**TOP TIPS
FOR ORACY**

About this resource

Oracy can be seen as:

"the ability to use oral skills of speaking and listening" (Wilkinson 1968)

Here are some top tips to consider when you are looking to further develop oracy within the learning environment.

1. Break it down

Explain what you mean by oracy so learners fully understand what you are referring to and what you expect. Break it down into the four strands and explain each strand fully so that learners understand the component parts of oracy.

2. What is the focus?

Be explicit in lessons with regards to which strand(s) of oracy you are going to focus on. The strands are:

- Physical
- Linguistic
- Cognition
- Social and Emotional

For example, in today's lesson we are going to focus on listening so that we can understand what someone is thinking and can then pose questions to check our understanding and challenge the speaker. Perhaps we are going to focus on the physical strand and look for learners to vary tone and pitch to highlight how this can help emphasise key words and keep others engaged.

3. Work with someone else

Use colleagues to help model conversations highlighting the traits of a good speaker and listener. Look at body language when speaking and the mannerisms of listeners to show they are paying attention.

4. Explore synonyms

Explore synonyms to help build a wider vocabulary and avoid learners' over-reliance and overuse of certain words. You can do this with synonym exercises in lessons to see how many different words learners can come up with for example 'think' or look to find words that learners can use as a sentence opener other than using 'Basically'.

5. Start small and build

Start small and then build from there – allow learners to work with talk partners when discussing points to help them develop confidence in the topic. You can then snowball pairs into fours, then eights so that learners gradually get used to speaking in front of larger audiences. Start with smaller time limits and build from there, encouraging structuring of content to help students speak for longer.

6. Specific roles

Create and then allocate specific roles for learners when discussions are taking place, example of different roles for learners:

a. think about coming up with alternative points or arguments

b. seek evidence from the speaker to help them to justify their viewpoint

c. pose questions to help get a clearer understanding of what someone is saying

d. add ideas to the speaker's in order to build on what they are saying

e. take notes so that they can summarise what is being said

These roles can act like a framework to help chunk aspects of discussions so that learners can focus on specific roles and build their confidence incrementally.

7. Thinking time

Allow thinking time so that learners can process questions and then formulate appropriate responses. You may also want to encourage them to write down their initial ideas so they have something to refer back to during the lesson.

8. Maintain high expectations

Maintain high expectations, we can all improve how we talk, listen, structure our speeches, vary our tone, engage our audience and present ourselves. We can use the four oracy strands so that we can build incremental improvements in 'our ability to use oral skills of speaking and listening'.

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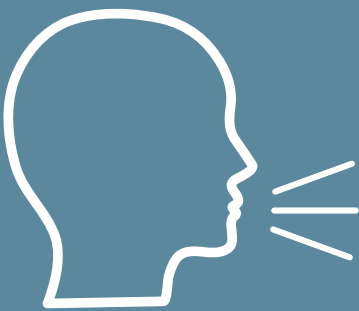
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