYSICAL

Projection, Gesture

- How are you using your face?
- How are you using your voice?
- How are you using movement and gesture?
- Is pitch, tone, and rhythm of voice varied?
- Do gestures and body language support what is being said?
- Are you in control of your voice and movement?

COGNITIVE

Thinking, Collaborating, Questioning

- Is there a strong argument?
- Have you made clear points backed up with evidence?
- Have you presented complex arguments clearly?
- Do you have a clear beginning, middle, and end?

LINGUISTIC

Vocabulary Acquisition, Lexical Choice

- Does the speech have precise language?
- Do you use formal or informal language?
- Is there a range of appropriate vocabulary?

EMOTIONAL

Audience, Engagement, Pathos

- Are you making an impact on the audience?
- Is the speech given with energy and 100% commitment?
- Are you connecting with the audience?
- How have you taken risks (i.e. using humor, surprise) in your speech?

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London UK

Book review

Task in groups:

Present an oral review of a picture book

- Assign roles: reader, presenter
- Look at title, author, blurb
- Read book paying careful attention to the text and/or images.
- Identify a headline (key concept)



Games' Night

- Watch in your groups
- Observe and reconstruct the rules
- What do you think about this game?



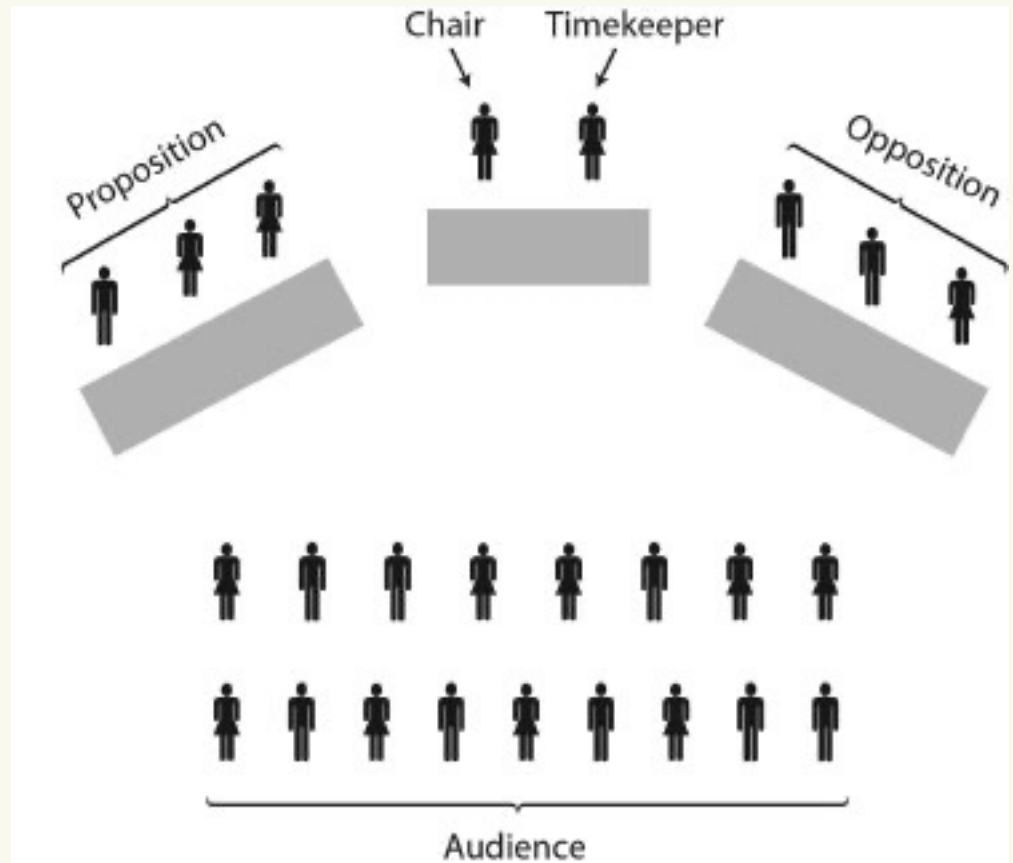
Fluency building

Rory's Story Cubes

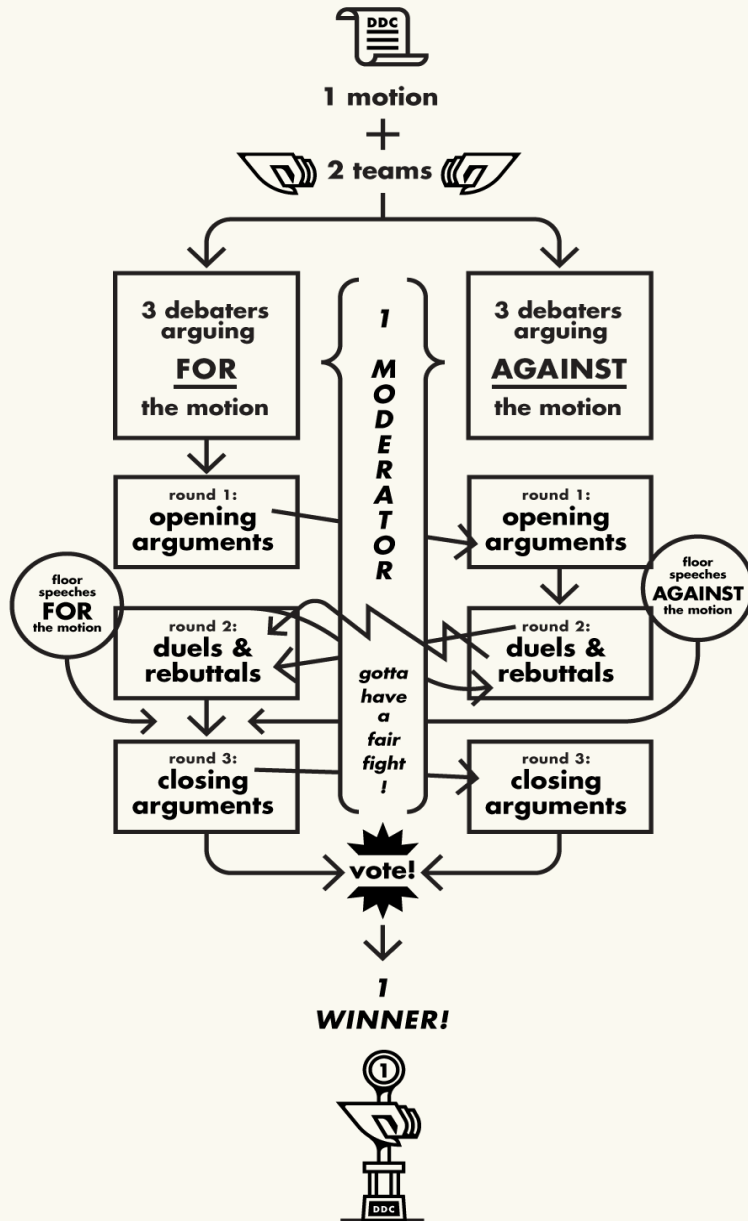


Debate

- Topic
- Divide the Class
- Structure



Debate



Debate

- **Structure**

A basic 1 hour plan:

Preparation (7-10 min) – Introductory Remarks Team A / Team B (3-5 min each)

– ***first arguments; in turns***

Preparation (7-10 min) – Rebuttal Team A / Team B (3-5 min each)

– ***response to first arguments; in turns***

Preparation (5 min) – Open discussion (simultaneous) (7-10 min)

– ***interactive discussion of the introduction and rebuttal points***

Preparation (5 min) – Conclusion (3 min)

– ***restatement of the strongest arguments from all previous stages; in turns***

Moderator's Comments

Be aware during discussions

- Micromoments = everyday moments
- Improve your teacher talk
 - Prompt yourself using question stems
- Question time
 - Factor into lesson plans
 - Keep Q notebook
- Validate creativity



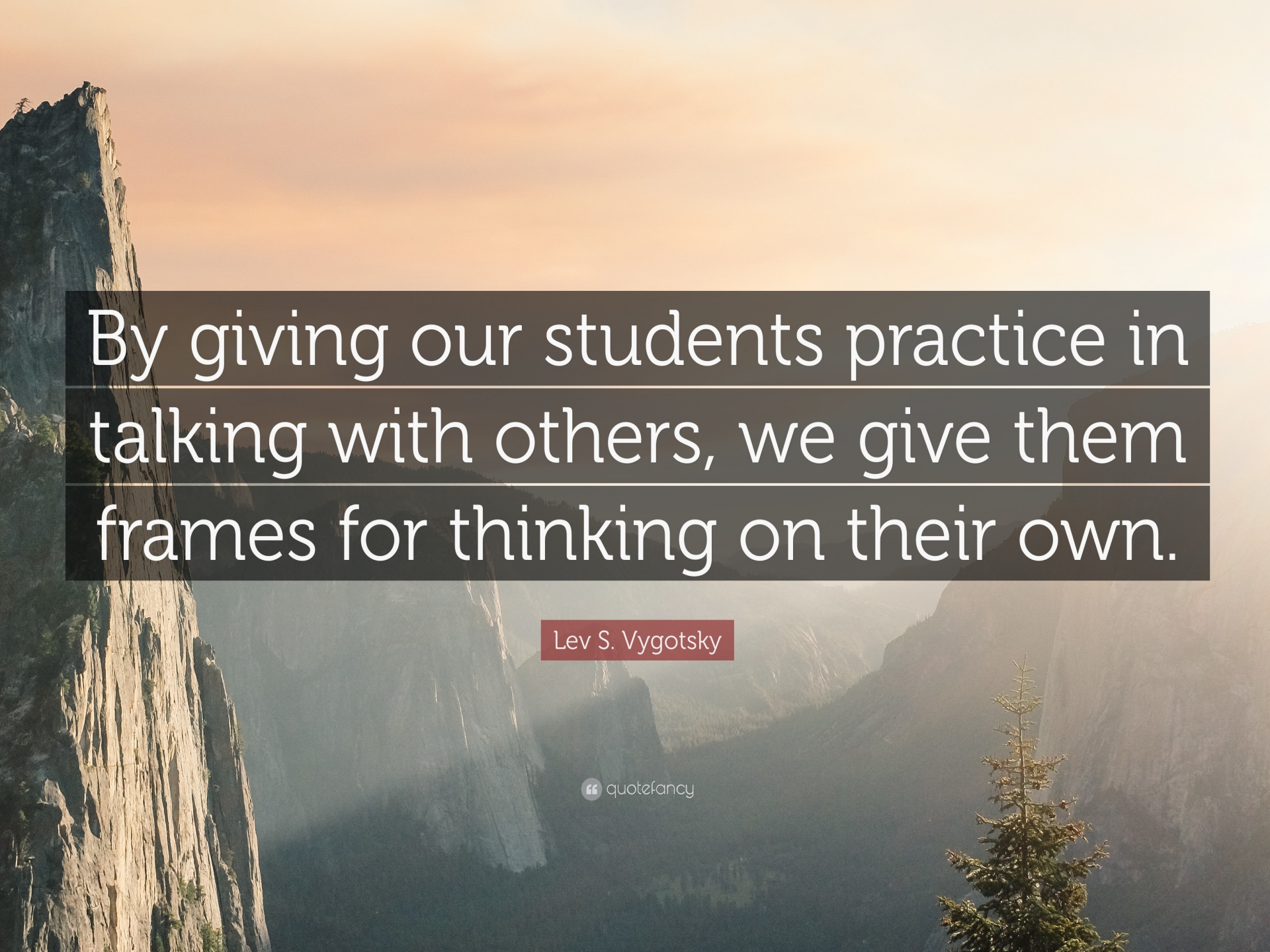
Blooms Thinking dice

What next?

- Encourage a *top down* approach to oracy in your school
- Integrate oracy into all of your lessons
- Develop your own “oracy” mindset
- Create opportunities for exchanges with EFL /subject colleagues
- Creating interclass speaking opportunities





A scenic view of a mountain valley. On the left, a tall, narrow rock formation rises vertically. The valley floor is covered in green forest, and distant mountain peaks are visible under a hazy sky. A single evergreen tree stands in the lower right foreground.

By giving our students practice in
talking with others, we give them
frames for thinking on their own.

Lev S. Vygotsky

Further reading...

- 'Small Talk: Making Introverts' Voices Heard in the EFL Classroom' Alastair Roy
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a53aIW6o8>
- Oracy - the state of speaking in our schools. English Speaking Union
http://www.esu.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/13796/Oracy-State-of-speaking-report-v2.pdf
Thinking Together Project, Cambridge University, UK
<https://thinkingtogether.educ.cam.ac.uk/>
- The Teen Brain Under Construction, Part 1
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_TPC1N6f1E
- National Literacy Foundation
https://media.wix.com/ugd/2c80ff_9cd57fd0cafc4675b3e90f2f13a188ff.pdf
- Sentence / question stems
<http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/sentence-stems>
- Enhancing Literacy Opportunities School-Wide: Oracy & Sentence/Thinking Stems
<https://learninghubwss.wordpress.com>

And visit the School21 website

- www.school21.org.uk

Keep in touch!

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