

ORACY CPD PROGRAMME: 2024/2025 EVALUATION REPORT

Attainment Raising Programmes

Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco)

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|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Project description..... | 3 |
| Evaluation approach | 4 |
| Results | 5 |
| Participants..... | 5 |
| Findings and discussion | 5 |
| Recommendations | 13 |

Project description

Oracy CPD is a 5-session programme that offers professional development and training for teachers and focuses on improving oracy in secondary schools, particularly for those working with disadvantaged students. The programme was delivered to a total of 26 teachers and school management staff (e.g., librarians, coordinators) from 13 schools across East Anglia, as well as to 13 neaco and related staff (e.g., Widening Participation (WP) officers and coordinators). We partnered with Oracy Cambridge, who designed and ran a series of face-to-face (first and last sessions) and online workshops (sessions 2 to 4) to develop key aspects of pedagogy and to help teachers lead developments within their school.

The main aim of the programme is to create a sustainable model for leadership and teaching of oracy across and within the curriculum, and to support school management and teachers in realising plans to promote the effective use of talk for teaching and learning and develop young people's spoken language skills. Moreover, the programme builds a community of practice by appointing one or more 'Oracy Lead teachers' who, after training, will lead by example – developing approaches in their own classrooms for consideration, discussion and dissemination with colleagues.

The programme consists of 5 sessions, with their respective delivery type, content and desired outcomes summarised in Table 1 below:

| Session | Delivery type | Focus/Content | Outcomes |
|---------|---------------|---|--|
| 1 | Face-to-face | Oracy pedagogy and education: dialogic teaching and learning, and the explicit teaching of oracy skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving subject knowledge in oracy • Learning about the latest developments in oracy education • Improving pedagogical knowledge |
| 2 | Online | Assessing oracy: how to build up evidence of impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying ways to deploy gained oracy skills and learning in their practice |

| | | | |
|---|--------------|--|---|
| 3 | Online | Oracy and inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the social and emotional aspects of oracy • Identifying how to ensure the inclusion of students with special needs in oracy activities |
| 4 | Online | Subject-related oracy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving subject knowledge in oracy • Identifying ways to deploy gained oracy skills and learning in their practice |
| 5 | Face-to-face | Developing oracy practice through teachers' lesson study | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying ways to deploy gained oracy skills and learning in their practice • Working collaboratively and developing peer support |

Table 1: Session outline of Oracy CPD programme.

Evaluation approach

The programme was underpinned by a Theory of Change. The evaluation was based on participants' feedback, assessing whether the programme aligned with its intended goals and whether it provided the anticipated value.

A post-programme survey was sent to the 26 teachers and school management staff after their participation in the Oracy CPD programme. Surveys were available in either electronic or paper format, with electronic format being the preference – this also helped gather responses from participants that did not attend the last in-person session, where paper surveys were distributed, and support a higher response rate.

The evaluation primarily consists of descriptive analysis of the survey responses. For multiple-choice questions, results are presented as percentages to show overall response patterns. Open-ended responses were analysed thematically, with common themes identified and summarised in a table alongside the proportion of participants who mentioned each theme.

Results

Participants

There were some challenges with uptake, which affected participation rates at the beginning of the programme. To address this, the programme was subsequently opened to a broader group of individuals to ensure a wider reach and to engage with as many people as possible.

The final, total group of participants included 26 teachers and school management staff, along with 13 neaco and related staff. The post-programme survey, however, was sent only to non-neaco staff (either teachers and school management staff, or related staff), amounting to a total of 29 participants. Of these, 14 completed the survey, resulting in a 48.3% response rate.

Before moving to the discussion of the results, it is worth noting that one respondent was not school based, but a WP member of a higher education institution (HEI). As some survey questions were specific to schools, they selected 'no' when questions were not applicable (e.g., see Figure 2 in the next section). Additionally, one respondent did not fully complete the survey; their incomplete items have been coded as 'unanswered' in the relevant figures (e.g., Figures 2–6 in the next section).

Findings and discussion

The figures below, constructed from the 14 responses to the post-programme survey, reflect the feedback of the participants on four main blocks: (i) effect of Oracy CPD on teaching practices and knowledge, (ii) learnings implementation in schools, (iii) future Oracy CPD opportunities, and (iv) future oracy Community of Practice.

(i) Effect of Oracy CPD on teaching practices and knowledge

Figure 1 shows a predominantly positive effect of the Oracy CPD programme on various aspects of the participants' teaching practice and knowledge. 100% of the participants agreed that the programme had contributed to their subject knowledge in oracy and

informed them of the latest developments in oracy education. Following this closely, 92.9% of the respondents indicated that the CPD contributed to their pedagogical knowledge about oracy. Lastly, 71.5% of the responses indicated that participants reported a contribution of the programme to their own oracy skills and a positive influence in their teaching practice.

Moreover, when asked about the specifics of how and what aspects of their teaching were positively influenced, several themes emerged. Among these, the introduction of new resources in their classes (60%), an increase in reflective practices (40%) and the direct implementation of oracy activities in their lessons (40%) were the most frequently reported by participants – see Table 2.

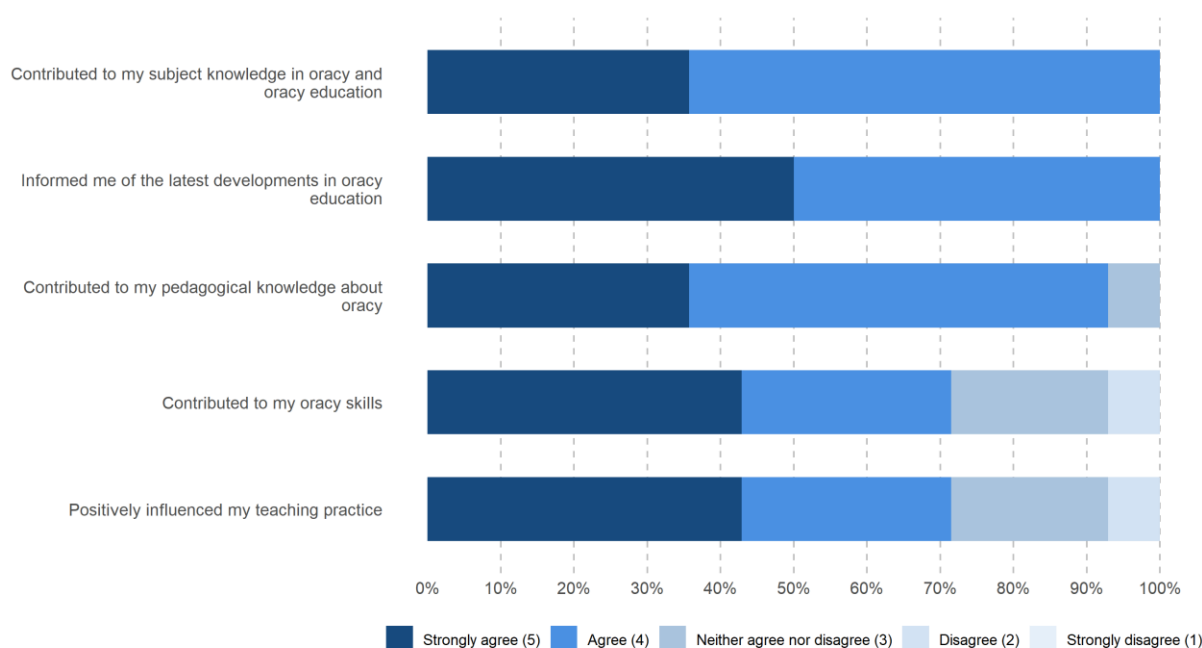


Figure 1: Perceived effect of the Oracy CPD programme.

| How has the CPD influenced your teaching positively? | Percentage of responses |
|--|-------------------------|
| New resources (research, study techniques) | 60% |
| Reflective practice | 40% |
| Implementing oracy in their own lessons | 40% |
| Becoming aware of the importance of oracy and its use in the classroom | 20% |
| Promoting oracy amongst other staff | 10% |
| Increased confidence in supporting students | 10% |
| Considering DLD in the classroom more | 10% |

Table 2: Themes and their frequencies illustrating the positive influence of the Oracy CPD programme on participants' teaching.

(ii) Learnings implementation in schools

Regarding the applicability and feasibility of implementing what participants learnt in the Oracy CPD in their schools, the vast majority (78.6%) gave a positive response, as depicted in Figure 2.

In particular, Table 3 shows that 73% of those who responded positively identified staff training and department practice reviews as areas for potential implementation. This is followed by 45.4% of responses alluding to the direct implementation and leadership of oracy development initiatives, such as tutor programmes or debate clubs. Finally, 9% of positive responses referred to a more conscious consideration of the impact of students' backgrounds on their oracy.

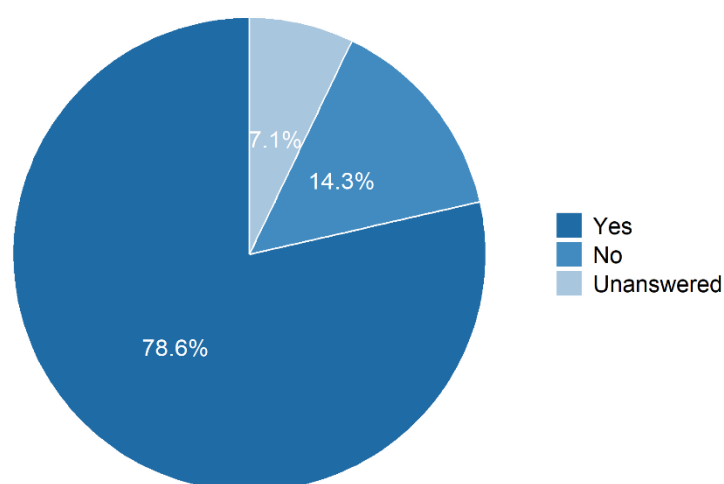


Figure 2: Perceived ability to apply CPD learnings in their school.

| How can you implement changes in your school based on the CPD received? | Percentage of responses |
|---|-------------------------|
| Staff training / department practice review | 73% |
| Implementing and leading oracy development initiatives (e.g., lesson study, tutor programme, debate club) | 45.4% |
| Considering students' backgrounds in the oracy practice | 9% |

Table 3: Themes and their frequencies illustrating how participants can implement CPD learnings in their schools.

(iii) Future Oracy CPD opportunities

The post-programme survey also addressed interest in attending future Oracy CPD opportunities, as shown in Figures 3 and 4. A total of 92.9% of respondents expressed interest in more CPD sessions, with 28.6% preferring face-to-face sessions, 7.1% opting for virtual sessions, and 57.1% showing no strong preference for either mode of delivery.

When it comes to the topics they would like covered in potential future sessions, 39% of participants requested a more practical perspective, including tips on effectively implementing oracy in school lessons. In addition, 15% expressed interest in learning

how to assess oracy, how non-teaching staff can support oracy both within and outside the curriculum, and how to support students with diverging oracy skillsets. Lastly, 8% requested training on oracy applied to EAL students, to specific subjects (e.g., science) and to debating, and research on the impact of oracy on broader skills like academic writing and critical thinking.

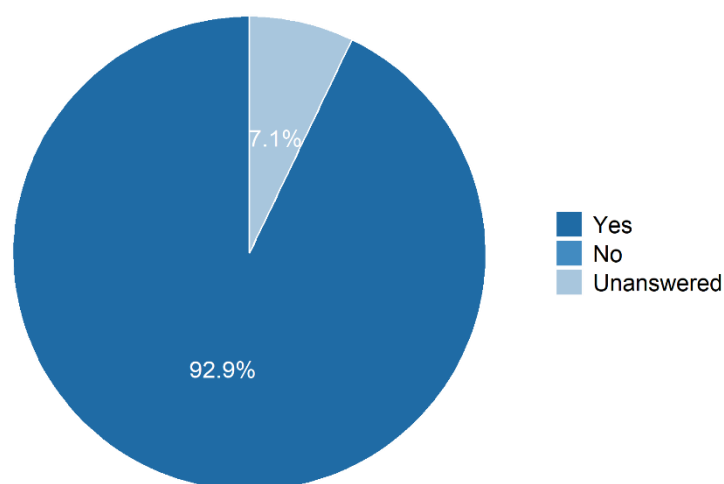


Figure 3: Interest in attending additional Oracy CPD sessions in the future.

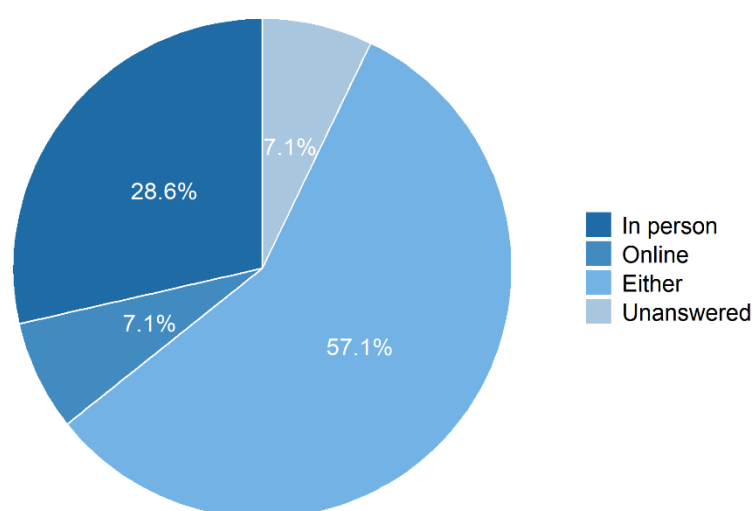


Figure 4: Preferred settings for future oracy training.

| What areas of oracy would you like to receive further training in? | Percentage of responses |
|---|-------------------------|
| Practical tips on how to effectively implement oracy in lessons (incl. practice) | 39% |
| Oracy assessment | 15% |
| How non-teaching staff can support oracy across the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities | 15% |
| How to best support students with different oracy skillsets (incl. DLD) | 15% |
| Subject-specific oracy (e.g., science) | 8% |
| Oracy to support EAL students accessing mainstream curriculum | 8% |
| Debating | 8% |
| Research on the impact that oracy has on academic writing and critical thinking | 8% |

Table 4: Oracy topics and their frequencies suggested by participants for further oracy training.

Finally, in line with the focus on feedback and with a view to informing future CPD sessions, participants were asked about aspects of the programme they felt could be improved. A total of 21% suggested that the sessions could be more interactive and include more practical examples. Additionally, 14% expressed a preference for full-day events and emphasised their preference for face-to-face training. Lastly, 7% of participants highlighted their wish for a deeper exploration of oracy assessment and a greater focus on the age groups of the students they work with in their schools. The same percentage also noted that having access to certain information beforehand would have allowed them to engage more actively in the discussions.

| Was there anything you wished had been different and/or done in another way? | Percentage of responses |
|---|--------------------------------|
| More interactive | 21% |
| More examples of activities to implement in their lessons | 21% |
| Full day event | 14% |
| Prefer face-to-face training | 14% |
| More focus on the age group attendees work with | 7% |
| Further exploration of oracy assessment | 7% |
| Know in advance what type of experience/information is needed for the discussions | 7% |

Table 5: Feedback on desired changes to the Oracy CPD programme.

(iv) Future oracy Community of Practice

A potential continuation of the Oracy CPD programme is the establishment of an Oracy Community of Practice (CoP) in the East of England, with participants also surveyed about this in the post-programme questionnaire. As displayed in Figures 5 and 6, 85.7% of the participants showed interest in becoming a member of the Oracy CoP, with 78.6% of them reporting willingness to contribute experiences from their own school to the CoP. These results highlight the legacy potential of the CPD programme, which could continue both within schools – through the ongoing updating of staff involved in the CoP – and across the region – thanks to the peer support and collaborative work facilitated by the CoP.

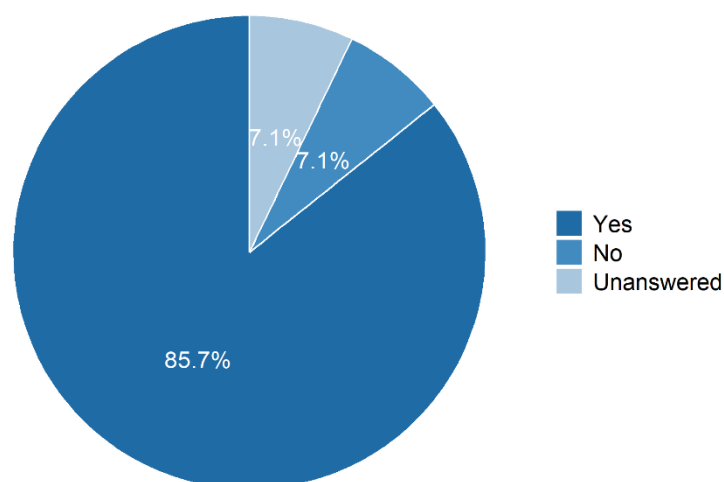


Figure 5: Interest in participating in an Oracy Community of Practice in the East of England.

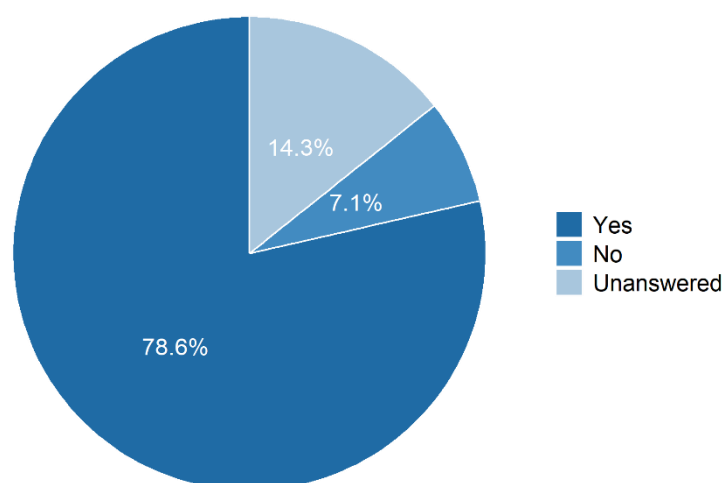


Figure 6: Interest in contributing school-based experiences to an Oracy Community of Practice in the East of England.

Lastly, in addition to the more targeted questions about the Oracy CPD programme, participants were also given space in the survey to share any additional comments, thoughts, or suggestions regarding the completed programme and/or future ones. Some of these testimonials are presented below:

“Very useful CPD sessions and given me great ideas to improve practice.” – Science teacher (Open Academy)

“I found the course content and different strands of oracy very interesting and engaging.” – Teacher (Jack Hunt School)

“Please ensure that the course is designed to be relevant and accessible to all participants, regardless of their roles. I believe oracy is a crucial skill, and the knowledge and strategies for implementing it would be beneficial for all staff members to learn and to share with their colleagues.” – Librarian (Stanground Academy)

“Full day please! Lots more sessions would be fab.” – Food technology teacher (Open Academy)

Recommendations

- 1. Increase interactivity and practical application in the CPD sessions.** The most frequent feedback from participants highlighted a desire for more interactive sessions grounded in practice. Future sessions should take this into account by incorporating hands-on activities and adapting content to emphasise practical strategies and classroom implementation.
- 2. Integrate ongoing feedback mechanisms.** Building on the previous point, some feedback touched on topics that were covered during the sessions, but which participants wished had been explored in greater depth (e.g., oracy assessment or subject-specific oracy). Embedding ongoing feedback mechanisms into the structure of the CPD would allow facilitators to respond to participants’ evolving needs in real time, rather than waiting for potential future sessions. This would also help ensure that the training remains as targeted and useful as possible for those involved.
- 3. Plan for medium-term follow-up.** The current post-programme survey explores the potential for applying the training content to teachers’ practice. However, many of these aspects require time to implement and/or to observe the effects. In order to assess these longer-term outcomes and the sustained influence of the Oracy CPD programme, consider conducting a follow-up survey with participants six months post-training. This would provide valuable insight into how the training has translated into school practice and help shape future CPD initiatives.
- 4. Strengthen the legacy of the programme through a sustainable CoP.** As suggested in the Block (iv) questions, the idea of establishing an Oracy CoP in the East of England as a continuation of the current Oracy CPD programme holds significant promise. From an evaluation perspective, bringing this idea to fruition

is strongly encouraged, as it could support the long-term sustainability and impact of the programme. To support this, continuing the partnership with Oracy Cambridge could be beneficial in co-designing the structure and resources needed to set up and maintain the CoP.

5. **Consider a blended CoP structure.** Building on the idea of establishing a CoP and in response to participants' preferences, consider a 'blended' format for the CoP, combining both online and in-person sessions. To make the in-person meetings more logistically practical for participants, it may be beneficial to hold both local regional meetings and one or two annual sessions in Cambridge. The former would enhance accessibility and support school-based collaboration, while the latter would provide a larger-scale networking and training opportunity.