Does an oracy intervention affect the way that teachers cope with students who challenge or worry them in some way?

C.M. Perez-Adamson

A thesis submitted for the degree of D. Ch. Ed. Psych

(Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology)

Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

University of Essex

Date of conferment: July 2018

ABSTRACT

The Voice 21: Improving oracy intervention funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) was focused upon improving the quality of classroom dialogue at the Y7 level. It has four key elements: (i) an oracy curriculum, which includes dedicated oracy lessons and strategies for building oracy in regular school lessons; (ii) a training package for school staff; (iii) strategies to build a whole-school oracy culture, including building oracy into assemblies and parents' evenings, and (iv) an oracy assessment tool, which helps teachers to identify specific speaking and listening skills.

Past research focussed upon oracy has established that oracy can lead to school age students achieving substantially improved skills in maths, science, and reasoning. This study attempts to develop an understanding of how vulnerable students were thought about and engaged with in a school that had recently completed the EEF intervention. Five teachers were interviewed and asked about their experiences of working with students perceived as challenging or worrying before and after the intervention, and about the possible impact of the intervention on relationships among students and teachers in the school.

A social constructivist epistemological position was adopted and a grounded theory methodology was used. Teachers reported that students developed skills in listening and relating to other students, which contributed to improved relations among students. Teachers also reflected that the intervention offered them the space to develop more trusting and close relationships with students. Oracy was described as serving students who were challenging or worrying by helping teachers to identify students with language difficulties, by giving students who attracted negative attention opportunities to participate positively in school and by offering students who were otherwise socially vulnerable tools to present their ideas, and a platform from which to influence the school culture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Dr Adam Styles for supervising this thesis, for providing valuable insights and for his encouragement.

Thank you to the teachers who participated and to the oracy lead in particular for his support of this project.

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“The process is no easy option. It is tough and rigorous and has depth. It is where the cognitive - an ability to think deeply - meets the experiential - an ability to feel and empathise. That’s the sweet spot. That is when you get real transformation.”

- Daniel Shindler (Drama and Wellbeing Lead, Oracy School).

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is oracy?

The term 'oracy' refers to the set of skills needed to develop spoken forms of communication, as well as the processes through which children learn through talk (Millard & Menzies, 2016). A framework for oracy has recently been developed by the University of Cambridge and a specialist oracy academy school (Oracy School) which locates oracy in physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social emotional categories and offers a means of supporting teachers to develop and extend pupils' abilities in each of these areas. A progression tool based on this framework can be seen in Figure 1. In the context of the UK National Curriculum, oracy education refers to: "the direct, explicit teaching of speaking and listening skills as part of the language and literacy curriculum, comparable to the direct, explicit teaching of algebra as part of maths" (Mercer, 2018 p.1). In a recent review of oracy in UK schools, Millard and Menzies (2016) discuss how oracy could influence students' lives beyond the school gates, and how it has significant potential for addressing social disadvantage.

Oracy has been referred to in a number of different ways in research and policy, e.g. in terms of spoken language, communication, speaking, and listening. However, in 2012 Robin Alexander described how the term 'oracy' refers to the acquired skill that can be compared to terms such as 'literacy' and 'numeracy', and that it is important for this term to be used consistently in order to raise the status of oracy in the UK curriculum. The effort to raise the status of oracy in schools is supported by a number of randomized control trials and quasi-experimental studies which are described by Millard and Menzies (2016). These suggest that high-quality talk in schools can have a profound impact on children's learning: improving attainment scores in English, Mathematics, and Science (Gorard, Siddiquie, Huat See, 2015;

Wilkinson, Murphy & Binici, 2015; O'Connor, Michaels & Chaplin, 2015; Adey & Shayer, 2015; Hanley, Slavin & Elliott, 2015; Kutnik & Berondini, 2009); the retention of subject-specific knowledge (Adey & Shayer, 2015; Rivard & Straw, 2000); transferring comprehension or reasoning skills to other areas (Wilkinson et al. 2015; Adey & Shayer, 2015); Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) Scores (Gorard et al. 2015; Topping & Trickey, 2015), and reasoning or problem-solving skills (Mercer, Wegerif & Dawes, 1999).

1.2 The theoretical basis

The cognitive impact of oracy is likely to be due to students' increased awareness and control of the processes by which they learn (Flavell, 1979; Brown, 1987), as well as an increase in their ability to activate and sustain cognitions, behaviours, and affect so that these are systematically oriented towards the attainment of their goals (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994 p. 309). This process is also known as 'self-regulation'. There is compelling psychological and educational research based on Vygotsky's (1962) work proposing that the development of children's reasoning and self-regulatory abilities are linked to their use of language (Whitebread, Mercer, Howe & Tolmie, 2013). Vygotsky proposes that children's learning is a process of progression from other-regulation to self-regulation. He emphasizes the role the social and cultural context plays in cognitive processes and argues that learning occurs in the zone of proximal development. A notion central to this theory is that of 'assisted learning' or the way each person's understanding of the social world is co-regulated via engagement and participation (Volet, Summers & Thurman, 2009). As such, a more experienced person provides a scaffold offering enough assistance to inspire yet leaving the learner with a challenge. As knowledge is internalized, the scaffold is moved to support the construction of additional knowledge (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976).

Vygotsky's theory is underpinned by the role of language. Language helps children to learn ways of thinking from others, it helps to guide learning and development as well as organizing individual thinking. Linked to this, Mercer, Wegerif & Dawes (1999) propose that when students learn to reason effectively with others, they also learn to reason more effectively alone. Thus a child with good oracy skills would be aware of their capabilities and be able to speak about how they have done something or what they have learnt, as well as being able to speak about planned activities, making reasoned choices and decisions.

1.2.1 Why do children need to be taught oracy?

Educational researchers argue that children need to be helped to work together and taught how to use language to explore, problem-solve, and reflect on information together (Mercer et al., 1999). It is argued that this is especially the case for children who have not had access to language-rich environments at home, often children from socially deprived backgrounds (Cross, 2009). However, teaching children how to use language as a tool for thinking has not been popular in the teaching profession, particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when it was more common for teachers to use didactic methods which offered students reduced opportunities to extend their thinking verbally in the classroom (Alexander, 2012). Oracy did not feature very prominently in UK education policy at the time and, in addition, group working in British classrooms can be off-task, inequitable, and not very productive (Galton & Williamson, 1992). However, Mercer et al. (1999) argue that if children do not automatically bring to the task of group work a clear idea of what was expected of them, or an understanding of what constituted a good discussion, it was unfair to expect them to be able to 'naturally' engage in the kind of talk which is important for learning. Instead, children need to be explicitly taught to use language to enquire, reason, and consider information together. This thinking has led to a range of interventions that support the use

of talk in the classroom (see, for example, Dawes, Mercer & Wegerif, 2000), and more recently the development of an oracy framework (see Figure 1), which now supports teachers to clearly understand and conceptualize the different aspects of oracy so that they can teach children how to use dialogue to support thinking and working together.

	Apprentice	Developing	Confident	Expert
Physical	I am starting to project my voice so everyone can hear it I am starting to vary the pitch, tone and rhythm of my voice I am beginning to use gestures and body movements to help convey the points I want to make	I can develop my presence as a performer, controlling my voice and movement I can use several different tones of voice and adapt my voice to the context I can use subtle gestures and body language to indicate a range of different emotions	I know how to vary my body language and tone of voice, adapting them to the situation and to what I am trying to say. I have a range of subtle changes in tone, pitch and movement to suit different genres of talk.	I can control my voice and body with fluency and precision I can teach others how to use their voice and body I am always at home in the context
Linguistic	I can use a limited vocabulary well I am starting to choose my words more precisely I can distinguish between informal and formal settings I can identify different types of language, such as: metaphor, tripling and emphasis	I can use a range of descriptive words to suit the different situations and use the 5 senses to ground my story I can use full sentences with connectives and speak fluently without repetition for several sentences I can speak formally, e.g. without using filler words (such as 'like') and with dictionary words instead of street slang	I can construct language effectively for a range of purposes, e.g. to persuade someone I can use the subject specific language of different disciplines, e.g. talking like a scientist, an historian, a mathematician or tour guide. I deploy excellent grammar when talking using full sentences I can select precise language and idiom to suit different audiences	I can deploy language with great precision and nuance I can use a wide range of vocabulary, idiom and expressions to suit any audience. I can engage with ideas at a high level and express my ideas fluently in any setting. I can develop the linguistic tools of others.
Cognitive	I am beginning to identify what makes a good argument I can use evidence to back up my point I can order my talk into a beginning, middle and end	I can pursue a line of enquiry I can spot flaws in other people's arguments I can ask a range of questions including probing questions I can choose and organize the content of my speech to convey clear meaning	I can take on different roles in discussion and can see both sides of an argument I can use different thinking skills to engage with challenging material I can summarise an argument and identify good and bad arguments I can analyse arguments and select evidence to defend or rebut a position	I can take into account the level of understanding of an audience and adapt my language I can marshal sophisticated arguments and use language and different genres of speech I can use and select metaphor, humour, irony, mimicry and other rhetorical devices with flair and imagination to make my argument come alive
Social & Emotional	I can find the confidence to speak in front of an audience I can show proof of listening I can understand my character strengths and can build on them I can support others in a discussion	I can take turns in discussion and listen to others and respond to their points I can follow ground rules and make sense of them to others I put my energy and whole-hearted commitment into discussions and speech to get the most out of any situation I listen attentively to what others are saying and play back to them what they have said	I can tell a story with no notes that engages an audience I can read an audience and change my language, tone and pitch to connect with it I can respond to build on the feelings and views of others I can develop the well-being of others through coaching and other techniques	I can take risks in the way I present to an audience in order to engage them: including using humour, surprise, etc. I can lead/chair a discussion in a range of contexts, making everyone feel involved

Figure 1.Voice 21 progression in oracy tool

1.3 National context

There is increasing recognition on the part of policy-makers that educational establishments should promote oracy. This is reflected in the 2014 National Curriculum for England, which states that pupils should develop their spoken language across all subjects and particularly in English. This is an important development for many educationalists who have organized for several years to raise the status of oracy in the curriculum. For instance, in 2007 the Communication Trust, a coalition of more than 50 organizations, launched across the UK to raise awareness of talk in schools and to support children with speech, language, and communication needs. The EEF was set up in 2011 to improve the educational attainment of Britain's poorest pupils and has advocated for several language-based interventions, such as Dialogic Teaching (Alexander, 2006), Reciprocal Teaching (Palinscar & Brown, 1984), and Philosophy for Children (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyon, 1980). Furthermore, a separate organization, Voice 21, has been set up alongside the Oracy School which has, with the University of Cambridge, developed an oracy assessment toolkit to give teachers practical tools with which they can teach and assess oracy. They have also developed a five-year campaign to connect educators committed to oracy, create infrastructures that will influence decision-makers, and ensure that oracy is formalized as standard practice in state schools.

While the current state of awareness and interest in oracy is encouraging, it is important to emphasize that oracy previously achieved very high status in the curriculum and has subsequently been side-lined. In 1975 the Bullock Report made a primary recommendation that every secondary school should develop a policy for language across the curriculum. The report effectively documented the crucial relationship between language, reading, and writing and was influential in shaping the way literacy and English were taught in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Kingman (1988) and Cox reports (1989) reiterated the

message of the Bullock Report and ensured that there was an emphasis on speaking and listening within the National Curriculum. Kingman (1988) emphasized that one of the major barriers to implementing oracy was the lack of knowledge and understanding of language among teachers and pupils. So in the late 1980s several government-funded interest groups began to develop classroom materials to support the focus upon speaking and listening within the National Curriculum (e.g. the Language in the National Curriculum (1990) group, the National Oracy Project (1992)). However, these initiatives were subsequently de-funded and shut down. From 1993 onwards, there was very little focus upon oracy and in 2003, when the literacy and numeracy strategies merged as the Primary National Strategy, talking was not mentioned at all in the manifesto document Excellence and Enjoyment (DfES, 2003). Jim Rose cautioned that too little attention had been given to speaking and listening and that children in British schools did not have enough access to a range of contexts in which they could practice their speaking and listening skills, while highlighting the essential role of oracy in literacy development (DfES, 2006).

Previous policy documents have pointed to key themes that continue to be important. These include the extent to which oracy is implemented across the curriculum rather than in discrete lessons (Bullock, 1975), and teachers' and pupils' understanding of language, or what oracy is and how to teach it in schools (Kingman, 1988). These issues re-surfaced in Millard and Menzies (2016) survey of 906 teachers across the country. While nearly all teachers overwhelmingly reported that they believed in the importance of oracy, they also reported that their practice did not match their beliefs. They stated that one of the main barriers to implementation was their perceived lack of knowledge of how oracy could be taught. Secondary and further education (FE) teachers in particular felt that it was not very relevant to them, with the exception of English teachers, since most were subject specialists. Teachers

assumed that, by the time students reached secondary school, they had good enough language abilities and, as such, language was not a priority for them.

1.3.1 Oracy, social deprivation, and mental health

Children's attainment at secondary school can be predicted by their level of language at reception (Cross, 2009). While it would be expected that 7.6 per cent of children, overall, would struggle with persistent and long-term speech, language, and communication needs (SCLN), a far higher percentage of children have to contend with immature or poorly developed or 'impoverished language' (also known as SCLN) as a result of reduced exposure to varied sources of language at home (Locke, Ginsborg & Peers, 2002). In fact, Hart and Risely (1995) observed extraordinary differences in the number of words that babies and toddlers heard, which varied according to their families' level of income. By the time children were age 3, this amounted to a gap of 32 million words between children living in low income households, and children with professional parents. As a result of impoverished language, speech may be unclear, vocabulary may be limited, sentences may be shorter, and children may have difficulty understanding complex instructions (Cross, 2009). Such difficulties often go un-noticed and do not meet thresholds for specialist intervention. For these children, school represents a second chance for them to develop good language abilities, yet the evidence suggests that gaps in language development between more and less socio-economically advantaged children tend to widen rather than narrow as children progress through school (Spencer, Clegg, Stackhouse Leicester, 2009). In one survey of 200 students in an inner-city secondary school, it was found that 75 per cent had SCLN that impaired relationships, behaviour, and learning (Sage, 2005). Perhaps this research accounts for the reason why the EEF and Voice 21 have funded a pilot which attempts to embed an oracy

curriculum in 12 different secondary schools across the UK, in order to assess how such an intervention could be implemented on a national scale (Smith, Grant & Boyle, 2017).

Good communication skills are often assumed or expected in schools, and most aspects of education are underpinned by language. Language skills are key to the development of literacy (Snowling & Hulme, 2012; DfES, 2006), which means that children with some form of SCLN are at risk of developing literacy difficulties, thereby reducing their access to the curriculum more generally. Furthermore, there is a high incidence of often unidentified SCLN in young offenders (Brian, 2004; Snow, 2013), children in care (Cross, 2009), those with conduct disorders (Gilmour, Hill, Place & Skuse, 2004), as well as among other school children with social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties (Toppelberg & Shapiro, 2000).

There is preliminary evidence that oracy interventions can reap a range of social and emotional benefits for pupils. One quasi-experimental study showed that pupils experience greater self-esteem and self-confidence and a reduction in anxiety and dependence upon others (Trickey & Topping, 2006). One qualitative study suggests that high-quality talk in schools supports students to grow in confidence and self-esteem (Ofsted, 2010) and qualitative studies from the United States suggest that collaborative verbal interactions between pupils can support students to build relationships with adults and peers, developing their sense of self and supporting a pupil's ability to handle stress (Akerman & Neale, 2011).

Research on 'what works' to support students' mental health in schools is a major focus for the UK government as evidenced by the recent pledge to invest £1.7 billion to transform children and young people's mental health (DfE, 2017). Mental health is also an important issue for teachers. A recent survey of 1,300 teachers published by NASUWT

Teachers' Union (April, 2018) reports that 96 per cent of teachers have come into contact with pupils experiencing mental health issues, with secondary aged pupils (aged 11-16) more likely to experience problems which make it difficult for them to participate in class and seek comfort in their social network.

1.4 Local context

The local authority (LA) where this research has taken place is host to a secondary school that has worked with the EEF to pilot the oracy curriculum. Within the LA educational psychology service, the project was not known about. Many aspects of oracy seem very relevant to the work of Educational Psychologists (EPs), considering in particular the extent to which oracy-based approaches shape and improve outcomes for young people with or at risk of developing Special Education Needs (SEN), and highlight the links between social deprivation, language, learning and mental health.

Moreover, oracy requires for pupils to develop successful interactional skills, while other subjects such as literacy and numeracy do not necessarily require this, at least not to the same degree. Successful interactional skills do not occur automatically, such skills are central to the work of psychologists and this suggests that opportunities for EPs to advocate for and support the implementation of oracy in schools are likely to be multi-levelled and wide ranging. As a first step, it seems important for oracy to capture the imagination of the EP community.

At the individual level, oracy-based approaches might support the identification of mental health difficulties, e.g. spotting those who find it tricky to speak in class due to anxiety, which is the most common form of psychological difficulty in children and adolescents aged 5-16 (Muris, Merckelbach, Gadet, Moulaert, 2000). EPs could support teachers to differentiate among young people with such difficulties, as well as providing individual

psychological interventions that develop their speaking and listening ability. At the group level, EPs are well placed to support teachers to progress their students' group working skills and abilities both through consultation and by giving teachers an experience of working in groups (e.g. work discussion groups) so that they are better informed about some of the relational processes that can both inhibit and develop effective collaboration. Finally, at the organizational level EPs are well positioned to advocate for oracy in schools, emphasizing how oracy can encourage participation and students' civic engagement so that professionals can become increasingly targeted in preventing difficulties and meeting the mental health needs of schools.

1.5 Rationale

Considering the links between oracy and SEN, it seems important for EPs to become aware of and to learn to support and advocate for oracy, in the same way they support other aspects of learning, such as literacy and numeracy in state-maintained schools. This research focusses upon the relationship between oracy and those pupils who are perceived to worry or challenge teachers in secondary school. Whilst there is a wealth of research that has documented and established the links between oracy and cognition and learning, underpinned by Vygotsky's theory, little is known about the processes and mechanisms through which an oracy curriculum might support students whom teachers perceive to be vulnerable; this is a current gap in knowledge which this research seeks to address.

1.6 Terminology: Students who 'challenge or worry' teachers

In this study there is an interest in teachers' particular 'experiences' of students who 'challenge or worry' them (whether those students have social emotional and mental health needs (SEMH), communication and interaction needs or learning difficulties) as opposed to

their experiences of working with students with a 'specific' identified need such as SEMH. It is acknowledged that the idea of students who challenge or worry may seem awkward and that it is potentially less precise than the SEMH label. However, there is evidence to suggest that at the secondary school level, students with underlying language needs are often re-categorized as having learning difficulties or mental health needs (Gascoigne & Gross, 2018) due to complexities arising from language needs not being identified or treated at an earlier stage. Such re-categorization can inform the interventions that teachers select for students (e.g. reading, writing or mental health interventions) which can further impede progress due to them not treating the underlying language needs (Snow, 2013; Snowling & Hulme, 2012). While the author had initially set out to explore links between oracy and SEMH, upon reviewing the literature in this chapter, it was felt that a focus upon teachers' experiences of 'students with SEMH' at the secondary school level could inhibit teachers' thoughts of any potential impact that a language based curriculum could have on supporting them to cope with students with an identified need, because of the implied presumption that such students do not have language needs. Considering evidence of a language 'blind spot' in education, it was felt that a focus upon teachers' experiences of worrying or challenging students would offer teachers a richer opportunity to consider how an oracy curriculum might function to support them in coping with students who are not being helped by standard categorizations at the secondary school level.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter will explore the existing literature on oracy in the classroom in the United Kingdom (UK) in the late primary to early secondary age range (pupils between Y4 and secondary school), and it will attempt to draw conclusions about what the research reveals about oracy, with regard to its value, limitations, and current gaps in knowledge. The chapter is organized in four main sections: (i) details of the literature search; (ii) analysis and review of relevant studies; (iii) thematic content and methodological considerations, and (v) conclusions and rationale.

2.2 Details of the literature search

2.2.1 The review questions

The following question informed the literature review process:

- How has oracy (and similar terms that have been used to refer to the way talk is used in the classroom) been explored and presented in the literature on education within the late primary to secondary age range (pupils between Y4 and secondary school) in the UK?

2.2.2 Databases and search engines used

A search of literature on October 18, 2017 included key databases related to psychology and education in the UK:

- Education Source, PsycINFO, ERIC, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection

2.2.3 Search terms

As explained, oracy specifically refers to the functional dynamics of dialogue (Mercer, 2018) rather than the language system itself. The term has re-surfaced recently, and several words have been used, and continue to be used, to refer to similar ideas. In order to identify appropriate search terms, several possible iterations of the word were considered. This included terms that were very different from each other, for instance, 'philosophy' referencing the 'Philosophy for Children' programme (Lipman et al., 1980) which encourages children to reflect on child-friendly philosophical questions in order to develop problem-solving skills. A second term, 'reciprocal', referred to the 'Reciprocal Teaching' programme (Palinscar & Brown, 1984) which gives children specific roles (predictor, summarizer, questioner) when discussing various texts. Including words as different as 'philosophy' and 'reciprocal' in the search terms led to search results that included more articles than could be systematically thought about in this study. A reasonable limit to the search terms was selected based on how oracy had been referred to in UK education policy and research (see Appendix 1).

Other terms that reflected the literature review question included 'education', 'collaboration', and 'United Kingdom'. Each term was similarly considered, although they required less exploration overall, given the clearly defined nature of the words. This resulted in search terms outlined in Appendix 2.

2.2.4 Search limiters

The databases were set to search for articles that included the identified terms in the article titles only (rather than in abstracts or in the main body of the text). The search generated a large number of results, and it was necessary to refine the results further, using the following limiters which correspond with the literature review question.

- 1999 was selected as a cut-off point because curriculum reform relevant to oracy took place that year, when communication was introduced as a key skill.
- The search was limited to the late primary to secondary age range, (pupils between Y4 and secondary school) considering the ages of the participants in this study.
- Articles were selected on the basis of being published in peer-reviewed journals. The literature was also scanned for doctoral theses.

The literature search resulted in 192 articles, of these studies 15 were found to refer to the functional dynamics of talk for learning in the classroom. The majority of the articles in the search referred to language as a system in itself. Considering the researchers' understanding of the historical position of oracy and its relatively recent re-emergence, as described in section 1.3, the author was aware of relevant literature including words such as 'philosophy' and 'reciprocal'. Thus it was necessary to follow up on references from key organizations that are currently generating research which is focused upon oracy. A search for all articles that referred to the functional dynamics of dialogue in the classroom were sourced from:

- The EEF
- Voice 21
- Oracy Cambridge: The Hughes Hall Centre for Effective Spoken Communication

It was not necessary to include all of the search terms outlined in Appendix 2 because the term 'oracy' is more clearly defined and established within these organisations. The EEF (established in 2011) has generated research with regards to oracy, and relevant research articles were identified on their website. Voice 21 and Oracy Cambridge have published key

documents and ideas which establish the current state of oracy in UK schools. A systematic process of following up on references from the websites of both organisations, based on the inclusion criteria discussed above, was undertaken. From Voice 21 (established in 2014), a document entitled 'Oracy: The State of Speaking in our Schools' (Millard & Menzies, 2016) was systematically searched. From the Oracy Cambridge website (established in 2014) research articles based on 'posts' by leading experts on oracy were systematically followed up.

It was found that 16 additional research articles met the search criteria for this study. Considering the high quality of the articles sourced from the above-mentioned organizations, and the scope of this study, some articles sourced from the database search were discarded on the basis of low overall quality scores (see below) or an overly niche focus such as, for example, oracy and interactive whiteboards. For more information on this process, see Appendix 3.

2.3 Analysis and review of relevant studies

2.3.1 Overview and summary of aims

A table giving an overview and summary of the studies selected for this review can be found in Appendix 4. All studies either acknowledged or explicitly focused upon the relationship between young people's use of language and their reasoning capabilities and/or the impact of talk on educational attainment. However, in addition, some studies focused upon the interrelated relationship between talk, thinking, and social-emotional processes. As a result, this review is organized into three main sections: (i) studies of oracy and children's collaborative learning; (ii) studies of talk-based strategies for teaching, and (iii) studies of

oracy and social emotional processes. The 18 studies have been categorized accordingly and will be reviewed in turn.

2.3.2. Framework for critical analysis of studies

Given the range of methodologies used in the articles selected for review, three different appraisal tools were used to critique the research. These were: (i) the Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) qualitative appraisal tool (Public Health Resource Unit, 2006); (ii) the CASP quantitative/case control appraisal tool, and (iii) an evaluation tool for mixed methods study designed by Long (2005). These methodological checklists are comprised of 10-15 'yes' or 'no' questions relevant to the methodologies of the articles. Each study was then given an overall numbered rating of 'one', 'two', or 'three', one being the highest rating, based on the articles' overall performance within each appraisal tool. Some studies set standards for overall ratings, for example, the CASP case control appraisal tool was used to rate the Howe et al. (2007) study which set a standard for a rating of one because there were no significant flaws in the design and the research was judged to be of high value. Similarly, the Long (2005) tool was used to rate Mercer et al. (1999), a mixed methods study with far fewer participants. This was also given a rating of one because the study had no significant design flaws and it also had resonance in the sense that it generated further research in the field. As design flaws mounted, and/or the research was judged to be of lesser value, overall ratings moved towards a two or a three. Ratings for each study can be found in Appendix 4 and a summary of the appraisal tools are provided in Appendix 5.

In the following section, the thematic content of the articles will be discussed. Studies that obtained higher scores (thus were arguably more robust) are given greater emphasis in

the discussion of their thematic content. The methodology of the studies is discussed with regard to the most salient critiques that arose from analysis.

2.4 Thematic content and methodological considerations

2.4.1 Studies of oracy and collaborative learning

2.4.1.1 Thinking Together

The studies reviewed in this section (Mercer, Wegerif & Dawes, 1999; Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif & Sams, 2004; Mercer & Sams 2006) were based on a Thinking Together intervention which aimed to raise children's awareness of the use of spoken language as a means of thinking collectively. The intervention also aimed to enable children to develop their ability to use language as a tool for thinking both collectively and alone. The authors suggested that three kinds of talk were most commonly found in classroom group work. These included cumulative talk (where pupils simply agreed without much involvement) disputational talk (where pupils disagreed with each other but did not give reasons for disagreements), and exploratory talk (where pupils proposed ideas, explored them together, and provided explicit reasons for agreement and disagreement).

Mercer, Wegerif and Dawes (1999) recruited a total of 124 Y5 pupils (60 experimental, 64 control) from seven primary schools in and around Milton Keynes. Teachers engaged in a one-day course introducing them to theory on talk and giving them a pre-designed scheme of work. This was made up of teacher-led collaborative activities which were carried out over nine structured lessons and, as mentioned, aimed to raise children's awareness of how they spoke together. The authors proposed a set of ground rules for talk (see Table 1) and children were encouraged to adapt them. Each lesson lasted for about an hour and focused upon one

or more of the ground rules for exploratory talk. Over the course of the intervention, teachers increased opportunities for children to work together in groups.

All relevant information is shared
The group seeks to reach agreement
The group takes responsibility for decisions
Reasons are expected
Challenges are accepted
Alternatives are discussed before a decision is taken
All in the group are encouraged to speak by other members

Table 1. Ground rules for talk in the Thinking Together intervention

After a ten-week period, a significant causal link was found between the programme and children's reasoning abilities as judged by Ravens Progressive Matrices (1995), a well-established measure of reasoning. Pupils' use of exploratory talk was also measured, and found to significantly increase over the period of the intervention.

The natural next step for this research was to explore the possibility of a link between collaborative group work that included high-quality talk, and learning a core subject, such as science and maths. Mercer and colleagues (2004, 2006) recruited a total of 230 Y5 students (109 experimental, 121 control) from seven schools in the Milton Keynes area. The authors followed a similar intervention programme as the one described earlier. However, in addition, teachers were given a pack of 12 structured science and maths lessons, covering the content required in the National Curriculum but including ample opportunities for children to work together in groups. Importantly, the first five of these lessons focused solely upon the use of

language and ways of collaborating in the classroom. Once again, this culminated in children developing and taking ownership of a set of ground rules for talk in their class.

Pupils' abilities were assessed using the Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) for Key Stage 2 in science and maths which are provided to all schools in England by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, as well as reasoning tasks created by the authors. Observational data and pupil interaction were also recorded. In both studies it was found that children could be taught to use talk more effectively as a tool for subject-specific attainment that focused upon reasoning ability, and that talk-based group activities could help the development of individual maths and science attainment. Pupils in the Thinking Together intervention condition made significant gains between pre- and post-test, compared to control pupils.

2.4.1.2 Thinking Together: Methodological considerations

The excerpts of talk in the control and intervention conditions powerfully conveyed the potential of exploratory talk to transform students' learning. Excerpts from the intervention condition showed how children asked each other for information, sought reasons, provided evidence for their proposals, evaluated proposals, and constructively challenged each other. This was in stark contrast to the increasingly monosyllabic and disputational exchanges typical of the talk reported in the control classroom.

A factor that made the Thinking Together studies especially valid was the range of ways in which researchers captured 'reasoning ability', the specific factor that the authors hypothesized would change. In addition to the standardized tests described, the authors developed a reasoning task that drew on students' abilities to perceive relationships between different scientific concepts. Because the curriculum teaching did not involve any special teaching about the relationships between concepts or terms, the target children's superior post-intervention performance seemed appropriately attributed to improved reasoning

ability due to the Thinking Together intervention. In addition, the authors analysed recordings for the use of target words in focal groups in the control and intervention groups such as 'because', 'I think', 'would', and 'could'. Such words were known to be associated with 'reasoning' conversations and the more frequent use of these words in the post- intervention group was evident.

The main criticism that can be levelled at these studies relates to the recruitment of participating schools. It is not clear how the intervention schools were selected, and this is relevant because a key factor that could have contributed to the success of the Thinking Together approach was the extent to which the teachers 'bought in' to the programme. It is possible that the research team already had established links with the schools, particularly considering that the earliest study reviewed here (Mercer, Wegerif & Dawes, 1999) was carried out in the same area. Thus the differences in attainment between the target and control schools at the end of the intervention could have been inflated as a result of the teachers' possible affiliation with the intervention. This also raised questions about what, specifically, led to gains in reasoning and academic attainment, whether the gains could be attributed to changes in teaching style or increases in exploratory talk, for instance. If high-quality talk did make a difference, it was not clear whether particular features of talk led to more gains than others and, if so, what these were. In addition, the intervention did not account for any changes in relational dynamics. Studies reviewed in the next section sought to explore such questions further.

2.4.1.3 SPRING intervention

Research conducted by the Social Pedagogic Research into Group Work (SPRING) (Blatchford, Kutnick, Baines & Galton, 2003) focused upon providing classroom-based evidence for quality group work in primary schooling. The authors sought to explore whether

evidence from experimental research, which proposed four key principles that improved the quality of group work, could be applied to the classroom context. The key principles were: (i) a relational approach to developing group work skills (e.g. empathy, inclusion, and respect) (Blatchford, Kutnick, Clark, MacIntyre & Baines, 2001); (ii) grouping arrangements (e.g. no more than four pupils per group) (Lou et al., 1996); (iii) tasks and lessons that warranted and developed the use of group work and talk (Mercer, Wegerif & Dawes, 1999; Howe & Tolmie, 2003), and (iv) adult involvement that facilitated autonomous group functioning (e.g. scaffolding and encouragement rather than control) (Blatchford, Baines, Rubie-Davies, Bassett & Chowne, 2006).

A total of 1,876 pupils took part (849 experimental, 1,027 control) from 72 classes in 36 schools in the south of England, however, only studies involving students from Y4 upwards are included here. Teachers in the intervention condition were initially trained to support students to develop generic group skills. Following this, over the next 12 teaching weeks, teachers devoted an hour per week to training students in skills such as listening, questioning, helping, giving explanations, and reaching agreement. Teachers also agreed to use group work across the curriculum, where appropriate. A second training day took place towards the end of the first phase of the intervention, which focused specifically upon the curricular application of group work, in particular on two units of primary science (evaporation and condensation; forces and motion). Subsequently, teachers included an hour a week of specific pre-planned structured group work, supported by comprehensive classroom resources, in the science lessons over an eight-week period. In addition, teachers were asked to continue with their use of group work across the rest of the curriculum. Five studies from the SPRING intervention met the criteria for inclusion, four of which will be discussed in this section

(Baines, Rubie-Davies & Blatchford, 2009; Howe et al., 2007; Howe, 2009; Christie, Tolmie, Thurston, Howe & Topping, 2009), and one will be discussed in section 2.4.3.

Baines and colleagues (2009) aimed to understand the extent to which the SPRING group work project led to interaction and dialogue patterns supportive of learning. From the larger sample, they recruited 60 groups (31 intervention, 29 control) of up to four pupils in Y4 and Y5 classes across 14 different schools. They measured group working ability by engaging control and intervention pupils in decision-making tasks and video recording the interactions. They judged the extent to which children had developed group skills by coding their interaction based on five categories: group participation and task involvement; social emotional ethos (the extent to which pupils encouraged each other or blocked ideas); type of dialogue (whether exploratory, cumulative, or disputational), and sustained on-topic discussion.

The pupils in the intervention condition performed significantly better than control pupils across all the measures of group working ability. Of these, perhaps the most powerful were the extent to which intervention pupils participated in the discussions, with fewer instances of children dominating. Intervention children refrained from anti-social behaviour, engaged in inferential dialogue of the exploratory kind, and spent more time thinking about ideas rather than frequently changing topic.

Christie et al. (2009) carried out the SPRING intervention in Scotland with a mix of urban and rural schools, including schools that had children of different ages in each year. A total of 593 pupils took part (522 experimental, 71 control) from 27 schools. The 24 intervention schools (three classes per school of Y6 and Y7 pupils) were selected for the intervention from a possible 85 schools on the assumption that the schools were representative of the population of Scotland. They carried out the intervention in a similar

fashion to the original SPRING study and aimed to measure the quality of collaborative group work interaction among pupils over time. They conducted observations at the beginning, middle, and end of the intervention, focussing upon six target pupils per class. The quality of the dialogue was measured against the concept of exploratory talk described earlier (Mercer, Wegerif & Dawes, 1999) and features of dialogue associated with problem-solving such as pupils proposing ideas, disagreeing, explaining their reasoning, referring back and reaching consensus (Howe & Tolmie, 2003). Using a specific time-sampling procedure, an observer completed a classroom rating devised to represent the attributes of dialogue described. To ensure that the contribution of group work was pinpointed as precisely as possible, observations were made during teaching sessions that were mainly group-based and during sessions that emphasized whole class activities directed by the teacher. This generated over 550 observations over the course of a year. It was found that both observations of peer interaction among children during group work and the global rating scales of the collaborative quality of the learning environments in participating classrooms showed significant improvement over time.

The Howe et al., (2007) study was based on the Scottish sample and it followed a pre-, immediate-, and post-test design in order to measure hypothesized knowledge gains in science over time. The study also explored the specific components of the context and of dialogue that led to the hypothesized knowledge gains through the observational measures previously described. Children's abilities in the specifically targeted areas of science were measured by tests created by the authors. It was found that improvement in the quality of the dialogue was consistent with the kind of exploratory talk strongly advocated by Mercer et al. (1999). Of these, in particular, it was found that propositions and explanations in dialogue significantly increased over time, and these significantly correlated with knowledge

gains in science compared to controls. In addition, there were statistically significant associations between the extent to which teachers adopted a guiding rather than a directive role and the quality of children's dialogue in groups.

Howe (2009) examined the data once again, with a view to understanding how children used dialogue together, and the relationship between the dialogue and knowledge gains. A total of 27 recordings of group interaction at different times were examined alongside pre-, post-, and delayed post-test scores in science exams. It was found that children almost never reached consensus in dialogue but that they very often proposed contradictions which were not resolved. It was also found that children often picked up on one child's relatively advanced contribution. While picking up on the relatively advanced ideas of another child was helpful to children in the immediate post-tests, such gains were lost in the delayed post-test. The authors reflected that, whilst unresolved contradiction could not be said to be responsible for the conceptual gains, the fact that the gains became apparent only in the delayed post-test context highlighted the importance of cognitive processes that occurred after the completion of the group task.

2.4.1.4 SPRING Intervention: Methodological considerations

The SPRING studies scored highly with regard to the CASP criteria in particular due to the large sample size. The measures used in Christie et al. (2009) captured important elements of dialogue for reasoning in group work, with an inter-observer agreement over seven categories of talk (proposition, question, explanation), achieving a mean of 92 per cent. The study showed that improvements were evident across urban and rural schools, and in both mixed age and single age classrooms. This provided confidence that the findings were

robust and gave further weight to the value of exploratory talk (Mercer, Wegerif & Dawes, 1999; Howe & Tolmie, 2003) in the classroom context.

The specificity of the measures in Howe et al. (2007) showed how improved collaborative group work which included children's use of exploratory talk specifically impacted on real-world learning within the KS2 curriculum. Rather than focusing upon a general cognitive skill (such as reasoning) as a dependent variable, the authors focused upon an area of science that was a mandatory component of the KS2 curriculum, e.g. forces and motion.

Baines et al. (2009) measured for aspects of social and emotional processes of good group working (Jarvela, Volet & Jarvenoja, 2010), in addition to the quality of the dialogue for learning, which included group participation and engagement, socio-emotional maintenance and socio-emotional blocking. Again, inter-rater agreement of the measures was relatively high, at 89 per cent overall, although one category within the measure, socio- emotional blocking, was an exception, with agreement only reaching 67 per cent. Overall, however, it can be concluded that the learning that took place in collaborative group work was not separate from good social and emotional processes between children.

A general criticism that can be levelled at all four studies was the method of data collection. Whether children were being video-taped or observed, the possibility of Hawthorne effects (that children could have felt increasingly motivated to use good group working skills as a result of knowing that they were being observed) could not be ruled out. A methodological criticism that can be levelled at Howe et al. (2007) and Christie et al. (2009) was that the observation scales did not capture the relational aspects of group work and the possibility that these contributed to knowledge gains. The social nature of the SPRING

programme may have given pupils an opportunity to form good working relationships, or opportunities to learn how to resolve difficult relations, both in and outside the classroom, and it is possible that this enabled pupils to feel more open to thinking together as a result. Finally, Baines et al. (2009) note how participation in the study involved a significant degree of commitment from teachers over the course of the school year. It would be hard to deny that such commitment was probably a major factor in the positive impact of the intervention, however that process was not accounted for in the studies.

2.4.1.5 Philosophy for Children

There have been three major studies which have judged the effect of the 'Philosophy for Children', also known as the 'P4C' programme, on children's academic gains in school at the KS2 level (Trickey & Topping 2007, Topping & Trickey 2007, Gorard, Siddiqui, Huat See, 2015).

Trickey and Topping's (2007) intervention was based on the 'Philosophy for Children' process (Lipman et al., 1980), but used a more contemporary practical programme based on Cleghorn's (2002) 'Thinking through Philosophy' intervention. The authors recruited 177 participants (105 intervention, 72 control) in Y5 from six primary schools in Dundee, with schools being matched and randomized. Intervention children engaged in 'collaborative enquiry' for one hour per week over 16 months. Control group participants received standard classroom experiences. Trickey and Topping (2007) described how a key aspect of the programme was an emphasis on: "developing a community approach to enquiry in the classroom, characterised by open ended Socratic questioning by the teacher who was tasked with challenging the children to think more independently" (p.275). In order to achieve this, the intervention teachers were trained by three specialist teachers (including the developer of the programme). They received a one-day training session at the beginning of the

intervention as well as two-hour training sessions every term for 16 months, enabling the teachers to develop their own 'community of enquiry'. The effect of the intervention was measured through the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT) which tested children's verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative (or maths) ability and was highly correlated with children's school attainment (Smith, Fernandes & Strand, 2001). Post-intervention scores from the CAT revealed significant pre-post cognitive ability gains in the experimental group. Pupils who had the highest results in the pre-test measures were reported to make the least gains.

Intervention children were followed up after two years (Topping & Trickey, 2007) and their progress was once again measured by scores on the CAT (71 intervention, 44 control). The was evidence of maintained cognitive gains from the P4C programme, with higher achieving pupils being at an advantage in sustaining such gains. However, the findings were not reported to reach statistical significance, due perhaps to the rate of attrition. It is clear, however, that intervention pupils maintained an advantage over the control pupils.

A recent and much larger EEF-funded study was reported by Gorard, Siddiqui, Huat, and See (2015) and based on a very similar P4C programme, comprising a weekly hour-long 'collaborative enquiry' session for a 12-month period. A total of 3159 pupils in years 4 and 5 took part in the trial (1550 experimental, 1609 control) from 48 schools across a geographically diverse region in the UK. Schools were matched and randomized and control schools received the intervention after the study was completed. CAT scores were much more modest in this study. Only the children starting in Y5 made any significant gains, and these were only in the verbal sub-test of the CAT. However, the intervention had a positive impact on children's KS2 progress in reading and maths with children making more than two months progress than control pupils, and free school meal pupils making significantly more progress (three months in reading and four months in writing).

2.4.1.5 Philosophy for Children: Methodological considerations

Trickey and Topping (2007) did not report the spread in scores between the verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative sub-tests of the CAT, meaning that the scores could have been based on increases in, for example, the verbal but not the non-verbal measures. The findings from the EEF study suggest that the programme may have had more of an impact on children's verbal abilities. This is important because it highlights a possible need for specific teaching tools and planned programmes in order to make use of language-based teaching within science and maths, as proposed by the Thinking Together and the SPRING interventions.

The results from the EEF intervention were more modest than Trickey and Topping's (2007) findings. As such, it is worth considering some of the key differences in the studies. Firstly, Trickey and Topping rolled out their programme within the ethnically homogeneous setting of Dundee which they describe as having 'pockets' of deprivation. The EEF schools were spread across the country and the authors were clear in reporting that the schools served much more deprived areas, as judged by children accessing free school meals (FSM). Both studies reported that children from disadvantaged backgrounds made the most gains. If the EEF study served more children on FSM, it stands to reason that there was a greater opportunity for gains in the CAT scores, however these were not achieved.

In light of this, it seems relevant to consider differences in the way the P4C intervention was rolled out. As mentioned, Trickey and Topping described how a key aspect of success in their programme was the emphasis on developing a 'community of enquiry' among teachers. This was not possible in the EEF study because of geographical distance between schools, and the fact that teachers were trained by trainers from a distant

organization. Thus it can be hypothesized that the alliance between the trainers and the schools was more robust in Trickey and Topping's study and this could have affected teachers' commitment to rolling out the programme.

2.4.1.6 Studies of talk and collaborative learning: Summary

It can be concluded that the 'Thinking Together' approach was helpful in teaching children how to use talk more effectively as a tool for reasoning. In the studies reviewed, it had a positive impact on children's reasoning abilities as measured by standardized tests of reasoning and on their attainment in maths and science. The SPRING programme was successful in teaching children how to work successfully in groups as measured by the quality of their dialogue, their socio-emotional ethos, their ability to stay focused, and their ability to mutually contribute to discussions (Baines et al., 2009). All four SPRING studies reviewed noted that the improvement in the quality of the dialogue was consistent with the kind of exploratory classroom talk strongly advocated by the Thinking Together approach (Mercer, 2000). In particular, it was found that propositions and explanations in dialogue significantly increased over time (Baines et al., 2009), and these significantly correlated with knowledge gains, compared to controls (Howe et al., 2007). There were statistically significant associations between the extent to which the teacher adopted a guiding rather than a directive role and the frequency of children using propositions and explanations during collaborative group work. Also, it can be cautiously proposed that unresolved contradiction in dialogue primed children to make good use of subsequent experiences in learning (Howe et al., 2007). However, the extent to which the SPRING approach enabled pupils to form good working relationships with each other was unclear, as was the extent to which this had any bearing on the academic gains made.

The P4C programme indicated that exposing Y4 and Y5 children to a structured hour each week in which they could think about and discuss topics that were of emotional and personal significance to them (e.g. fairness, bullying) enabled children to make significant gains in reading and language tests, and modest gains in maths and writing, with children from deprived backgrounds making the most gains overall. Importantly, teachers who led children in P4C sessions also taught them in their regular lessons, there was an explicit focus upon teaching children how to work together in groups, similar to the ground rules established in the Thinking Together programme, as well as an overt focus upon teaching children how to use language to develop their thinking by, for example, supporting views with reasons, offering alternative view points, and agreeing a solution.

The lack of overt curricular focus within the P4C intervention may have accounted for the more modest gains made in maths and writing. It is likely that specific curricular programmes, such as those created for the Thinking Together and SPRING programmes, maximized the power of talk-based learning within specific subjects.

2.4.2 Studies of talk-based strategies for teaching

2.4.2.1 Dialogic Teaching

The studies reviewed in this section (Jay et al. 2017; Mercer, Dawes, and Kleine Staarman, 2009) evaluated the impact of Dialogic Teaching (DT). DT is a strategy-based intervention for teachers which supports them to model dialogue that encourages pupils to develop higher order thinking (reasoning, arguing, explaining) as well as articulacy (Alexander, 2006).

Jay et al. (2015) evaluated the impact of a large DT intervention developed and delivered by Professor Robin Alexander. The intervention, implemented over the course of two terms, was intended to raise levels of engagement and attainment across English, maths,

and science in Y5 pupils by improving the quality of teacher and pupil talk in the classroom. The intervention required teachers to work with students on setting ground rules for talk as well as teaching incremental 'talk repertories', for instance, questioning, exposition, feedback etc. Talk repertories were subsequently applied in varied contexts and across the curriculum (such as whole-class teaching, teacher-led small-group discussion, pupil-led small-group discussion, teacher-pupil one-to-one, and paired pupil to pupil).

All educators involved received resources and training from an expert delivery team as well as access to plenary sessions at the end of each term. Different levels of expertise were organized within each school so that teachers had access to supervision from more experienced mentors. The programme was incremental and progressive with 11 cycles of planning/reviewing and refocusing. Video and audio recording of lessons was used for development and formed a key component of the supervision of the teachers, which also formed part of the planning for each cycle.

The study involved 4958 Y5 pupils (aged 10-11) from 76 primary schools in the north of England. Schools were selected through a process of 'minimization' in which schools were matched according to factors such as numbers of children with SEN, numbers of children eligible for free school meals (FSM), as well as overall levels of student attainment. A total of 38 schools were selected for each of the control and the intervention conditions. A pre/post-test design was implemented, with all pupils being tested on their attainment in science, maths, and English. Pupils' attainment in each subject was measured through a 'GL assessment test'. It was reported that the test was suitable for pupils in Y5 and standardized on UK populations. Qualitative interview data was also collected and reflected the teachers' experience of the intervention.

Children in DT schools made two more months' progress in English and science than pupils in control schools. The scores of the science tests reached statistical significance and the results of the English tests were very close to being called statistically significant. Students made an additional one month's progress in maths. However, the results of the maths tests did not reach statistical significance. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds made more progress than others in English, science, and maths.

Mercer, Dawes, and Kleine Staarman (2009) sought to assess the extent to which DT was practicable in the classroom setting, when extensive intervention was not in place. Their aim was to understand the extent to which research on classroom talk had 'fed-in' to the fabric of teaching. The authors recruited science teachers and offered them some information about DT, and teaching principles developed by Mortimer and Scott (2003). From the principles of DT, teachers were informed about raising pupils' awareness of the potential power of talk, so as to encourage them to develop a 'meta-awareness' of the use of talk for learning. The concern was not just with helping children to understand the curriculum, but also helping them to understand the 'dialogic processes' involved in studying and practicing science, as described earlier. From teaching principles developed by Mortimer and Scott (2003), teachers were informed about a spectrum from which to judge teaching and encouraged to achieve a balance between teacher-student contributions as well as teacher-student points of view being represented in the classroom .

The study involved 12 teachers across five primary and six secondary schools in the Y5-Y7 age range. Schools were located in two regions in the UK. Researchers collected 120 hours of classroom talk, made up of three recordings of consecutive science lessons across 12 classrooms. The participants were self-selecting on the basis of teachers expressing an

interest in DT. Teachers also knew that the researchers were interested in how teachers use talk to teach science. The authors also ensured that the teachers were considered by the LA and by the schools to be 'good' practitioners.

The extent to which dialogue was effectively used as a pedagogic tool varied considerably across the data. Only two teachers came close to representing DT and only three regularly engaged pupils in extended discussions of the type Mortimer and Scott call 'Dialogic-Interactive'. The authors suggest that pressure to 'get through' the National Curriculum mitigated against a more adventurous, open-ended approach to classroom dialogue. In addition, it was suggested that years of empirical research proposing that classroom talk has a powerful potential to develop student learning had relatively little impact on the content of the initial and in-service training of teachers in the UK.

2.4.2.2. Dialogic Teaching: Methodological considerations

The findings from Mercer, Dawes, and Kleine Staarman (2009) support the view that teachers needed ongoing training and supervision in order to implement DT. Their findings were valuable because they focus upon teachers who claim to be committed to DT approaches. If such teachers struggled to implement DT, there was good reason to support a supervised approach, such as the one undertaken in the EEF DT study. However, in the EEF study the attrition rate was high, with 14 of the 38 intervention schools not returning post-outcome data. The authors did not go into detail about why this was, however interviews with the teachers who did return data indicated that they experienced difficulty in implementing the programme due to its complexity and the level of commitment required. Perhaps more attention could have been focused upon the role of the mentors, in particular the extent to which they acted as supportive guides rather than line managers. With 11 cycles

of intervention to get through over two terms, teachers could have met with their mentors on a weekly basis. This could have been an important relationship in supporting implementation of the programme. Considering the significant cognitive and linguistic shifts expected of teachers, alongside the real-world pressures of teaching, it seems that an emphasis on support rather than line management may have been helpful. Moreover, perhaps measuring the impact of this intervention after two terms, considering the significant shifts required of teachers, was premature.

2.4.2.3 Structured talk interventions

Hanley, Slavin, and Elliott (2015) evaluate the impact of the 'Thinking Doing Talking Science' project which aimed to improve pupil attainment in science. It required for two teachers from each participating school to attend five days of professional development training in order to deliver the programme to Y5 pupils over a school year. Once they had been trained, teachers used practical discussion tools in order to encourage students' learning in science. Teachers were required to include dedicated discussion slots in their lessons and encouraged to use specific questioning approaches. For instance, in one structured activity, called 'the odd one out', students were shown different objects and asked to identify and verbally explain why they thought an object was odd. This gave pupils the opportunity to draw upon scientific understanding and vocabulary in order to justify their responses, there being no single 'right' answer. Other such activities included the discussion of positive, negative, and interesting features of scientific scenarios presented by teachers as well as 'practical prompts for thinking' which included short teacher demonstrations that were designed to intrigue pupils and act as discussion starters.

The study involved 1513 Y5 pupils (aged 9-10) from 42 primary schools in and around Oxfordshire. Schools were matched and randomized, with 763 pupils in total being allocated to the intervention. Pupils' abilities in science were assessed by tests designed by the authors and taken from standardized assessment questions. The tests spanned the science curriculum content that was appropriate for the Y5 pupils. It was found that the project had a significant impact on the attainment of pupils in science. Overall, Y5 pupils made approximately three additional months' progress.

Crawford and Skipp (2014) judged the efficacy of a similarly structured 'talk' programme called the Literacy Intervention Toolkit (LIT) programme. This was based on Brown and Palicsar's (1984) 'Reciprocal Teaching' intervention. The aim of the project was to improve the reading ability of children in Y7 who scored below Y4 at the end of primary school. The intervention aimed to do so by providing teachers with a structured framework that enabled students to take control of their learning by taking on the 'role of the teacher' as they were explicitly taught how to apply four reading comprehension strategies: summarizing; clarifying; questioning, and predicting. The intervention consisted of 3-4 hours of LIT tuition per week for eight months, mainly delivered in small groups.

The study involved 4413 pupils in Y7 (aged 11-12) from 41 schools within the borough of Hackney. A total of 22 schools were randomly allocated to the treatment condition. Of all the pupils in the intervention condition, 660 were found to be eligible for intervention based on their end of primary school reading scores. The main outcome was reading ability and this was assessed by scores on a measure called the 'Access Reading Test'. Qualitative interview data from the teachers was also obtained. Results from the study suggested that the reading scores of Y7 pupils in the intervention schools rose. However, the results were modest,

equivalent to one month's progress in reading, and the results did not achieve statistical significance.

2.4.2.4 Structured talk interventions: Methodological considerations

Some caution should be noted in the findings of the two 'structured talk' programmes reviewed here. The 'Thinking Doing Talking Science' programme scored highly with regard to the CASP criteria overall, however, the 'post' testing was administered directly after the intervention and there was no follow up. As such, the long-term effects of the programme are not known. Furthermore, there were considerable methodological difficulties with the LIT intervention. The authors intended to study Y7 pupils who scored below Y4 at the end of primary school in their reading levels. However, it was not possible to study this population because the characteristics of pupils in treatment and control schools were too different. Instead, they compared all Y7 pupils in treatment and control schools, regardless of whether they received the intervention. The treatment and control groups were not comparable before the intervention and, as such, the evaluation could not conclude with certainty what the impact of the LIT programme was on reading. Furthermore, teachers reported that the programme facilitated 'healthy debate' within the classroom and that it promoted independent learning. These are interesting outcomes which were not measured in the research, thus it seems further research with comparable cases and controls, and a more holistic approach to judging the impact of the programme would be useful.

2.4.2.5 Oracy Assessment Toolkit

Mercer, Warwick, and Ahmed (2016) developed and evaluated the efficacy of an Oracy Assessment Toolkit. The aim was to develop a set of resources to assess the spoken language skills of students aged 11 and 12. The framework was developed from existing

research in the area, in consultation with relevant experts (people of recognized stature in English studies, socio-linguistics, applied linguistics, and educational assessment) and in discussion with teachers at the Oracy School.

Initially, a skills framework was developed which identified four key areas, including cognitive, social, physical, and linguistic skills that teachers and pupils could target for progression in oracy. Following this, pre- and post-tasks were designed to represent the range of skills identified in the framework. These included a formal presentational task, an instructional Lego activity, in which pupils were encouraged to clearly explain instructions for an activity to another pupil, and a 'talking points' group discussion activity, in which pupils were judged on the extent to which they used features of exploratory talk. A three-way rating scheme was established in order to mark the extent to which pupils demonstrated each skill either consistently (gold), some of the time (silver), or rarely or never (bronze).

The authors then tested the instrument on four Y7 classes across four schools with very different profiles. A pre- and post-test design was implemented, with no other pupils aside from those at the Oracy School having access to an oracy curriculum. Only two schools including the Oracy School were available for the post-intervention assessment which took place after one school year. Results from the assessment showed limited improvement in the students' oracy skills in the intervention condition within the 'talking points' and 'speech' task, but not in the instructional Lego task. There was no improvement in the oracy skills of the pupils within the control school. Interview data was also collected, focusing upon the teachers' views of the oracy assessment tool.

2.4.2.6 Oracy Assessment Toolkit: Methodological considerations

There were inconsistencies in how the students' performances were interpreted, with inter-rater reliability between the teachers averaging 50 per cent. As a result, the research team developed a series of videos to form a baseline for assessment in order to enhance the reliability of the measures. Interviews with the small sample of teachers involved in the Oracy School indicated that the videos were helpful. However, it was clear that more research, including use of the videos, was needed in order to improve the reliability of the measures. Thus, it seems important to consider 'standardizing' the use of video, particularly for teachers who are new to assessing oracy.

2.4.2.7 Studies of teacher input regarding oracy: Summary

Mercer, Dawes, and Kleine Staarman (2009) emphasize that the strong body of evidence supporting talk-based approaches to learning in schools had not been assimilated into teaching practice, at least in the Milton Keynes area where their study was completed. As such, the authors supported the view that even the most committed teachers needed training in order to implement DT. The DT Programme (Jay et al. 2015) gave teachers training and tools to use dialogue in order to support pupils to make better progress across the curriculum. The results were positive, particularly in science and English, and especially beneficial for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the programme required significant commitment from teachers, and the high rate of attrition indicated that schools either needed more time to implement the intervention as designed, or teachers needed increased support. As such, it is likely that the results of Jay et al., (2015) were not fully reflective of the full potential of DT. Structured talk interventions also showed promise with regard to promoting attainment in specific subjects such as science and reading. However, more research was needed in order to judge whether the effects of these were sustained in

the long term. The assessment toolkit indicated that pupils' oracy skills could be assessed (Mercer, Warwick, Ahmed, 2015). However, teacher training, and baseline resources such as videos were needed in order to enhance the reliability of the assessment tool.

2.4.3 Studies of oracy and social emotional processes

2.4.3.1. SPRING intervention

Data from the SPRING intervention described in section 2.4.1.3 was also used in order to determine whether collaborative group work led to improved relations between pupils (Tolmie et al., 2010). The authors used the previously described data which measured the quality of dialogue and of group activity in the classroom over the course of an academic year. In addition, the authors developed a survey called 'People in Your Class' which was sent out to 221 pupils within the overall sample. The survey provided individual level data on children's relations with classmates in schools, in terms of who they liked working with in class and who they liked playing with at break times. It was found that improved social relations between children significantly correlated with improvements in collaborative group work. It was also found that, rather than well-developed social relationships being a precondition for effective collaboration, provided certain ground rules were in place, engagement in collaborative learning acted to boost both academic achievement and social relations to relatively uniform levels. There was no sign that either work or play relations improved as a function of gains in understanding.

2.4.3.2 SPRING intervention: Methodological considerations

It was not possible to recruit enough participants from the control school. As a result, the findings were based on the experiences of intervention pupils only. Of the 221 'People in Your Class' surveys that were sent out, only 38 per cent were returned. Thus the surveys that

were returned were to an extent self-selecting. It may be hypothesized that children with better relationships may have been more open to answering questions about their relationships with other children which raises questions about whether the data was representative of the students' experiences. In addition, only 1.8 per cent of the children from the overall sample have ethnic minority backgrounds. It is likely that a similar study in an area with a greater mix of cultures and ethnicities would bring about different results.

2.4.3.3 Philosophy for Children

The team behind the P4C programme, described in section 2.4.1.5, also assessed the socio-emotional effects of the programme (Trickey, Topping, 2006). The study involved 171 pupils (119 intervention, 52 control) from five different schools (eight different classes) in and around Dundee. Socio-emotional effects were measured through the Myself as a Learner Scale (MALS) (Burden, 2000), a well-established measure which looks at children's perceived skills and belief in themselves as learners. Results suggested a significant reduction in student dependence on adults and anxiety, and greater self-confidence, with girls tending to gain more than boys.

2.4.3.4 Philosophy for Children: Methodological considerations

The results were fairly consistent across schools and classes, adding to the validity of the findings. Furthermore, the measure used was highly suitable for the purpose, and well-known, with established validity and reliability. However, there was a limit to the extent to which social and emotional outcomes could be measured by established scales, and it would have been beneficial to triangulate the findings with further data. Relatedly, the results did not provide information about what led to the gains in social and emotional outcomes,

whether these could be attributed to, for instance, improved relations between pupils and teachers, peer relationships, or changes in teaching styles.

2.4.3.5 Thinking Together

Wegerif (2005) evaluates the Thinking Together approach, claiming that the model was somewhat reductive in scope due to its explicit focus upon talk that included verbal reasoning. As one of the co designers of the approach, he claimed that close analysis of actual dialogues analysed in the creation of the model highlighted the essential importance of a fourth strand of talk, (in addition to the disputational, cumulative and exploratory forms of talk described earlier) that of verbal creativity associated with good social relationships among pupils and their teachers. This was not included in the final model because it mainly concerned 'off-task' talk which did not seem useful for educators.

Wegerif's (2005) study was based on an undisclosed number of transcripts of children's talk collected over the course of the development of the Thinking Together intervention. Further analysis of the transcripts revealed that, in fact, playful talk could have been central to the aim of improving the quality of thinking and learning in classrooms. Wegerif (2005) identifies two main types of 'creative talk' which are linked to children's reasoning. The first type occurs when there is a context for children to use apparently illogical words and ideas. For instance, he described a child who reflected that a picture of a radiator reminded her of a bone. Other children picked up on the association and made their own creative associations which led to some deep thinking about imagination, for instance, how: "one world could be dissolved by the presence of an artefact from another world" (p. 232). Wegerif calls this type of creativity 'imaginative analogy'. While he makes no claims that this type of talk itself resembles reasoning, he does claim that creative thinking leads to a second

type of verbal creativity which involves reasoning. This includes creativity that results in a 'valued product'. For instance, he describes how a group of children constructed a new 'shared metaphor' when working on Raven's progressive matrices (1995), e.g. referring to shapes as 'getting fatter,' which enabled the group to see how to solve a particular problem.

Wegerif (2005) also argues that creative play with words and ideas assumes an orientation of mutual trust and support. Children have the sense that their contributions will be accepted, even if they are not yet fully formed. Creative talk requires children to attempt to make the best sense they can of a different perspective, and appears to open up a space for reflection in which ideas resonate together. Wegerif (2005) warns that the Thinking Together approach runs the risk of encouraging children to over-emphasize 'reasoning', and that this can inhibit thinking, for example, if children get into the habit of rejecting the suggestions of others by using learned statements such as: "No, I don't agree because of X,Y or Z".

2.4.3.6 Thinking Together: Methodological considerations

Wegerif's (2005) study met criteria for this review because it was based on the Thinking Together project which scored highly with regard to the CASP criteria overall. However, there was no information about the quantity or selection of transcripts analysed, nor was there information about or a description of the process of analysis. Despite this, the ideas are powerful because they highlight how reductive it seems to be to conceptualize of exploratory talk, of the kind in which children reason, oppose ideas, and offer justifications, without apparently 'off-task' creative utterances. In addition, Wegerif (2005) warns against pressurizing children to engage in 'reasoned' exchanges, as this can block children's development in oracy.

2.4.3.7 Studies of oracy and social emotional processes: Summary

The implication that collaborative group work (Tolmie et al., 2010) can improve social relations between children at the same time as improving the quality of the work in groups is powerful, and considering the previously discussed gains in attainment, it suggests that it was doubly worth teachers investing time and energy in programmes that promote high-quality talk in groups. It is important to emphasize, however, that the children had 12 weeks of structured input in how to work together in groups and to use language as a tool for thinking (Tolmie et al., 2010). Similarly, the P4C intervention (Trickey & Topping, 2006) suggested that, after seven months, levels of anxiety were reduced and academic self-confidence increased in individual pupils, which provided evidence that talk- based programmes can achieve gains in individual wellbeing alongside gains in understanding. However, the specific processes that account for gains in social relations and individual wellbeing are unknown, for instance, whether they could be attributed to improved peer relations, improved relations with teachers, or pupils' increased self-efficacy as learners.

Wegerif (2005) proposes that creative talk opens up a space for reflection between children in which ideas can resonate. The study highlights how it is important for educators to acknowledge that talk-based interventions run the risk of encouraging children to over-focus upon generating talk that is based on logic and that this can prevent creative utterances from developing into reasoned ideas.

2.5 Conclusions and rationale for current research

When teachers were given specific training on the educational benefits of oracy, or on promoting talk that enables children to use language to work effectively together, to jointly enquire, reason, consider information, and engage critically and constructively with each

others' ideas, their individual reasoning abilities improved. All studies reviewed here propose that high-quality talk in schools raises pupil attainment as measured by typical school tests and standardized tests of reasoning, with evidence that talk-based interventions support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds more than any other group.

Talk-based programmes did not necessarily need to focus upon particular academic subjects in order to have an effect on student attainment. The studies suggested that having a timetabled hour each week to think and discuss topics that were of emotional and personal significance to students enabled them to make significant gains in reading and language tests, and modest gains in maths and writing. What seemed universally important, however, was an explicit focus upon teaching children how to work together and how to use language for thinking. It was likely that curriculum-specific programmes maximized the power of language-based learning within specific subjects.

This review also examined research that explicitly focuses upon teacher-led talk-based strategies. The DT intervention, which applied across the curriculum, showed promise in enhancing a student's academic attainment with key strategies such as structuring questions so that they provoked thoughtful answers, seeing responses as building blocks of dialogue rather than a terminal point, and chaining teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil exchanges into coherent lines of enquiry (Alexander, 2006). Structured teacher-led programmes such as 'Reciprocal Teaching' and 'Thinking Doing Talking Science' appeared to lead to gains in subject-specific areas, at least in the short term. These programmes encouraged teachers to act as guides who facilitated autonomous group functioning (Blatchford, et al. 2006), rather than engaging in traditional methods.

Thus far, research that has reviewed the impact of oracy in classrooms has mainly focused upon links between this and children's cognitive abilities. Social and emotional benefits of talk-based programmes have been explored to an extent, and the findings show promise. However, there is a limit to the extent to which studies in this area can be trusted, mainly because they have used quantitative methodologies which were reductive and therefore limited when exploring issues of a social and emotional nature. The use of the MALS in Trickey and Topping's (2006) study may have shown that there was a lowering of anxiety in some children but it did not explain the processes that may have influenced such a change. Many factors could have contributed to this, for instance, supportive relationships in school are known to be of benefit to young people who struggle with emotional difficulties such as anxiety (Roorda, Koomen, Split & Oort, 2011). It seems intuitive that by teaching children to develop their critical world-view with others, promoting active and extended participation in dialogue, young people and their teachers also formed a basis of trust and increasingly nurturing relationships. Thus, it seems relevant to explore what supports and what hinders teachers to use the space that talk-based interventions provide to develop increasingly 'attuned' relationships with students especially in light of current government priorities with regards to children's well-being in schools (DfE, 2017).

This indicates a need for research which explores how oracy might influence relationships between students or between students and their teachers, using a qualitative methodology that allows for the variability inherent in such social processes. This review suggests that there is no such UK based research, highlighting a gap in the literature that this research seeks to address.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

3.1 Chapter overview

In this chapter the aims and the purpose of this research will be described and linked to the methodology selected for this study; grounded theory. There will be a discussion of how grounded theory is appropriate to the research questions, and epistemological considerations (beliefs about how we come to know what we know) will be explored, considering how epistemology has influenced the methodology chosen, and how it has informed the process of data generation and analysis. The trustworthiness of the research will be considered at the end of the chapter, where ethical considerations will also be discussed.

3.2 Aims of the research

This qualitative study attempts to arrive at a psychological understanding of the way in which students who challenged or worried teachers were thought about and engaged with in a secondary school that uses oracy as a key feature of the curriculum. The research questions which inform the aims of the study are as follows:

- Does an oracy approach affect the way teachers respond to students who challenge or worry them in some way?
- What are teachers' views of the impact of an oracy approach on student and teacher relationships in the school setting?

During the initial stages of the research design, the perspectives from which to explore the research questions were considered. The grounded theory methodology, which will be explored later in this chapter, encourages a 'theoretical sampling' approach which invites researchers to elicit multiple perspectives in order to add to the richness of the data (Glaser

& Strauss, 1967). It follows that eliciting multiple perspectives in the setting, such as those of students, teachers, and the school leadership team could have offered a rich narrative of how oracy has functioned within the research school. In particular, it seems that the student perspective alongside the teachers' would have been of value, due to the relational nature of the research questions and how these applied to teachers and students in particular.

However, research which explains the role that teachers play in supporting young people with emotional difficulties was reviewed and it was subsequently decided that there was value in focussing solely upon the teachers' perspectives. This decision was supported by a range of interventions based on attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) which targeted students with emotional and behavioural difficulties in schools. Such interventions include Emotion Coaching (Gottman, Katz & Hooven, 1996), Nurture Groups (Boxall, 2002), The Learning Triangle (Geddes, 2006), and Attachment Interventions (Bomber, 2007). These interventions provide teachers with tools and strategies to develop emotionally empathic and attuned relationships with challenging or worrying students. Children and young people who present such behaviour in school may not have experienced the compassionate, empathic, and comforting relationships needed to learn to emotionally self-soothe and self-regulate in the face of challenges (Stroufe, 1983, 1986).

Research in neuroscience, though at nascent stages, has supported an understanding of how such relational interventions might 'work'. Porges (2011) proposes that emotional regulation is directly related to an individual's vagal tone, or how well a person's fight-or-flight response (hyperarousal) and vagus nerve, a nerve that runs throughout the body and puts a 'break' on bodily functions that are stimulated by hyperarousal, are balanced and work together. Good vagal tone is thought to be the product of having had access to structured

and enabling environments that have resulted in secure attachments and relationships (Porges, 2011). Where young people have missed out on such experiences, they are more likely to have difficulty activating the vagus nerve in the face of stress, and subsequently resuming normal body and brain functioning after experiencing stress (Gottman et al., 1996). In the classroom this might apply to children and young people who become overly excited, and subsequently experience difficulty regulating their hyper affects, when needed, so that they can meet their learning goals. As such, it is proposed that attachment-based interventions 'work' by helping to trigger the vagus nerve and calming the body's stress response (Porges, 2011). Repeated experiences of empathy and offers of physical and psychological attunement give the brain the chance to build new connections which support the regulation of emotions and behaviour (Siegel & Bryson, 2012). Furthermore, students themselves have claimed that their levels of satisfaction in their relationships with teachers are the most important contributory factor to their overall happiness at school (Rees, Goswami & Pople, 2013), and it has been shown that teacher-student relationships become more influential for students as they get older, and are particularly important for children deemed academically at risk (Roorda, Koomen, Split & Oort, 2011).

Research suggests that students' emotional well-being can be linked to oracy interventions, as explained in section 2.4.3. The Oracy School, for instance, reported no exclusions (Ofsted, 2014), despite the fact that it served a population with a higher proportion of students on FSM, a key predictor of school exclusion in the UK (Strand, 2014). It is possible to think of reasons why an oracy curriculum would have an impact on students' emotional wellbeing in schools. Oracy interventions are designed to promote empowerment and civic engagement by giving young people training on how to reason through ideas and use their voices. In order for pupils to develop oracy skills, it is necessary for teachers to create

environments in which they have the sense that their contributions will be listened to and valued. Moreover, oracy approaches require teachers to model good practice and, as such, they promote positive and supportive relationships among teachers. P4C interventions (Topping & Trickey, 2007) led to teachers developing 'community of inquiry' groups, DT interventions included personal or group supervision with a teaching mentor (Jat et al., 2015), while at the Oracy School teachers were encouraged to regularly meet, discuss, and share best practice (Ofsted, 2014). This is relevant because evidence suggests that schools which promote supportive and empathic discussion among teachers equip them to cope with challenges such as those posed by students with worrying behaviour (Jackson, 2002).

Thus, in the context of this research it seemed reasonable to hypothesize that as long as the oracy curriculum was followed to an acceptable standard, teachers would have opportunities to get to know the students they taught in a different way, and their relationships with students and each other *could* to some extent have shifted as a result of the intervention. As such, this study aimed to explore the possibility of relational shifts between teachers and students and the effect that this may have had on how teachers viewed or coped with students, particularly those that were vulnerable.

However, it also seemed possible that the constraints imposed on teachers (such as, for example, the requirements of the curriculum, difficulties implementing the intervention) could have interfered with their availability to engage with oracy, and any relational shifts that may have occurred as a result. As such, it was felt valuable to focus the research upon teachers' perspectives in order to flesh out their ideas in detail and to consider the factors that may have impacted on the implementation of the intervention. In addition, considering the size and scope of the research, multiple perspectives from students, parents, and other

professionals, as well as teachers could have imposed suppression, restriction, and minimization of otherwise relevant data.

3.3 The purpose of the research

This is an exploratory study and its purpose is to further explore the relationship between an oracy intervention in a secondary school and the possible impact this has had on teachers' experience of pupils who challenged or worried them. Research on talk-based interventions in schools has mainly focused upon the impact of oracy on young people's academic attainment. There is some limited evidence that talk-based interventions can have a positive impact on students' emotional well-being, but more research is needed on the factors that contribute to this. Furthermore, the author is not aware of any research which has considered how a focus upon oracy in schools might promote the kinds of relationships (between teachers and students) that are fundamental in supporting students who are emotionally vulnerable. It is hoped that a better understanding of how oracy might be related to young people's well-being in school will be developed. It is also hoped that this research will shed light on what the role of the EP might be in supporting the development of oracy in schools.

This research will explore three main areas. First, how teachers understand oracy, as well as the factors that were enabling and/or challenging in implementation of the intervention. Second, how teachers made sense of students that challenged or worried them, as well as how teachers coped with such students. Third, the extent to which teachers thought that relationships (among teachers and students and between students) had shifted as a result of the intervention.

3.4 The epistemological position of the researcher

Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge, or how (or whether) we can come to know and understand ideas. Epistemology underpins methodological approaches because the assumptions that inform research methodologies are ways of getting to 'know' about things. The epistemological theory that this study centres on is social constructivism. This theory emphasizes the impact of collaboration, social context, and negotiation on thinking and learning, highlighting the role of the social and cultural context on cognitive processes (Charmaz, 2014). This is not to say that individual thinking processes such as information processing, memory, and language ability are not important. However, the social constructivist position emphasizes the relationship between social activity and individual thinking as a vital and distinctive characteristic of human knowledge. As a result, knowledge is seen to be 'constructed' through human interaction. It follows that there is significant reliance upon language and communication within a social constructivist orientation.

This orientation requires researchers to question the widely regarded 'realistic descriptive' model of language which treats talk data as a straightforward conduit to an individual's meanings, truth, and beliefs. Social constructivists have argued that consistency in language is often overstated by researchers suppressing, restricting, categorizing, and selectively reading data (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Furthermore, it is not clear how consistency in data can be interpreted as a definite guide to a view, action, or belief. This is particularly the case when considering how individuals use language in order to manage the way they are perceived by others in context. For example, in this research it is possible that a teacher could have viewed the interviewer as someone associated with the head of oracy within the school, considering that the head of oracy supported the recruitment of participants. In order to remain in good standing, it is possible that a participant may have

wanted to be perceived as engaged with and positive about oracy. As a result, in the interviews the interviewee may have focused upon the positive aspects of the oracy intervention. If such a view was repeated across contexts, a positivist researcher may have interpreted such dwelling as evidence of 'validity', or of 'true' belief. However, from a social constructivist perspective, the invitation questions whether such a belief could be a reflection of what an individual was looking to achieve in context.

The concept of 'accounts' is useful in unpacking what has been proposed here, that talk is 'active', it has a function (e.g. persons may want to impress in one context and undermine in another) and, consequently, there is a possibility of considerable variation across accounts. Accounts can refer to any passage of writing or talk. However, the technical sense of the term is used when explaining actions which are unusual, bizarre, or in some way reprehensible (Scott & Lyman 1968). Philosophers, linguists, and psychologists have refined the features that make up accounts by identifying excuses and justifications (Austin, 1961), apologies, requests (Goffman, 1971), and disclaimers (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975). Accounts are context-specific and in order to understand their meaning it is important to reflect on the contextual framework in which they take place. Furthermore, Mercer and Longman (1992) argue that when people speak to each other they generally collaborate in creating a framework of shared understanding in which any particular 'account' will appear 'normal' to both participants. For instance, in the context of the interviews in this study, a teacher responded to a question about how she used oracy in science lessons by stating the following:

I think it helps me to see where they are not understanding science, if we're talking about in science, I think it just helps me to understand how they think or understand the topic more.

The teacher's account was relatively benign and seemed very 'normal' in the context of the interview. In a different context, however, for example, among other science teachers with misgivings about using oracy approaches in science, it is possible that the teacher may have responded to a question about using oracy in science lessons with a very different account. This practice is referred to by Mercer and Longman (1992) as the variability in accounts and it further justifies the idea that there is no 'correct' version of a particular account. People are inconsistent in their behaviour and attitudes: "flexibly adjusting their responses according to their perception of the context and a large variety of unconscious, interactional and self-presentational goals" (Wetherell, Stiven & Potter, 1987 p. 60). This is relevant because, if a participant exhibits one view at the start of the interview and contradicts herself as the interview progresses it is best not to treat either view as the 'truth.' Rather, the questions become: "on what occasions does the participant put one view across? On what occasion does he put the other view across? How are these accounts constructed and what function is achieved?" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987 p. 35). Thus, given a social constructivist epistemology, the aim is to disclose, in as much detail as possible, how the research interviews function to present the interviewees' perspectives .

In addition to considering the variability of language used in different contexts, within a social constructivist epistemology it is also important to consider how a listener *interprets* language. Steve Pinker (1994) states that: "simply by making noises with our mouths we can reliably cause precise new combinations of ideas to arise in each others' minds" (p.15). If Pinker's statement can be understood as a presumption that people use language to share information accurately, and the words we hear or read simply activate a mental dictionary (Mercer, 2013), then it would be rejected by social constructivists. In contrast, this research takes the position that, while it is possible to exchange information

with language, human exchanges generate responses in our own minds, and we use existing knowledge and frame of reference to make sense of what is said, which in turn motivates our responses or subsequent actions. Kathy Charmaz (2014) states that researchers are part of the world that they study and of the data that they collect. In the context of an interview, the listener plays a role in interpreting knowledge. Thus researchers 'construct' an interpreted grounded theory through, for example, their perspectives, their past involvement with the research topic, and their research practices (Charmaz, 2014).

3.5 Methodology

3.5.1 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory was developed in order to study social or social-psychological processes within a particular setting. The methodology offers researchers the opportunity to continuously develop questions and avenues to explore until theoretical saturation is met, and enables researchers to go back and forth between the data analysis and collection in order to gain a layered understanding of the phenomena being studied (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Grounded Theory methods emerged in sociology in the late 1960s at a time when quantitative methods derived from a positivist epistemology were dominant. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recognized some of the limitations of research grounded in a positivist epistemology, including the priority given to replication and verification, resulting in the suppression of research questions that did not fit positivistic research designs. In addition, such quantitative methodologies tested logically deduced hypotheses from an existing theory but rarely led to the development of new theory.

Glaser and Strauss were keen to research topics that did not fit with dominant research practices of the time, such as topics informed by human agency, problem-solving practices, and subjective meanings. They drew upon divergent disciplines to create Grounded Theory. Strauss imbued the method with ideas such as emergent processes, social and subjective meanings, and the open-ended study of action (Charmaz, 2014). Such ideas reflected Strauss' background in symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) a theoretical perspective which proposes that: "reality and the self are constructed through interaction and rely on language and communication…interaction is inherently dynamic and interpretive and addresses how people create, enact and change meanings and actions" (Charmaz, 2006 p 7). In contrast, Glaser's background in positivism and quantitative research methods provided the methodology with explicit and rigorous coding strategies. He also emphasized ideas being discovered and emerging from the data (Charmaz, 2014).

This resulted in a systematic methodological strategy that enabled social scientists to describe and explain social processes within a particular context, and to develop theories from research grounded in data (Glaser & Straus, 1967). At the time, the authors did not state an underlying epistemological or ontological position (our conceptions about the nature of reality). Rather, they set out the defining components of Grounded Theory as outlined below (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

- Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis.
- Constructing analytical codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses.
- Using the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis.

- Advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis.
- Memo writing in order to elaborate codes, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps.
- Sampling aimed at theory construction, not population representativeness.

3.5.2 Selecting Grounded Theory

Considering the exploratory nature of this research and its contextually bound phenomena, Grounded Theory was felt to be a logical and apt approach. Implicit in asking whether an oracy intervention affects the way in which teachers cope with students who challenge or worry them is an emphasis on exploring and describing dynamic social processes within a particular context. Thus it seemed appropriate to attempt to generate theory grounded in context. Several other methodologies, including thematic analysis and discourse analysis, were considered in the design of this research.

Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within data. The methodology offers strategies for organizing and describing data as well as the interpretation of data. Themes are sought which both link the data to the research question and represent a patterned response or meaning within the data set. As such, the methodology permits the researcher to combine a systematic process of analysis with an interpretive analysis of meaning in context (Yardley, 2000). The methodology is both exploratory and explanatory and not theoretically bound to a particular epistemology.

Whilst this was considered to be a suitable methodology for this study, it was not selected for several reasons. First, the guidelines used to separate the data collection phase from the process of analysis seemed limiting. As this study involved approaching a research

context in which processes were largely unknown, it seemed valuable to adopt a methodology, such as Grounded Theory, that supports the process of theoretical sampling. It was hypothesized that the research would benefit from a methodology which gave the researcher an opportunity to return to the field in order to further explore the ideas that emerged in the initial analysis. Second, the emphasis on keeping theoretical memos in Grounded Theory seemed to be aligned with the researchers epistemological position. If constructivists acknowledge that their own knowledge and understanding influences the research, then keeping such memos would seem to deepen the analysis, through the researcher becoming aware of her own influence on the process of constructing theory. Similarly, within thematic analysis there is not the focus on generating theory through an inductive analysis of the data which is then sorted and diagrammed and considered in memos so that it can be meaningfully abstracted. Rather, there is a focus on following a six step process, which seemed oversimplified.

Discourse analysis (DA) was also considered, in particular because of the links between the epistemological position of this research and that of a DA which emphasizes that language and communication are active and socially constructed. DA emphasizes examining language in order to understand the way participants 'account' for themselves (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), that is, how the talk is 'constructed,' as well as its 'function'. However, the analytical process in DA focuses upon the way in which language is structured, rather than on the content of the data (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). As such, DA is best suited to research questions that aim to deconstruct the reading and interpretation of a particular problem. Thus the analysis is best suited to research questions that assume a 'problem' at the outset. As the research questions for this study do not assume a particular problem, it was presumed that an analysis of the content rather than the structure of the accounts was more

appropriate. As mentioned, a key principle of DA, such as how participants 'account' for themselves in context, has informed the analysis. It is believed that one of the things that people try to achieve in conversations with others, is a satisfactory 'account' of themselves and their actions. An acknowledgement of this is highly relevant to the credibility of this study. The categories which have informed the theory are seen as being made up of discourses or 'built knowledge' between the participant and the researcher which refer to a specific context. Moreover, DA is typically associated with social constructionism. While both constructivism and constructionism focus upon constructed realities, constructivism emphasises how the individual constructs a reality in which they participate (Charmaz, 2014).

3.5.3 Grounded Theory through the years

As we have seen, Glaser and Strauss (1967) did not initially identify the underlying epistemological or ontological position underpinning the methodology of Grounded Theory . Over the past 40 years, however, Grounded Theory has been positioned and developed within divergent epistemological paradigms. Today, the flexibility of the approach appeals to qualitative researchers with a range of philosophical beliefs.

Strauss went on to develop his approach with Juliet Corbin, focusing in particular upon verification, and attempting to minimize the influence of a researcher's pre-existing assumptions and values on the analytical process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). They introduced technical strategies to the method which included specific categories to label codes, as well as explicit functions for linking categories to an explanatory framework. As a result, Grounded Theory was positioned within a realist ontology and a positivist epistemology in the 1990s, when it was adopted by quantitative researchers expressing interest in mixed methods (Charmaz, 2014). However, by 2008 Corbin and Strauss had identified the underlying

ontological and epistemological position as pragmatism and symbolic interactionism, creating greater flexibility to the approach.

Glaser continued to argue that a perspective on reality and knowledge generation was not needed in order for a theory to emerge from data. He remained focused upon theory generation, arguing that the well-defined 'coding paradigm' created by Strauss and Corbin (2008) interfered with the researchers' ability to generate emergent codes and discover theory (Newman, 2008).

Charmaz (2014) questioned the underlying assumption that theory is 'discovered' and 'emerges' from data, independently of the scientific observer. She stated: "neither data nor theories are 'discovered', rather we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices…any theoretical rendering offers an interpretive portrayal of the studied world, rather than an exact picture of it" (Charmaz, 2006 p. 10). While following the original methods of Glaser and Strauss (1967), Charmaz interpreted these as a set of principles and practices which could be used flexibly, complementing other approaches according to the requirements of individual research projects. She positioned Grounded Theory within a symbolic interactionist ontology and a social constructivist epistemology, meaning that researchers' finished grounded theories were seen as interpreted constructions of reality.

3.5.4 The relevance of Charmaz on Grounded Theory to this study

Having outlined how a social constructivist epistemology focussing upon language has positioned this research, it makes sense to adopt Charmaz's method of Grounded Theory in this study. As such, the Grounded Theory that emerged is viewed as a construct influenced

by the ideas that the participants were able to articulate in interview, as well as the author's background and perspective. The theory was developed as a portrayal which was creatively authored and interpreted rather than as a singular and objective theory.

Charmaz's (2014) invitation to draw upon other approaches where appropriate was accepted, and there was an acknowledgment of how participants 'accounted' for themselves so that a psychological understanding of the way teachers relate to oracy and to challenging or worrying students could be constructed. This study rejects the notion that individuals at the research school experienced a stable set of views when it came to working with oracy and with students who were challenging or worrying. There are no claims made for the generality or the representativeness of the sample. As such, this study can only reflect how teachers accounted for oracy at a particular school, and what they were able to reproduce in interview.

3.6 Research design

A qualitative methodology was selected in order to make it possible to elicit rich descriptions of the way in which teachers experienced students who challenged or worried them in a unique setting. Investigating these phenomena in this way made it possible to find out what happened psychologically and through what routes and in what ways challenging or worrying behaviour was thought about and dealt with in teachers' daily lives. Oracy and spoken language approaches in the classroom have been usefully explored from an experimental position using a quantitative research methodology. Such studies have been useful in the development of the construct of oracy where coherence, parsimony, and predictive validity are important (McCaslin & Hickey, 2001). The value of a qualitative methodology resides in the opportunities that it offers researchers to 'get inside' a construct

by exploring how it might function in a specific setting and how it is understood and dealt with by a specific group.

3.7 Participants

Five teachers were interviewed from a secondary school that had taken part in the previously mentioned EEF (Smith et al., 2016) pilot which took place in the 2016-2017 academic year and aimed to explore the extent to which an oracy curriculum could be integrated into secondary schools that did not have any previous experience of implementing oracy approaches. This school will be referred to as the Pilot School. In order to explicate the participant selection for this study, it is first necessary to further describe the previously mentioned Oracy School, as the EEF pilot was modelled on practice at this school.

3.7.1 Oracy School

This specialist school opened in London in 2012 and was founded by a group of academics, teachers, speech and language therapists (SLT) and specialists in teaching voice and drama. The school has been strongly committed to oracy since its inception, and it has been highly successful, receiving a rating of 'Outstanding' by Ofsted (2014). It is both a primary and secondary school which takes in higher proportions of students eligible for FSM, SEN support, and Education Health and Care (EHC) plans than the national average. Oracy is integrated throughout the curriculum and the school describes itself as having a 'whole school oracy culture'. In Y7 students have discreet oracy lessons which are guided by the oracy skills framework described in Chapter 1. The school also has a 'well-being' curriculum, which means that children have access to small group coaching sessions with adults guided by Growth Mindset approaches, which propose that children's beliefs about themselves as learners influence their achievements (Dweck, 2006), as well as mindfulness interventions.

The Ofsted Report (2014) states that students make exceptional progress for their age, and that pupils with SEN make the same rapid progress: “this is because they experience excellent teaching and highly effective support from very well-trained teaching assistants” (p.2). Special mention is made of the pupil’s engagement, sense of belonging, and respect for each other and their teachers, as well as the strong relationships between teachers and teaching assistants who are described as challenging each other to creatively find more effective ways of teaching.

3.7.2 Pilot School

The Pilot School was selected by the EEF because it is a secondary school with a performing arts specialism and a strong commitment to implementing oracy within the curriculum (Smith et al., 2017). The school is located in the LA where the author undertook her training placement. The following factors describe the school further.

- The proportion of students supported by FSM and EHC plans is much higher than average. About two-thirds of students in the school are eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funding to support students who receive free school meals and those who are looked after).
- A large majority of students at the school come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, and about a third of students speak English as an additional language.
- It is a six-form entry school, with approximately 180 Y7 pupils.
- The most recent Ofsted assessment gave the school a rating of ‘Good’ (Ofsted, 2014).
- The whole of the Y7 cohort was involved in the pilot.

The aim of the pilot was to develop Oracy across Y7. In order to do so, the following was implemented (Fidoe, 2014):

- Dedicated oracy lessons of one hour per week, run by drama teachers (and one music teacher).
- Weekly oracy assemblies, run by the oracy lead (also a drama teacher) and supported by a range of teachers from the school.
- A selection of techniques which teachers of all subjects learned to introduce oracy more formally into their lessons.
- The creation of a cultural shift, e.g. assemblies, parents' evenings, to demonstrate the high status of oracy across the school.
- Teachers and students became familiar with the oracy framework.

In order to implement the above, the EEF designed different tiers of training which the Pilot School completed. This included the following (Fidoe, 2014):

- An oracy lead was appointed in each school and given four days of training by the Oracy School.
- Two senior school leaders received a day of training from the Oracy School.
- A 'critical mass' of teachers received one day of training from the oracy lead with support from the Oracy School, augmented by training and role modelling from the oracy lead throughout the year.

3.7.3 Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria was set out for teachers to take part in this research, which included the following:

- All participants were qualified teachers.

- Participants were part of the Y7 teaching team that delivered the weekly hour long oracy lessons, or supported the weekly hour long oracy assemblies delivered by the oracy lead.
- Participants had at least two years' teaching experience so that they could draw from their experiences before and after the intervention.

3.7.4 Sample size

According to Robson (2011), qualitative researchers should continue to collect data until 'saturation' is reached, that is, when more data collection does not appear to add to what has already been learned through the process of analysis. Thus the main determinant of sample size, according to Robson, should be the specific research question. Given the limited number of schools running an oracy intervention in the UK, the sample size was governed by the number of teachers who consented to the research and met the inclusion criteria for the study at the chosen school. Approaching other schools taking part in the same pilot was considered. However, as five participants were recruited from the Pilot School, it was felt that adding more participants from a different setting would have compromised the consistency of the findings. Furthermore, the research questions were crafted in such a way as to be interrelated with the context, e.g. looking at teachers' perceptions of challenging or worrying behaviour among pupils in a unique context. As such, the nature of the topic was designed to be clear and familiar to the interviewees so that they would be able to speak in depth and detail about the research phenomena, thereby reducing the need for a larger sample size.

3.7.5 Procedures for participant recruitment

Participants for this study were recruited following a staged approach, as outlined below:

- Identification of schools that participated in the EEF (Smith et al., 2016) oracy intervention.
- Identification of schools taking part in the EEF pilot within the LA where the author was on placement.
- Identification of the oracy lead within the school.
- Face-to-face liaison with the oracy lead, providing written information outlining the scope of the research (see Appendix 6).
- Recruitment email sent by the oracy lead to all teachers who met the criteria for the study.
- Further liaison with the oracy lead in order to confirm which teachers offered consent and the scheduling of interviews.
- Conducting three interviews.
- Reflecting, through supervision, on the interviews and the recruitment process.
- The drafting of a new recruitment email (See Appendix 7) including the offer of an Amazon voucher worth £10.00 as a gesture of appreciation.
- Conducting an initial analysis.
- Conducting two final interviews.

Table 2 below provides a summary of the five teachers who consented to participate and met the inclusion criteria for the study. Teaching experience ranged from 2.5-17 years. One participant was the oracy lead within the school.

Participant	Gender	Number of years teaching overall (years)	Number of years teaching at the Pilot School	Amount of Oracy Training (in days)
1	F	2.5	2.5	1 day + school insets
2	M	2.5	1.5	1 day + school insets
3	M	10	3	3 days
4	F	17	10	1 day + school insets
5	F	2.5	2.5	1 day + school insets

Table 2. Description of participants

3.8 Data generation

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with individual participants. Semi-structured interviews are a method of gaining insight into a participant's views and perceptions of the topic of study. Interviews are appropriate to participants when studying the meaning of a phenomenon as well as: "individual perceptions of processes within a social unit" (King, 1994 pp 16-17). Considering that this project aimed to construct a psychological understanding of how teachers thought about students who challenged or worried them, within a school that had piloted oracy as a key feature of the curriculum, interviews were thought to be an apt and fitting method of data generation.

3.8.1 Interview procedure

Semi-structured interviews were scheduled at participants' convenience and audio recorded in a soundproof meeting room within the research school. The room was chosen because it was private and suitable for clear sound recording. All interviews were conducted by the author and lasted between 35-50 minutes. A brief introduction was given at the start of each interview outlining the purpose, checking that the participants had understood the

participant information sheet, and signing the consent form. Before the interviews were brought to a conclusion, the degree of satisfaction felt by both the interviewer and the interviewee was considered. Participants were asked if they had anything to add or ask and there was a short break in order for the interviewer to review the interview schedule, and to ensure key topics had been considered. Once the interview had ended, the recording was stopped. Participants were formally thanked and entered a debriefing stage in which it was ensured that they were happy for the recording to be used.

3.8.2 Interview content

The aim of the interviews was to ensure that participants engaged with the topic as extensively as possible. Questions were asked using varied language from interview to interview and not all questions were asked in each interview, although three main topics were discussed in each session. They included the following: i) How is oracy working in this school?; ii) What does 'challenging or worrying behaviour' mean in this setting?, and iii) Is there a link between the oracy intervention and the way teachers cope with students who are challenging or worrying? The author was careful not to label and define students at interview by, for example, referring to 'mental health difficulties'. Instead, the focus was on teachers' experiences of pupils who challenged or worried them. This was important because the literature that was sent to teachers ahead of time, including the participant information sheet and the consent form included labels such as 'behavioural difficulties' and 'social, emotional and mental health'. These forms were drafted and sent in September, 2017, before the author had reviewed literature which highlighted the importance of focussing upon teachers' experiences of vulnerable students, as described in section 1.6. In order to minimise the impact of such wording on the forms, the author was careful to deconstruct the idea of students who challenged or worried teachers at interview, for instance, by asking for

examples of students that worried them and following up with questions about how such students coped with oracy. The interview schedule can be seen in Appendix 8.

As previously mentioned, one of the key principles in Grounded Theory is theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Theoretical sampling encourages a researcher to develop the categories generated in an initial analysis by going back to the field and gathering further data. This principle made it possible for interview questions to be added or omitted between sets of interviews. After the first set of interviews, which took place in October, 2017, the data was analysed and discussed with the research supervisor. Subsequently, further questions were drafted. Whilst these did not vary significantly from the original interview questions, it was felt to be useful to follow up on further areas of interest at the second set of interviews, which took place in January, 2018. This will be described in section 3.9.3.

Interviews 1 + 2 + 3
↓
Analyse Interviews
Theoretical sampling: Identify emerging questions
↓
Interviews 4 + 5

Table 3. Description of the interview process.

3.8.3 Interview method

Interview methods can shape both the engagement of the participant and the usefulness of the data gathered, the opening of the interview being especially important (Keats, 2000). When participants entered the interview room they completed an information sheet which gave them an opportunity to settle before they engaged in discussion. Following this, the purpose of the interview and what it sought to achieve was explained, and the ethical

basis of the research was laid out. Participants were encouraged to talk extensively and were told that their views, perceptions, and responses were highly valued.

As an active listener, the interviewer was concerned with inserting probes, seeking clarification, and identifying problems by thinking through whether what was said by the interviewee was consistent with what may have been said earlier. If not, it was important to probe these areas so that participants had the opportunity to offer a rich account of their views and experiences (Howitt, 2010). For instance, one participant proposed that oracy could be problematic for students whom he described as 'thick'. It was felt that this statement needed clarifying as it contradicted what had been said earlier, and this gave the participant the chance to offer a more nuanced account of his views at the time. This exchange has been documented in Appendix 9.

As has been illustrated, qualitative data analysis can begin at the data collection stage, and progress can be dependent upon the early and repeated processing of the data (Howitt, 2010). Consonant with this, there was an attempt not to rush questions or cover silences, as it was often not clear whether a participant had finished a thought, or if they were taking a moment to think through what they had just said. Before interjecting with a new question, as much as possible the interviewer inserted an 'mmm hmm,' 'yes' or 'I see' in order to encourage the participant to offer a more refined and considered response.

As the interviews progressed, some participants made strong statements. In these cases, there was an attempt to empathize with the emotional implications of what was being said. This was accomplished with body posture, facial expression, or short statements of empathy. At other times, personal 'entering' was appropriate. According to Ely (1991), it can

be useful to communicate a shared experience or opinion. However, care was taken to ensure these anecdotes did not minimize, hijack, or attempt to overcome the interviewee.

It was expected that problems would arise when the interviewer did not naturally empathize with the interviewee's responses. In such cases, the interviewer attempted to show an interest in what was being said. However, such circumstances may have shaped the participant's ability to give a full account of their views at the time. This will be discussed further in section 3.10.1.

3.9 Data analysis

3.9.1 Transcription and MaxQDA

All audio recordings were sent to a transcription service. A basic level of transcription was used considering the emphasis on the content rather than the structure of what was being said in the interviews. In order to check the accuracy of the transcripts, they were read through while the audio recordings were listened to. The transcripts were analysed with the support of MaxQDA software.

3.9.2 Coding

The coding of data followed methods of analysis outlined by Charmaz (2014). The first phase of coding, also called 'line by line coding', involved coding each line with a short phrase that reflected what had been said. As described by Charmaz (2014), the aim was for the codes to 'capture and to condense' meanings and actions within each coded line. Each line or thought was coded as separate from the rest of the data. The aim was to stay close to the data and identify the action that emerged from the line of data, as opposed to applying pre-existing categories, ideas, or themes. Charmaz (2014) describes how coding for action within a line and staying close to the data leads to an openness which allows new ideas to emerge.

By coding concisely, remaining open, comparing codes across the data, and moving quickly through the data, it was possible to explore theoretical possibilities that emerged from the data. Charmaz (2014) explains how engaging in a systematic line-by-line process of coding should also prevent a researcher from making conceptual leaps and developing a theory prior to completing analytical work.

When Grounded Theory was developed, Glaser (1978) emphasized that it was important for researchers to not have preconceived concepts in mind, as the aim was that theory should literally emerge from the data. However, consonant with the epistemological position of this research, it is acknowledged that the author's background, ideas, and skills have informed the process of coding and that the codes have been constructed by the author.

Initial line-by-line coding of the first three interviews generated over 500 codes. In order to be able to work with the data in a manageable way, it was necessary to go through each interview transcript and engage in a process of focused coding where initial relationships or links between the codes were noticed and it was possible to group codes together. Following this, focused coding took place across the data set (three interviews). The aim of this process was to raise initial codes to focused codes where an initial code revealed a pattern in the data, or where an initial code accounted for repeated narratives in the data. Constant comparison supported this process as codes were compared against the data and with other codes in order to generate focused codes. Categories and sub-categories naturally emerged which pulled the data together in a meaningful way and helped to identify questions and categories that felt 'thin', though still relevant, thus guiding further enquiry. An overview of the analysis, along with an example of the different levels of coding that took place for one segment of a transcript can be seen in Appendix 11.

3.9.3 Theoretical sampling

Once analysis of the first three interviews was completed, and tentative categories had been established, further interviews were scheduled. Their aim was to elaborate and refine the categories that had been created and inquire further into new ideas that emerged from the process of coding. Grounded Theory methods propose that a researcher would ideally continue to collect data until there was satisfaction that a point of saturation had been reached. Charmaz (2014) discusses how such a point is reached when the researcher is satisfied that the boundaries, nuances, and contradictions within each category have been sufficiently thought through and accounted for, and the relationships between categories have been clarified. One limitation of this study is that there was a limit to the extent to which it was possible to collect data until full saturation was met, as data collection was guided by teachers from the particular research school consenting to participate. However, it was possible to interview two further participants within the setting and these interviews served to further construct full and robust categories. As mentioned, it was necessary to amend the interview schedule slightly in order to give participants an opportunity to flesh out ideas that had emerged from the previous interviews. This included: i) teachers' relationships within the setting; ii) teachers' thoughts about implementing an Oracy curriculum, and iii) teachers' views on parental engagement.

3.9.4 Use of memos

Within Grounded Theory, memo writing is a tool used to construct analytical notes and explicate ideas and emerging thoughts at each stage of the research process (Charmaz, 2014). Memos were written during each analytical phase and tacked on to initial codes, focused codes, and categories. Memos recorded the ideas that emerged as the data was coded. They supported the process of comparing codes with codes and codes against the

data, as well as raising questions, making links, and guiding the process of theoretical sampling. Once all the data had been collected, memos supported the process of identifying the initial and focused codes that best accounted for the data and took form as theoretical categories. They also helped to sub-categorize and richly define the categories. Examples of memos written at different stages of the analysis can be seen in Appendix 11.

3.9.5 Theoretical integration

The process of establishing the categories involved the use of visual diagrams (see Appendix 11) and extended memos (which developed in to the analysis chapter) that aimed to define the boundaries of each category and find the nuances within each of the categories. Categories were then labelled in specific and analytical terms so that they could be sorted and organized into a meaningful theoretical framework. Further visual diagrams were created once the main categories had been established in order to work out the implications of each way of sorting, as well as providing a visual representation of the categories and their relationships as they emerged. This then developed into a final overarching diagram which serves as a visual representation of the theoretical framework for this study. The final overarching diagram can be seen in section 4.2.

3.10 Trustworthiness

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of this research, principles of credibility, transferability, and dependability were followed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.10.1 Credibility

'Credibility' refers to the validity of the research process. In order to ensure credibility, the interviews were treated as a research conversation in which there was an opportunity to build knowledge between the interviewer and participant, as opposed to a led discussion that

reflected the researcher's perspectives or preconceived expectations. Some questions were influenced by claims made in the literature, and, at times, the interviewer persisted in these claims. However, the goal throughout was to draw out the participants' full perspectives and the interviews were conducted in a manner that gave participants the opportunity to dispute and expand on these claims. Checking in with questions such as "do you think that may be a way in, or no? Please feel free to say if no" is a form of questioning that further enables participants to either expand on, or reject a thought. Also, because the interview format was open-ended, and participants were not asked consistently whether they directly agreed or disagreed with any particular statement, it was considered in the analysis that failure to state an opinion did not mean that the participant may not have agreed to produce it on another occasion, or that they may not have agreed if they had been asked.

It is important to consider the notion of researcher reflexivity in that gender, ethnicity, formal roles, and personal qualities are considered in the interaction between researcher and participant (Robson, 2011). Differences in affiliation, at times had an impact on the interviewer's ability to draw out the participant's full perspective. One teacher, who was new to the school, newly qualified, and came from a different ethnic and cultural background to the interviewer generally offered responses that were less detailed in comparison to those of other participants. At times, the interviewer needed to probe in order to draw out a response, and such instances served as a marker of the extent to which the interview functioned as a space in which participants could give a rich account of their views and experiences. In the case described, it was felt that several attempts over time would have been needed in order

to generate the richness of detail generated in other interviews. The footnote [1] illustrates this further.

Overall, however, the interviewer's position as a trainee EP unaffiliated with the school but working in the same LA as the teachers may have been an advantage in generating rich information. First, teachers in the school were accustomed to reflecting on their practice with EPs. The discussions may have been very different if, for example, the interviewer had been a fellow teacher, and there had not been a common experience of reflecting on practice together. Second, being unaffiliated with the school and unaffiliated with the EEF pilot meant that teachers may have felt less impelled to defend their teaching practice or to restrict negative opinions or accounts of oracy. Third, the fact that the interviewer was working in the same LA and had a professional affiliation (both the interviewer and interviewee worked in

1

> **Interviewer:** Yeah, okay. What is your perception of, yeah, if the oracy's making any difference, what is your perception of why an oracy intervention would make a difference to pupils who are challenging or worrying?
>
> **Interviewee**: Well, I think it should be able to give them more confidence to speak, not having a set, like it kind of gives them more of a space to, an area, it's not so, oh let me think. It's not so, hmm, sorry …
>
> **Interviewer:** No, it's okay, it's quite a funny thing to think about because I mean, you know, I've brought you out into this space and I'm asking you to think really hard! So, I guess the question really is, if the oracy were to make a difference to those pupils that are, you know, particularly under-confident, maybe at risk of exclusion, maybe pupils who, you know, aren't doing so well, maybe those that, I don't know, find it difficult to make friends or those, like the boy in your class who finds it difficult to get his voice out when there's like, when it's an academic subject but when it's something a bit less structured he can. So, I mean, and it could be that your response is, 'Actually, do you know what, not really. The oracy is separate to that and it doesn't really feed in', but yeah, if the oracy intervention was making a difference to those trickier pupils, what would that be?
>
> **Interviewee:** I think it's because there's no, there's not really a wrong or right answer in a sense and you're kind of, as a teacher you're supposed to help them with their discussions, in terms of, 'Oh, okay, you said this' and then asking more questions for them to discuss. So, because there's not a right or wrong answer, they're just allowed to discuss, they're not so, they're more willing to participate and share their ideas I think.

education) meant there was a framework of common knowledge. The interviewer shared an understanding of the population within the borough and the school, and the advantages and disadvantages that pupils and teachers faced as a result. Furthermore, there was a shared professional culture between the teachers and the interviewer in the sense that it was normal for both parties to probe, listen actively, refute, and connect thoughts to specific education sources as cultural behaviours and frames of reference were shared. This further highlights how the narratives generated were specific to the context and influenced by shared experience. As described, this shared experience may have added to the richness of the accounts that were generated.

3.10.2 Transferability

'Transferability' refers to the extent to which the research can be applied to other contexts or to other periods of time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order for the findings of this study to apply to other schools, it would seem necessary for the school to focus to some extent upon approaches that impact and develop the schools' oracy practice. In addition, it seems important to highlight that the findings would apply to teachers of Y7 pupils more than any others, as pupils of other ages would be likely to have different sorts of difficulties and experiences related to their stages of development. Furthermore, it is important to consider transferring the findings to a school at a similar stage with regards to developing oracy, as schools with, for instance, advanced oracy practice, would be likely to have different needs, as would schools that serve disadvantaged communities.

3.10.3 Dependability

'Dependability' refers to the reliability and consistency of the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Engaging in supervision with an academic tutor ensured that

processes were followed consistently and that choices at different stages could be justified. Samples of the process were shared with the supervisor (including drafts of the interview schedules, transcripts and codes at several levels). The analysis was discussed at different stages so that alternative explanations could be considered. Furthermore, the learning that took place in supervision strengthened the author's ability to consider alternative explanations when inferences were made in the data analysis, and the data was abstracted and converted to codes, categories, and ultimately a theoretical framework. Finally, learning how to make use of MaxQA software enabled the researcher to organize the analysis in a manner that was easy to transfer to the research supervisor and increased the transparency of the analytical process. Finally, the Grounded Theory methodology requires that researchers write memos throughout the research process. The memos function as an audit trail because the decisions that eventually led to the theoretical framework can be tracked at each level of analysis.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust's Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix 12). The British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics (2009) sets out clear rules and guidelines for conducting research, as well as recognizing the value of the researcher's own morality. The following principles guided the research:

Informed consent. In the recruitment process an outline of the study, which included information about the topic of study, the interview procedure, and an overview of confidentiality, was sent via email to the oracy lead. It was agreed that this would be passed on to all eligible teachers via email at the first and the second stages of recruitment. A copy of the information sheet was available for all teachers to review at interview and teachers

were asked to sign the consent form (see Appendix 13) which ensured that they understood the information presented to them.

Right to withdraw. Participants were presented with a consent form that informed them of their right to withdraw from the study for any (or no) reason.

Exposing participants to mental stress. Participants were informed that they would be asked questions that might cause discomfort, for example, questions about their experiences of working with pupils who were worrying or challenging. Participants shared these accounts of their own accord, and it was emphasized that they could choose not to answer questions.

Confidentiality. Participants were informed that any disclosure of their data would be for educational purposes and anonymized, e.g. their anonymous interview transcripts could be shared with a colleague in order for the analysis to be strengthened. Furthermore, data was recorded, analysed, and stored on password-protected devices in order to avoid accidental disclosure. It is acknowledged that the research setting is unique and therefore identifiable. As such, there is a limit to the extent to which the school can remain entirely anonymous.

Debriefing. Participants were thanked and debriefed at the end of the interview, with efforts made to ensure they were happy for the data to be used in the study. Participants were also given an opportunity to ask questions and give feedback in order to prevent misconceptions, strengthen the interview for future participants, and check that the participants had not been made to feel psychological distress. While it was not necessary to provide contact details for local counselling services after any of the interviews, these were on hand in the event that they were needed.

Chapter 4: RESULTS

4.1 Overview of chapter

This chapter provides a description of the results outlining a theory of the relationship between the oracy intervention and students who were perceived to worry or challenge teachers. The interviewees' accounts will be provided throughout in order to give meaning to the results. Teachers have been given pseudonyms and they will be referred to by name throughout the analysis. First, a summary of the results and the theory which emerged will be presented. Next, a description of the context, as described by teachers, will be given, and then the results will be discussed in detail. Finally, the results will be considered in relation to the two research questions.

4.2 Overview of the constructed theory

Teachers defined oracy as a process through which students learn how to use language to think about their ideas, explain themselves to others, and to become more confident in expressing themselves. The contextual definition of oracy was linked to the implementation of the intervention. Most teachers reported that the curriculum was of greater use to the 'significant' number of students who were 'less articulate' and 'less confident' than others. Thus the lessons targeted those students rather than students whom teachers identified as 'articulate' or 'confident'.

Over time, it became apparent to the teachers that the oracy intervention led to a recalibration of sorts, and that this accounted for several changes at multiple levels. Teachers mainly described perceived change at the level of relationships between them and their students, as well as between students, as such, the analysis and theory mainly focused upon these aspects. The interviews also suggested that the intervention recalibrated relationships

between teachers, which was moderated by what staff thought of oracy, and the extent to which staff became involved in the implementation of the intervention. Tension that arose between teachers and departments as a result of the intervention appeared to limit the extent to which the oracy teachers were able to give space to the intervention, review the intervention, and develop it throughout the school. However, it did seem to spark an interest in the school about what was happening in Y7, and thus it seems possible that oracy had potential to impact more broadly upon the school.

Figure 2 provides a simple diagrammatic overview of the constructed theory, which comprised the categories outlined in the diagram. Categories are related to one another and develop from the underlying category labelled 'recalibrating the system'. The underlying category is set slightly to the side in order to leave space for the development of further ideas about how the school system had been recalibrated, as some categories, particularly with regard to relationships between staff and senior leadership, and the broader impact upon the rest of the school were beyond the scope of this study.

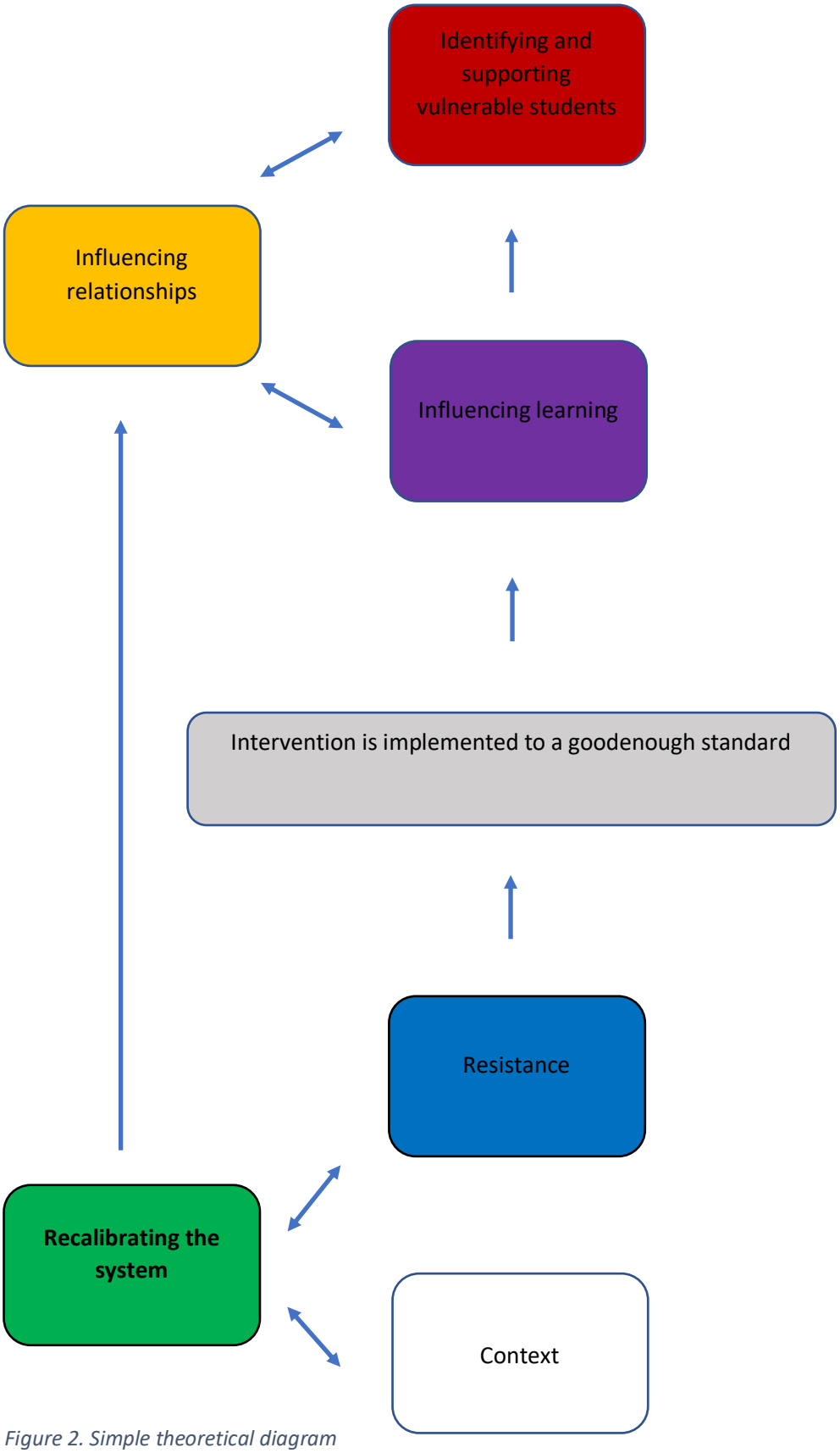


Figure 2. Simple theoretical diagram

As outlined in Figure 2, the curriculum appeared to recalibrate students' learning in ways that have been extensively documented elsewhere. Overall, teachers discussed how students learned how to use language as a 'tool for thinking', e.g. to deepen thought processes and problem-solving skills with others and independently. To accomplish this, students were given structured opportunities to listen and make verbal contributions, so that they could develop skills and confidence in listening to others and expressing themselves. In addition, the curriculum appeared to recalibrate students' relationships with each other and with their teachers. The curriculum was reported to give students a space in which they could communicate their thoughts and feelings, with teachers and other students listening to them and respecting them. As a result, the curriculum contributed to increased self-respect among students as well as increased respect between students. Oracy teachers were also able to develop more trusting and close relationships with students as a result of giving them increased control of some lessons. The closer relationship between teachers and their students supported teachers to engage in relational behaviour management practices.

The distinction that teachers made between those students who needed more oracy than others became a marker in identifying and defining students who were worrying or challenging, and the curriculum appeared to recalibrate how teachers thought about and dealt with such students. Worrying or challenging students fell into three broad (and sometimes overlapping) categories. Those who struggled with language, those who attracted negative attention, and those who were otherwise socially vulnerable.

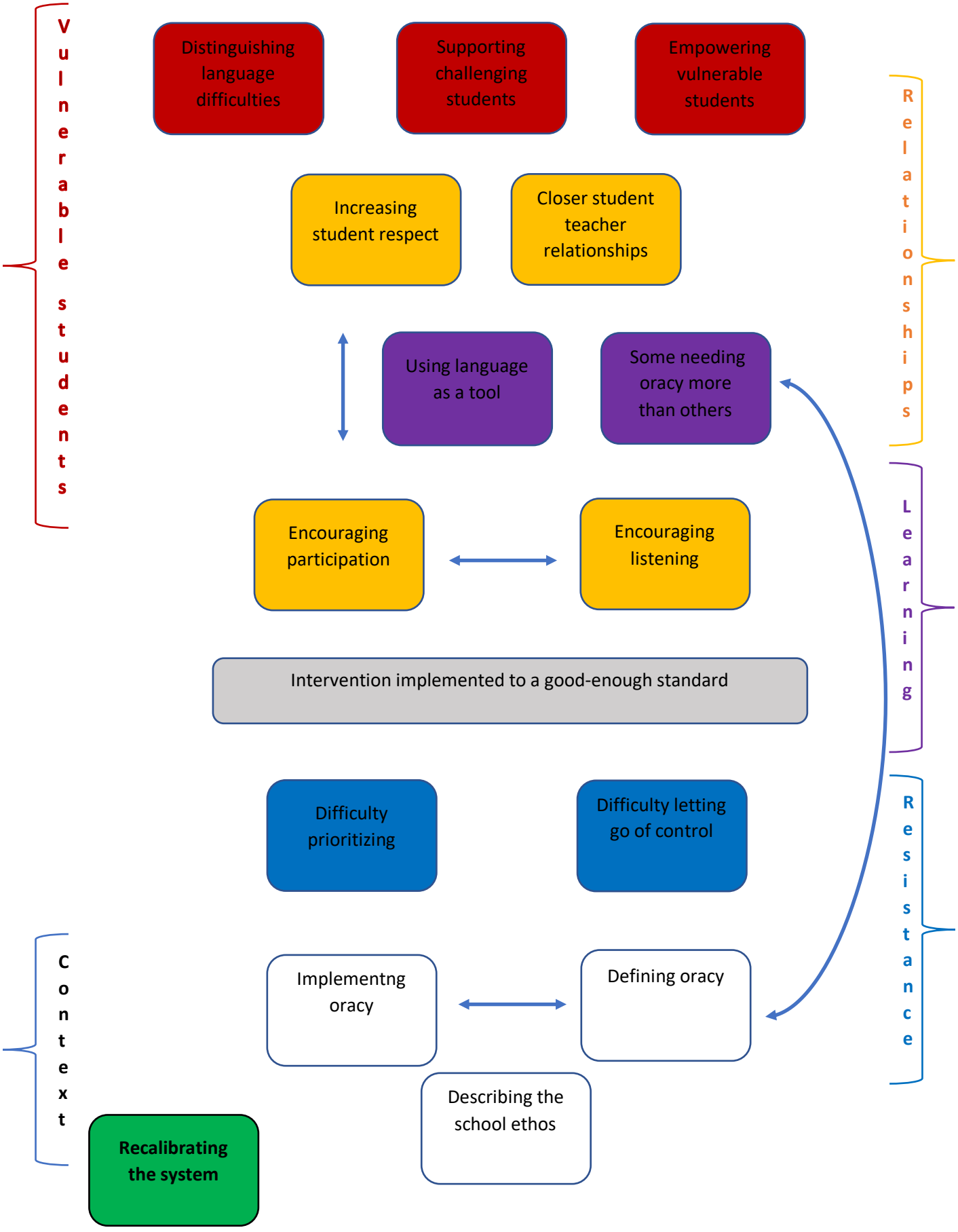
- **Students with language difficulties:** The theory suggests that the intervention gave teachers an opportunity to focus explicitly upon the quality of students' spoken language. Some teachers were able to identify students who struggled

with language as a result, and to consider the complexity associated with supporting such students, due to the individualized and interactive factors that may have contributed to the language difficulties in the first place.

- **Students who attracted negative attention:** Teachers noted that students who otherwise attracted negative attention were more willing to participate in oracy lessons because they could engage with the subject matter more easily than in regular lessons. The structures embedded in the curriculum, particularly with regard to listening and taking turns when speaking to others, also supported positive engagement and participation. As a result, these students had a feeling of being noticed, validated, and being in control of something positive.
- **Students who were socially vulnerable:** The theory proposes that the curriculum empowered some students who were otherwise socially vulnerable by giving them tools to present ideas and thus increased feelings of confidence, and offered a platform though which to shape and influence the school culture.

Figure 3 offers a more detailed view of the theory, depicting the smaller concepts within each category as well as the links between concepts. A detailed description of each category and explanation of the links between the categories (marked by the arrows in the diagram) is provided thereafter.

Figure 3. Complex theoretical diagram



4.3 Detailed explanation of the results

4.3.1 Context of the study

The discourses that made up this category included teachers' accounts of:

(i) the ethos of the school;

(ii) implementing the oracy curriculum;

(iii) defining oracy.

4.3.1.1 School ethos

This sub-category summarizes teachers' accounts of the context in which the oracy curriculum was implemented.

Participants described the school as a good place to work, where teachers were generally supportive of each other, and there was very little staff turn-over. There was a strong sense of community among the staff and a feeling of genuine friendship and caring which enabled them to 'keep going' and to support students. Good relationships between teachers contributed to the relative success of the implementation of the intervention, and the school chose to continue with the oracy curriculum throughout the 2017-2018 school year, after the EEF study was completed.

4.3.1.2 Implementation

This sub-category refers to teachers' descriptions of the processes and mechanisms through which the oracy intervention was implemented.

Initially, the oracy lessons focused upon creating discussion guidelines (similar to the guidelines discussed in section 2.4.1.1) which students contributed to. The aim of the guidelines was to promote discussions that had good learning outcomes.

As the students grew more confident in using their voices and respecting others' opinions, they learned to instigate, build, challenge, clarify, probe, and summarize in conversations, as can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Types of talk

Students were initially taught each skill discretely and, over time, they were taught to use the skills flexibly and independently through a range of talk-based protocols. Examples of the talk-based protocol can be seen in Figure 5.

Size	Method	Description	Context
Solo	Whisper to a friend...	Individually, students whisper concerns/questions in a conversation to an imagined friend. One person at front turns back. When they turn around, everyone stops whispering.	• Distilling ideas • Developing initial ideas
Pair	Think - Pair - Share	Individuals formulate ideas independently, before sharing with a partner. Pairs then feedback to whole group.	• Presenting initial ideas • Brainstorming
Pair	'I bet you're thinking...'	Students are provided with sentence stems to help them explore and refine each other's ideas. Sentence stems might include: *What's the question?* *I bet you're thinking...* *I'm dying to tell you...* We both agree that... *What I don't get is...*	• Exploring others' ideas • Clarifying/ refining ideas • Summarising
Pair	Sage and Scribe	One person instructs whilst the other, listens and write what they are being told.	• Refining ideas • Developing understanding of a concept • Summarising
Trio	Talk Trio	Students assign themselves A, B or C. A & B talk, C observes and summarises	• Refining ideas • Problem solving
Small group (5 - 6)	De Bono's Hats	Students adopt the characteristics of one of De Bono's six hats to help manage and structure their discussion.	• Challenging an idea • Exploring a concept

Figure 5. Protocol for group talk

Teachers used a range of topics in order to support students to learn oracy, including current affairs and individuals' interests. The oracy tasks aimed to broaden and deepen students' thoughts and perspectives, e.g. students were tasked with doing research, forming opinions, and arguing a position in class or in assemblies. The end-of-year 'ignite' speeches served as the culmination of the lessons. Students formally presented a speech on a topic of their interest for five minutes. The speeches were rehearsed, memorized, and performed, initially within the assembly groups. Twelve students were subsequently selected to perform their speeches at a special event for parents, students, and teachers.

Teachers who were actually involved in the oracy teaching and assemblies (see Figure 6) were far more likely to attempt to implement oracy in their classrooms than those who were not directly involved in the intervention, given their regular access to oracy tools and strategies. Peter, the oracy lead, discussed how it was complicated to develop oracy beyond the oracy lessons and assemblies due to the teachers' competing pressures. It was reported that teachers resisted basic oracy principles in their classrooms due in particular to the

perceived 'loss of control' that engagement in oracy tasks required and teachers' fears over allowing students to work together in groups. He pointed to a need for more teachers to adopt the intervention, and for more senior members of staff to take responsibility for developing oracy in the whole school.

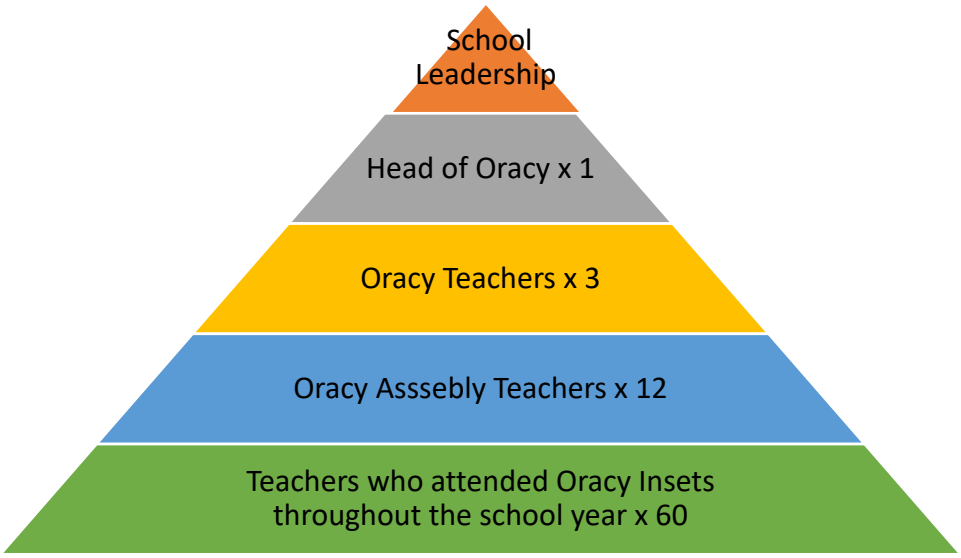


Figure 6. Hierarchy of teaching staff involved in oracy

4.3.1.3 Defining oracy

This sub-category refers to teachers' definitions of oracy and the possible impact that this had on students' progress in oracy.

Teachers tended to describe oracy as a subject which gave students tools to gain confidence in expressing themselves and in contributing to group discussions. There was an emphasis on oracy supporting students who were 'less articulate' and 'less confident'. Teachers appeared to find a role in drawing out students' ideas, giving them the tools to have a good discussion with others, keeping them on task, and supporting them to listen to each other.

Outside the oracy lessons, only Peter and Andrea stressed the importance of using the subject creatively and linking it to students' learning in other subjects by emphasizing the specific role that language could play in supporting students to formulate ideas before they engaged in school work. Both teachers were oracy enthusiasts given that one was the oracy lead and the other had added experience of oracy teaching.

I use debate and oracy a lot in my lessons. I get them to have class discussions where they are building on or listening to what other people have said and taking on their ideas. So, for example, my year 9s recently, we had a class debate in which each group is given a statement about what Macbeth was like and they had to say those statements, argue why they agreed or not, and then other people had to add on or challenge what they've said. So I definitely do use that idea of using talk to sort of formulate ideas before it gets to the writing stage.

Andrea

There was no emphasis on using advanced aspects of oracy such as developing students' language, rhetorical techniques, or choice of content to convey meaning and intention. Various levels of oracy were outlined in the progression in oracy tool (see Figure 1) which was designed to support teachers to develop tasks that could have been increasingly advanced throughout the year. However, teachers mentioned the fact that they found it tricky to engage with the different strands and levels within the tool.

I think at the Oracy School, because everything is embedded around this philosophy, I'm sure you can throw in a phrase like the 'linguistic strand' to the kids there and they know what you're talking about, but here every time it sounds like to them like you're speaking Martian and they switch off and they feel like it's not for them.

Celia

It follows that teachers' descriptions of students' overall progress in oracy may have been bound by their own definitions and understandings of oracy, and that students' progress was best described as 'apprentice' and 'developing', within the oracy framework.

4.3.2 Resisting

Teachers emphasized that there were several challenges which affected the implementation of the intervention. The discourses that made up this category included teachers' accounts of:

(i) difficulties prioritizing the intervention;

(ii) difficulties relinquishing control of their classroom.

4.3.2.1 Difficulties prioritizing

This sub-category refers to teachers' accounts of difficulties prioritizing oracy. It included the following dimensions:

- Competing curricular demands;
- Other interests and priorities.

While teachers generally espoused the curriculum and claimed that students benefitted from having a lesson that they were not assessed in, the lack of assessment meant other subjects that were assessed and 'counted' towards GCSEs were prioritized.

I've got to say I don't prioritize my planning for this as I do my drama planning and also we don't prioritize it for rooming in the same way. So we end up hither and thither because we know we're not teaching it after year 7 as a separate subject. It's not going to lead into key stage 4 results as in there's no oracy GCSE and so I think it's inevitable that there will be a kind of, by default, other things take priority.

Celia

Teachers also discussed resistance to oracy in terms of systemic school dynamics. Andrea proposed that the more experienced teachers were, the less motivated they were to prioritize new ideas, regardless of impact, because of said teachers' commitments to their own specialisms and projects. She observed that there was some 'push and pull' from teachers who argued that oracy was: 'stepping on their territory'. She also stated that the

newly qualified or trainee teachers were more likely to lead the oracy assemblies and become involved in oracy in meaningful ways.

Oracy has become one of the things in our schools and I think…sometimes there can be slight clashes between staff of 'right, your thing is now going over my thing', and there is always that territorial sort of push and pull between teachers which can sometimes happen…and so you notice that in the assemblies it's the new teachers, it's the trainee teachers who are leading the assemblies or the support staff. It's not higher up, senior leaders or anything like that.

Andrea

4.3.2.2 Difficulties relinquishing control in regular lessons

This sub-category refers to teachers' accounts of having to negotiate relinquishing 'control' in their classrooms in order to allow students to discuss and to work together in groups.

Not all teachers believed that their topics lent themselves easily and well to giving students opportunities to use discussion in class.

Well, I feel like in science it's, the topic is quite a big topic and there's a lot to learn, so sometimes I am a bit, I can be a bit wanting to move on quickly and not giving them enough time to discuss and then also when they're discussing, I will hear them discussing other things and so sometimes I'm like, 'How effective is this?

Eliza

Some teachers defended their need to be directive rather than think flexibly about ways of integrating the principles of oracy with directive teaching.

I think because Maths is quite, it's fundamentally quite complicated…I don't really want the kids, at that point, to go off and have their own discussions. That sort of needs to be teacher-led until they get a better grasp of what I'm on about…they'll start convincing themselves of something that's just wrong and it will come to assessment and then they'll just believe whatever they did initially, which I can pretty much guarantee would be utter rubbish.

Samuel

In addition, teachers reflected that when students were given opportunities to discuss their learning in groups, they were opening themselves up to problems as some groups 'got it' more than others, and when things did not go well students tended to engage in anti-social behaviours or they used the discussions as opportunities to 'sit back' and not be involved.

Teachers also stated that they struggled to monitor negative group behaviours in classrooms with 30 or more students.

There's this fear of, 'oh, I don't want to move the tables in the classroom', or, 'I'm worried about losing control', and actually teachers might try something once, it doesn't work and then, 'well, that didn't work so I'm not going to try it again'.

Peter

The extent to which teachers felt confident to relinquish some control, and use the oracy principles effectively and creatively in the classroom seemed to be linked to the extent to which they were involved in the intervention, the extent to which they had thought about the links between their topic and oracy, and the quality of relationships that students had with each other and teachers had with students.

I think it depends on quite a few things. I think it depends on how confident you are at implementing it as a teacher. It depends on the subject that you're teaching, whether it fits in nicely with the content that you're trying to cover or have to cover and also the kids, whether they respond to it or not. So some classes, I wouldn't necessarily use a debate topic or a debate sort of system to go over an idea because I wouldn't think it would work with them. It would be more teacher-led discussion and then responding to questions as opposed to them responding to one another. But I do think it does depend on how you feel within the class, I think as a teacher, how confident you are with the kids and the relationships you've got with them and their relationships with one another as to how well it works really.

Andrea

4.3.3 Influencing learning

Teachers emphasized that the oracy intervention had an impact on some students' learning. The discourses that shaped this category featured teachers' accounts of the following:

(i) seeing improvements in students' use of language as a 'tool for thinking';

(ii) some students needing the oracy intervention more than others.

Of note, and as illustrated in Figure 2, the category entitled 'influencing relationships' discussed in section 4.2.4. was linked to changes in learning. In particular, sub-categories

within that section entitled ‘encouraging listening’ and ‘encouraging participation’ contributed specifically to students’ learning.

4.3.3.1 Using language as a ‘tool’ for thinking

This sub-category refers to the extent to which teachers accounted for the intervention having an influence on students’ ability to use language as a tool which enables them to work with other students to solve problems and accomplish tasks.

Teachers indicated that, over time, they saw a difference in the listening skills of students who had some oracy training, and that this enabled them to work together more effectively. In addition, teachers proposed that the oracy lessons gave students the means to: join in discussions; become more accustomed to contributing to group tasks, and present ideas. They proposed that students deepened their thinking by building on others’ contributions and by challenging others’ ideas with reasonable arguments. Three teachers commented that students began using the language structures that they had been taught spontaneously, in classes outside the oracy classes.

I notice it mostly when we're having class discussions, so I think it has, it has really changed their listening skills because often in class debates, you can have a child say a statement and then a while later, another child will say the exact same one. So it’s quite obvious they haven't been listening, whereas in the younger years I think where they have had some oracy training, you can tell that they are listening and engaging more with what the others have said, and they do use sometimes the structures they've been given. Sort of like, I was to add on to what Shane said or I want to build on or challenge, so they are using some of the structures they've learnt in oracy and oracy assemblies, in classes, in class discussions, I have noticed.

Andrea

As mentioned in section 4.2.1, it was notable that the accounts of development in oracy mainly focused upon beginner or intermediate oracy skills, such as listening, actively managing interactions, and building on the views of others. There were no references to the more advanced and technical components of the curriculum such as the structure and organization of talk or rhetorical techniques such as use of metaphor and humour.

In addition, teachers valued the emphasis that oracy placed on supporting students to draw out responses because this gave teachers an improved understanding of students' actual understanding of a topic and also heightened their awareness of the effectiveness of their teaching.

Having more discussions to draw out understanding has been helpful because I've realized that I would teach something and I'd think they understand it but then, until they do a test or, and the way I ask my questions, I'll scaffold it in a way that I'm kind of telling them the answer in some way. So it kind of helped me to realize that I might be telling them the answers too much and that I need to open up discussion because I can draw out some misconceptions when I'm teaching.

Eliza

4.3.3.2 Some needing oracy more than others?

This sub-category refers to teachers' suggestions that the curriculum was of greater benefit to students who did not have access to rich language resources at home.

Teachers reflected that articulate 11-year-olds who had had enriching experiences at home benefitted less from the curriculum.

I think it works better for the lower ability students in oracy …I think oracy generally works better for students who don't have that confidence. I'm not sure your slightly precocious, articulate 11-year-old that has always been and will always be … that I think they get lovely opportunities to speak, but I'm not sure it develops them in a way that the curriculum couldn't have done before and I'm not sure that, if the need is there so much for those students.

Celia

Some teachers were more explicit, labelling the difference between those who benefitted more than others a class issue, and claiming that middle class students learned to have conversations at home, whereas working class students did not. The lessons, therefore, were essentially 'making up' for what middle class students were already exposed to, access to rich language resources that supported them in forming opinions and developing their interests.

I don't know, the cynical side of me…says that oracy lessons are essentially what middle class families do round the dinner table. It's essentially learning to have a conversation and then obviously got a lot of kids here that

are never going to have that family conversation around the dinner table, so I think a lot of it, I don't know, a lot of it I think is just making up for that.

Samuel

Celia discussed how she managed the perceived discrepancy by mixing abilities, arguing that both able and less able students benefitted. Overall, considering the amount of time spent on the oracy curriculum per week, all teachers agreed that the intervention was worthwhile.

But I'm quite happy with that. It's one lesson a week and I'm quite happy for that to be, that it's about addressing a significant need in less confident and articulate kids. The hope, I guess, from teaching oracy specifically is that those students who, again, would normally be reticent in a group situation, have tools with which they can join in or are more accustomed to speaking in group tasks.

Celia

4.3.4 Influencing relationships

Teachers highlighted that the oracy intervention developed relationships between students and between students and teachers. The sub categories that shaped this category included teachers' accounts of the following:

(i) encouraging listening;

(ii) encouraging participation;

(iii) increasing respect between students;

(iv) developing relationships between teachers and students.

4.3.4.1 Encouraging listening

This sub-category refers to the impact that the intervention's explicit focus upon listening had on student relationships. There were two dimensions to this sub-category.

- Teaching listening;
- Finding meaning in listening to others.

Overall, teachers appreciated having a space in which they could explicitly discuss and think about the value of listening with students, rather than assuming that all Y7s had developed appropriate listening skills and could meaningfully adhere to the school rules of respecting others when they spoke. Teachers discussed how several structures embedded within the oracy curriculum supported teachers to effectively teach students to listen. For instance, a whole school 'proof of listening' technique was emphasized with posters in every classroom, illustrating how students should look when they were listening to others (e.g. sitting up, looking at the person speaking, showing attention). Also, the curricular emphasis on picking up on others' contributions in order to, for example, learn about identifying flaws in others' arguments, also encouraged students to listen.

> It's life skills, isn't it? It's the respect, it's the being able to listen, it's the understanding of why it is important that you are silent when someone else is talking. Which again, is referred to in other subjects but it becomes a bit of a…school rule, you shouldn't talk, you shouldn't do it because it's rude to the person that's talking. It's getting them to understand why that's so, rather than just saying it's a rule.
>
> Peter

Peter stressed that listening became more meaningful to students when they were given time and space to think about listening, and when they had repeated experiences of being listened to. Teachers stated that this was especially useful for students who had not had good-enough experiences of adults showing them respect and listening to them, as will be discussed in section 4.2.5.

4.3.4.2 Encouraging participation

This sub-category reflects teachers' accounts of students who found confidence in using their voices through the oracy curriculum. There were three dimensions to this sub-category:

- Supportive structures;

- Feeling respected;
- Using their voices.

Teachers discussed how the oracy curriculum supported equitable participation from students because of the structures embedded in the curriculum. In particular, the importance of having small group discussions, the ability to assign students different roles within the discussions (e.g. instigator, builder, summarizer) and the emphasis on turn-taking.

> It might be small groups negotiating a topic that we're all talking about. It might be ensuring that reticent students, that everybody engages with that. So where we might, for example, give them a role within a discussion, that means everybody has a structured contribution that they can make if they would normally let that slide and not join in because they weren't sure, or because they were too lacking in engagement…So I think what it looks like in oracy lessons when it's successful is the smaller structured things.
>
> Celia

The curriculum also promoted student participation by giving students a unique space in which they reportedly felt they were not being academically tested. It was suggested that the notion of assessment weighed heavily on some students' minds and made them believe that their verbal contributions in class were judged either as right or wrong. The lack of assessment took pressure off the students and allowed them to express themselves more freely. As a result, students had opportunities to deepen their thinking, to articulate themselves more clearly, and to contribute or to appropriately challenge others' contributions.

> It's because there's no, there's not really a wrong or right answer, in a sense, and you're kind of, as a teacher you're supposed to help them with their discussions, in terms of, 'oh, okay, you said this' and then asking more questions for them to discuss. So, because there's not a right or wrong answer, they're just allowed to discuss, they're…more willing to participate and share their ideas I think.
>
> Eliza

Andrea stressed that it was crucial for students to know that teachers were not solely interested in their exam results, but that they were also interested in developing them as rounded individuals. The lack of assessment in oracy motivated students to participate in

lessons because students felt that teachers were investing in them and giving them a valuable skill which prepared them for life outside school and exams. Many teachers held that it was important for students to have a space in which they were allowed to talk about what mattered to them, in front of their teachers and within the school walls, in order for them to learn that school could be a place that they could shape.

What was interesting was listening to their choices of topics at the end of the year. Listening to the different things they'd decided to focus on, and us as a school being able to say 'it doesn't matter what you talk about, it's up to you, it's in your hands really'. So I think it's one of the very few places that they're allowed in the curriculum to be quite broad and open and guide it themselves. I think they appreciated that. I think that was probably something that's quite new to them and hopefully I think some of them did say 'oh okay, so it's not all about oh you have to do this and we have to do that. It's more the school allowing us to talk about what matters to us and what is vital to us'.

Andrea

4.3.4.3 Increasing self-respect and respect between students

Teachers' accounts of students gaining respect for themselves and for other students through the oracy curriculum were prevalent and wide-ranging. This sub-category consisted of the following dimensions:

- Feeling safe;
- Gaining self-respect;
- Growing tolerance.

Andrea reflected that notions of self-respect and respect between students led to students feeling safe and supported in school.

It's allowing that space for them to put across their thoughts and feelings and realize that people are listening and respecting them, even if it's not them talking about their own problems or issues in that space. It might not be appropriate to, but it's recognizing that school is a place where they could discuss those. So even if it's not Peter at the front going on about your worst possible experiences and let's share and have group therapy, it's creating that atmosphere and that sense of safety and feeling comfortable with one another, students and staff-wise, and that it could be, should you need to, then go to someone and talk about anything that you wanted to discuss.

Andrea

Teachers commonly discussed how the oracy teaching gave students confidence in speaking and in using their voices to express their views, thoughts, and opinions. The emphasis that the curriculum placed on listening, on taking turns, and on giving students the tools as well as the space to express themselves seemed to increase self-respect among students.

I think it's telling them that your voice is important, it does matter and I think it couples, it links to the idea that we're not assessing them in it. It's not that we're doing this because you need to get a B and a C and a level six. It's just because this is an important life skill to have. It's vital that you learn to listen and express yourself and feel confident in doing so.

Andrea

Eliza reflected that there were a range of different social groups at the school, and many divisions between students, which resulted in some groups rivalling others. She described how the oracy lessons were unique in the sense that students from different social groups had to speak with each other which, she proposed, contributed to increased respect between students.

Maybe they wouldn't talk to certain people in their group outside of the oracy…so it allows them to discuss things, hear different points of views on things…they live in a certain household, they might have certain views on different topics…So, when we talked…it was a topic where they kind of had to explain what side they were on…and people had to express why they agree and listen to other people and why they didn't agree, and so just hearing other points of view make them more, I think, rounded as an individual…just understanding more the other person. I think that's where…bullying and stuff comes from when you don't understand the other person, where they come from, and so I think discussions help that.

Eliza

4.3.4.4 Developing relationships between teachers and students

Teachers commonly spoke about developments in their relationships with students as a result of the intervention. There were three dimensions to this sub-category:

- Giving students control;
- Increasing trust;
- Getting to know students.

The oracy curriculum required teachers to give students control and ownership of discussions. As mentioned, many teachers observed that they feared this initially, considering their experience of teaching students who lacked skills in being able to regulate discussions with others so that the discussions were equitable, reasonable, and contributed to their learning. However, with experience, some teachers became increasingly confident in using group discussions in the classroom.

> With the oracy training the one thing that it does bring is sort of a little more confidence in letting kids have their own discussions, I suppose. I think initially there is a bit of a fear of giving kids any form of control of your lesson, I suppose, because I do the oracy teaching and stuff and I do watch kids have conversations that are relevant to what you said, it does give you a little more trust in them doing their work.
>
> Samuel

Celia emphasized that an increased sense of trust developed between her and the students as a result of giving students some control of the class. She described this shift as empowering for students.

> Where you have classes who get it…their ability to lead a discussion without any contribution from the teacher is really empowering for them. The trust you place in them, but also they quickly understand that trust is placed there for a reason, that they can do it. It's very powerful, I think.
>
> Celia

Once teachers had developed trust in students regulating their own discussions, they discovered how oracy could function to reveal and develop new skills and talents among students. For instance, they were surprised that students took up different roles in smaller groups than they did in whole group settings. They discussed being impressed with how well some groups of students were able to lead discussions and how often they found that unexpected characters, for instance, students who did not respond much to questioning in class, managed to find their voices and have confidence within their peer groups. In addition, teachers began noticing students who had distinct abilities and skills in oracy.

> There are just students who do better in oracy than drama and vice versa. Oracy, I think, is probably…more intellectual and drama is more instinctive and creative probably. I think drama is more embarrassing probably if

you're slightly shy as a teenage or pre-teenage student whereas oracy, particularly the way we structure it from the beginning with these sort of group tasks, it feels safer.

Celia

In addition, teachers reflected that the curriculum offered them an opportunity to get to know students in a different way and to have closer relationships with students because of the nature of the topic, which encouraged students to discuss ideas that were of meaning and value to them. The subject gave students an opportunity to have their ideas, opinions, and interests witnessed and validated by their teachers.

Eliza, Samuel, Celia, and Peter commented that the lessons sometimes moved students to share personal matters with their teachers, allowing teachers to hear about students' backgrounds and family stories.

Some people talk about, 'oh, my brother said this', or they will talk about their family and what happened to their brother, like one time one person told me, 'oh, my brother went to prison' in an oracy lesson or registration. So, I think when it's with the tutor group or oracy lesson and it's not in science I'm able to get to know their background a bit more but in the science lesson it's a bit different.

Eliza

Celia suggested that one of the main factors that influenced close relationships between students and teachers was the subject matter being taught. She stated that performing arts lessons lent themselves easily to students having closer relationships with their teachers, because the subject matter led to increased opportunities for students' self-expression.

Teachers agreed that a closer dynamic between them and students offered increased opportunities to show genuine interest and respect for students. Samuel discussed how this contributed to better behaviour management strategies with students who challenged him.

If you can have a laugh with them about something they're interested in, then the best behaviour management strategies are kids liking you. Well, I mean it's arguable but certainly getting kids to respect you I suppose is the best, so in regard to them liking you or not, if you can have a sort of conversation with them where you're

showing an interest in them, they're more likely to be on your side or think that actually you are for them in a way, so yeah it does help on that front.

Samuel

4.3.5 Identifying and supporting students who were worrying or challenging

This category is an extension of the 'influencing relationships' category. Teachers reflected that students who were described as worrying or challenging benefitted from the positive and closer relationships that emerged from the oracy curriculum. However, in addition, it was suggested that students who were more vulnerable than others benefitted from the curriculum in specific ways. The discourses that made up this category included teachers' accounts of:

(i) distinguishing students with poor language skills;

(ii) supporting students who attracted negative attention;

(iii) empowering students who were socially vulnerable.

Negotiating teachers' definitions of what they perceived to be worrying or challenging was not straightforward. Initially, teachers mainly defined students who were worrying or challenging as students with known diagnoses, with extremely challenging behaviour, or students who had made disclosures of suicidal intent. However, when teachers were asked specifically about the impact of the oracy curriculum on students' individual development and their relationships with their peers and teachers, more nuanced accounts of what a worry or challenge meant emerged.

It became apparent that the distinction that most teachers made between students who needed the oracy teaching more than others was a useful marker in defining students who were in some way worrying or challenging. For example, when Celia discussed relationships between more and less able students, she saw the former as helping others to

feel safe, as if there was something uneasy or frightening about expressing themselves in front of their peers and teachers:

I try to ensure there's mixed ability in each of the small groups, I think that the less able kids like having a kid who is safe and they will get on and that they know what they're doing, and I think those kids enjoy having a chance to lead and excel and be confident.

Celia

Further analysis revealed that students who were perceived to be worrying or challenging generally fell under the sub-categories that make up the rest of this category.

4.3.5.1 Distinguishing students who had difficulty with language

This sub-category refers to the accounts of students who arrived at the school with limited language, or language skills that were judged to be immature or poorly developed. This sub-category is made up of the following dimensions:

- Describing language difficulties;
- Supporting language difficulties.

Teachers described 'being articulate' or 'being confident' as a significant need among the Y7 school population.

A lot of the kids coming here can't talk…I don't know what they do in primary school but they come here and they have such a bad way of just constructing a sentence, so I think obviously when they leave we kind of need them to be able to talk formally, which a lot of them just can't do. Can't say a sentence without 'um', 'er' being like the main word of that sentence, so it is important.

Samuel

Considering the range of interactive factors that can contribute to language difficulties, Samuel's statement highlighted a lack of focus or understanding, a perception shared by him and all the other teachers, of students' needs with regard to language. For instance, it was not clear whether such students had impoverished language resources, persistent and long-term cognitive and/or language difficulties, or language needs linked to emotional needs.

What seemed clear, however, was that when teachers focused upon language they could identify students with language needs and roughly categorize them as:

- students with impoverished language resources;
- students with more complex needs.

Considering the lack of clarity in precisely defining students' needs, there were mixed views with regard to the most effective way in which such students could be engaged and supported. For instance, teachers observed how they often picked current events as topics of discussion. However, they soon discovered that such topics alienated some pupils.

> I think there's a problem with your naughty, like not very clever kids who I don't think, because they don't really get to be in control of it because they don't necessarily understand or they're just not as quick…I think it is because if everyone was told to give a speech on what they thought of Donald Trump then, potentially, some kids are going to stand up for like ten seconds and just go, 'he's an idiot', and then that probably will be the entire speech. If they're allowed to talk for five minutes about football, then they will. So, yeah, I mean, I think, generally the brighter kids tend to pick more complicated subjects, just naturally, but then if you've got one who struggles talking about football as best they can, then that's equally valid.
>
> Samuel

Finding a way to balance students' needs in oracy seemed to be a tension that many teachers experienced. Teachers perhaps felt impelled to use what they termed 'advanced' topics, such as current events, because such topics were beneficial to most students who had some ability in oracy, especially those who were interested in current events and could extend their thinking on the topic, or use the topics to further their oracy skills.

However, teachers reflected that it was beneficial for all students to access the learning because when they engaged with subject matter that was meaningful to them, teachers were better placed to develop an understanding of the students' specific needs. More experienced teachers discussed the need to amend the curriculum to include topical or popular subjects in order to engage the students that were harder to reach.

What we didn't do enough of last year was making it topical. So I've written a scheme of work, the beginning of it, you're talking, you're trying to get the kids to do it, so the content is not really massively important, it's them being able to use the skills. So quite meaningless things like 'what's the better television programme, *X Factor* or *Strictly Come Dancing*?' because really, to have a meaningful conversation, they need to bring something with them.

Peter

Overall, however, teachers claimed that the oracy curriculum was a vital intervention for the wide range of students who fall into the sub-category of having language difficulties. Some of the reasons for this included the fact that the structures that students were given for communication enabled them to feel confident and make progress. Also, the explicit teaching on the differences between speaking formally and informally gave some students the means to make informed choices about how formal language could be helpful to them. In addition, focussing upon skills such as bringing emotion, creativity, and persuasion to their speech may have been helpful, at the very least because such a focus motivated students to bring topics of interest, and promoted participation and engagement.

We put him through because he wasn't the most, it wasn't the best written speech but actually he just went for it and it was creative and it was emotional, it was passionate and there was another girl in the same class who was articulate but she had no engagement. It was almost robotic so actually, as a written essay hers would have wiped the floor with everybody else's but actually it's a public speech.

Peter

4.3.5.2 Supporting students who attracted negative attention

This sub-category refers to teachers' accounts of students who were described as seeking negative attention, and the processes and mechanisms through which the oracy curriculum supported these students in particular. The students accounted for in this sub-category were those who struggled with boundaries, students who had tricky relationships with authority, as well as individuals who were characterized as placing little value in academic learning. This sub-category included the following dimensions:

- Feeling noticed;

- Feeling in control.

Several teachers proposed that the oracy lessons were helpful for students who attracted negative attention because they were given opportunities to have their ideas witnessed by their peers and their teachers in a structured environment. Teachers suggested that this was a confidence booster, that it offered students positive attention, and that such attention possibly deterred them from engaging in negative behaviours. This was also linked to the 'encouraging participation' sub-category (4.3.4.2) in the sense that oracy provided a forum in which students learned that they could shape their learning to suit them, to some degree.

In addition, Peter suggested that the slowing down and placement of a structure around basic principles of respect, such as the ground rules and the 'proof of listening' technique, were supportive because students were given an opportunity to discover meaning and safety in adhering to such rules. Students were able to learn about respecting others in the context of oracy activities that they were already engaged with rather than being told to behave in ways may have been meaningless to them.

I think it's certainly a confidence booster. I think it gives students attention. I think a lot of students crave attention and I think they can get positive attention, whether they're making a contribution to a discussion or they're being acknowledged for a point that they've made or they're doing an oracy speech, you know, I think they would have looked for that attention in other ways. So I think we've done a lot of work on the oracy about respecting the speaker and everybody will get their turn, so the turn-taking and all those kinds of things. So I think it's definitely had an impact on everybody's behaviour but particularly those students with behavioural difficulties, where they need boundaries.

Peter

Samuel added that it was important to engage students in topics that interested them because this gave them opportunities to be recognized for positively contributing ideas and managing interactions. He indicated that positive attention and interactions with others were important for these students.

I think what oracy does provide, for the naughty kids that are bright, it gives them a bit of a chance to show off and be in control of something quite positive. So for those particular students I think oracy's quite valuable…I think if you're intelligent you have that side of you that wants to know about stuff, so you might have a bit of an idea about what's going on in the world. It might not be that fantastic but you'll kind of know that Trump's a person or you might know that there's something going on in North Korea, not necessarily what but you'll at least have heard of that…The naughty clever kids, sometimes it is their chance to show off in quite a positive way because they can be like, 'I'm clever, I know about this stuff. I can control this conversation'.

Samuel

Eliza was slightly more cautious in her account of students who attracted negative attention. She recognized the importance of such students having a space in school in which they could put forward their ideas. She emphasized that students were much more willing to contribute and express ideas in oracy than they were in more structured lessons. However, she also stated that students needed very clear boundaries, as they sometimes had difficulty regulating their contributions and approaches with other students.

There's a couple of students who might be a bit naughty and they find it like a stage for them, if that makes sense, and they will overtake the discussion some times and so I would have to keep like saying, 'okay, that's enough from you', while in lessons or science lessons they won't be so, they won't talk as much or they won't participate as frequently but when I see them in oracy lessons they're a lot more ready to participate because they like the attention and stuff like that.

Eliza

Samuel made a link between students who sought negative attention in school and those who perhaps felt 'ignored', as he described it, by their parents or carers at home. He explained that the curriculum gave students an opportunity to feel attended to and noticed by adults.

I think it's less valuable for your middle-class kids that sit down every evening and have a family meal, whose parents sort of take a proper interest and do all of that. I think, as a subject, it's less valuable for them than the kids that are more likely to be ignored and not have that kind of family-based discussion because I think it sort of provides that setting, whereas obviously your middle-class kids don't really need that setting so much.

Samuel

4.3.5.3 Empowering students who were socially vulnerable

Students accounted for in this sub-category were otherwise vulnerable individuals who used the platform that the oracy curriculum provided in order to attempt to shape the school culture and change other students' perceptions of them.

The curriculum's showcasing of oracy through the creation of speeches and presentations led to new voices emerging and new stories being told. For instance, teachers spoke of a student who shared her experience of being Muslim in the school. She was described as an able and articulate student, but shy, socially vulnerable, and 'not a big presence in the year'. In her speech she accounted for her experience of being verbally abused as a result of her faith (others called her a 'terrorist' and someone who had cancer due to her wearing a hijab). Samuel indicated that oracy gave students such as her an opportunity to recalibrate the school culture and be noticed in a way that they had not before.

I think it made some students stand out in a way that they hadn't before. So, like this girl with the head scarf talking about terrorism and stuff, she's quite quiet, like a lovely girl but not a big presence in the year I suppose and then she did this big sort of passionate speech and it was, I think no one had really seen her in that way, including all the staff, they'd never really seen her in that light before. So I think for particular students it would have changed a bit of a perception of them, whether or not that carries on for a meaningful amount of time it's hard to know, but certainly at the time.

Samuel

The student was given an opportunity to present her speech at an event in front of her peers, parents, and teachers. Due to the impact of the speech, she was subsequently invited to promote the school at a local primary school as well as at a civic engagement programme within the LA.

Similarly, teachers spoke of a boy who was bullied in school and had a history of being in care. Peter described how the student used the oracy platform in order to change

perceptions of young people in his position, and how the student came back in Y8 with a renewed sense of purpose.

You had 12 sets of families and friends and we had the theatre lights and he was on the stage by himself and he wasn't the first, he was about the ninth or tenth of the 12, but as soon as he started speaking he said, 'I'm going to talk about my experience of being bullied' and he just burst into tears and had to leave the stage. He had a bit of pep talk and he came on at the end and nailed it, so he came back at the end and I think it was really empowering for him and for the other students who were there to see that speech. He's still got quite a lot of issues, he's spent quite a bit of time already this year in the internal exclusion, but I think it made a real impact on him actually, I think he felt he was given the opportunity that he wouldn't have had to express himself because I think he reacts to certain students because he's been bullied most of his life.

Peter

In addition, Samuel claimed that oracy gave otherwise low-achieving students a fresh opportunity to achieve in school, regardless of their attainment or their behaviour in other subjects. Moreover, it was helpful for students to have the opportunity to engage their parents in their achievements, so that the families could support them in challenging the narratives associated with belonging and achieving in school.

Kids would do their speeches and they weren't all necessarily the best behaved kids, they were just the ones that did the best speech and it gave them, I suppose, an opportunity to do something and for their parents to see them involved, I mean three of the kids were the best behaved in the year, just happened to be the brightest as well. But then there were the others who weren't necessarily and then the parents could see them with the other kids, doing something good, bit of an event, like made a big deal out of it and made the kids feel some sense of achievement, I guess.

Samuel

4.4 Relating the theory to the research questions

The aim of the study was to construct a psychological understanding of the way in which students with perceived challenging or worrying behaviour were thought about and engaged with in a school that uses oracy as a key feature of the curriculum. In this section the research questions will be discussed in the light of the findings.

Question 1: Does an oracy intervention affect the way that teachers respond to students who challenge or worry them in some way?

The theory proposed in this study emphasizes that teachers' definitions and understandings of oracy affected the manner in which the intervention was carried out. Teachers generally saw the intervention as a mechanism through which to support students to become more articulate and confident in their speech. In contrast, oracy was not thought of as a subject which taught students to marshal sophisticated arguments using a wide range of vocabulary, idiom, and expression, for example. Teachers' definitions of oracy can be linked to the apprentice and intermediate level of the progression in oracy tool (see Figure 1). Perhaps this definition was influenced by the teachers' assessment of the population of the school, which included a significant portion of students who faced issues related to social deprivation. The definition affected how the oracy curriculum was delivered, teachers claiming that the oracy curriculum was of greater benefit to students who were 'less articulate' or 'less confident', and of less benefit to students whom they labelled as 'articulate' and 'confident'.

The distinction between students who were better served by the oracy curriculum became a marker in identifying and defining those who were perceived to be in some way worrying or challenging. Descriptions of these students included:

- Students who struggled with language;
- Students who attracted negative attention;
- Students who were socially vulnerable.

There were also accounts of students with more complicated profiles such as those who disclosed thoughts of suicidality or students who were questioning their gender. However, teachers did not account for any links between such risky profiles and the oracy curriculum in this study. Instead, teachers communicated that the oracy teaching impacted upon students

who were at risk of or at the early stages of developing difficulties, rather than those with significant and complex needs. Thus the constructed theory suggests that the intervention supported teachers to identify students with specific language needs, that it offered students who attracted negative attention increased opportunity to participate positively in school, and that it was a source of empowerment to otherwise vulnerable students, keen to reshape the school culture.

Question 2: What are teachers' views on any impact that an oracy intervention can have on student and teacher relationships in the school setting?

Teachers reflected that the oracy curriculum contributed to students' sense of self-respect, and that it increased tolerance between social groups. The oracy curriculum encouraged participation by students because they were given a forum in which they were being invested in, developed, and offered important life skills while not having to contend with the pressures brought on by assessment. The emphasis that the oracy curriculum places on students listening to each other and having structured opportunities to make verbal contributions in front of their peers gave students confidence in speaking and in using their voices to express their views, thoughts, and opinions. According to their teachers, this contributed to their sense of respect for themselves and acceptance that their views and ideas mattered. Furthermore, the oracy lessons motivated students to talk about topics that were meaningful to them, which increased understanding between some students and offered some an increased sense of safety and belonging in school. This, and the structures embedded in the curriculum (listening, taking turns), also encouraged tolerance, which was thought to be important in a school that taught students from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Teachers also suggested that their relationships with students shifted as a result of the oracy curriculum, with teachers accounting for a greater sense of trust. Some of the teachers involved in the oracy teaching had initial concerns about giving students the space to engage in group discussions in the oracy lessons. However, the act of teaching or being involved with oracy gave teachers the confidence to use student-led discussion, both in and out of oracy lessons. Once teachers began giving students some control in lessons, they found that their relationships with students grew closer and became more trusting. Teachers were surprised to discover that some students had distinct skills in oracy and that the smaller group discussions offered them a different forum in which to use and develop their spoken language skills, in contrast to the whole group setting, which was limiting for some students. Students learned to value the trust that teachers placed in them and teachers enjoyed getting to know and hearing students' thoughts and opinions on a range of topics that interested the students. In some cases, students brought personal narratives, allowing teachers and others to hear about students' backgrounds, interests, and family stories. Teachers proposed that behaviour management became increasingly relational rather than behavioural as a result of the closer relationships that developed within the oracy teaching. However, teachers reported that the success of oracy was somewhat dependent upon the students' relationships with each other, and the teachers' levels of experience and interest in oracy.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the results of this Grounded Theory study in which a theory was constructed which focused upon the perceived impact that an oracy curriculum had on a secondary school. The theory proposes that the oracy curriculum initiated a 'recalibration of the system' which led to several changes. Such changes included

differences in student learning, differences in the way students and teachers related to each other, and a recalibration of what teachers thought of as worrying or challenging. The theory proposes that the curriculum appeared to have specific impact on students with language difficulties, students who attracted negative attention, and on otherwise socially vulnerable students who wanted to shape the school culture.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter key findings will be discussed according to the categories identified in Chapter 4, including the following: (i) the context of the study and resisting; (ii) influencing relationships, and (iii) identifying and supporting students who are worrying or challenging. The influencing learning category will not be discussed due to the extent to which oracy has been linked to attainment in the wider literature, as discussed in Chapter 2. The findings will be located within the literature reviewed in this study, and within the wider literature where necessary, so that future directions for research and practice can be identified. Following this, the strengths and limitations of the study will be reviewed and reflections on the research process will be considered before drawing the research to a conclusion.

5.1 Context of the study and Resisting: Summary and discussion

These two categories will be discussed together owing to the links between how oracy has been defined and implemented and teachers' resistance to developing oracy.

In the Context of the study category, oracy was defined as a subject which mainly supported students with low ability in oracy. Such a definition served to minimize the oracy teaching, rather than influencing its development as there were no accounts of teachers developing students' skills through advanced aspects of oracy, as described in the progression in oracy tool in Chapter 1. Low ability in oracy was subsequently linked to student disadvantage and to social class, teachers reflecting that students from middle class backgrounds did not need oracy teaching. The category of Resistance mainly accounted for teachers' resistance to letting go of control outside of the structured oracy lessons and assemblies in order to allow students to work together in groups.

The findings in both of these categories do not explicitly relate to the research questions, rather they were constructed as part of the Grounded Theory. Considering the overall implication that high-quality talk-based interventions in schools support gains in attainment as well as improved social relations, it seems important to think further about why oracy may have been resisted, due to how it was being defined in context, and how several teachers struggled to develop it in the school, in order to identify future directions for research and practice. First, the impact of social disadvantage on education will be discussed, followed by a discussion of teachers retaining control and group work.

5.1.1 The impact of disadvantage on education

Studies reviewed in Chapter 2 indicate that talk-based interventions support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds more than any other group. Many of the studies took place in schools that serve disadvantaged communities. However, there was very little emphasis on the support that teachers need to sustain high-quality talk-based teaching in schools. There was some evidence to suggest that the more teachers engaged with support, for example, through the setting up of 'community of enquiry groups' (Trickey & Topping, 2007), the better the outcome of the programmes. Even the most committed teachers need significant training and support in order to implement approaches such as DT (Mercer et al., 2009) and there was evidence to suggest that the support structures needed for teachers to successfully implement DT have not been fully worked out (Jay et al., 2015). These findings indicate that the delivery of high-quality talk-based approaches in disadvantaged areas is likely to be a taxing task for teachers, which some might likely resist.

In contrast, oracy approaches are more easily delivered in private schools (Millard & Menzies, 2016). Teachers at such schools are significantly more likely than their colleagues in

LA and community schools to feel that oracy contributes to pupils' linguistic development, and there are two main reasons for this. First, young people from affluent families not only have access to more language (Hart & Risely, 1995) but parents also expect their children to leave school with a high degree of verbal confidence (Millard & Menzies, 2016). It should be noted, however, that the quality of the interaction that young people have with adults is important and that a focus upon the active cultivation of language can have negative effects, especially if this creates stress and takes away from interaction and play (Hirsch-Pacek & Golinkoff, 2003). Second, students in independent schools do not adhere to the national curriculum. Rather, they are likely to adhere to traditional programmes which often include language-rich topics such as Classical Greek, Latin, and Divinity, for example. As such, a different standard of technical language is needed and practiced by teachers in private schools in order for pupils to be able to access the curriculum.

Furthermore, sending young people to schools in the private sector has been one of the dominant ways in which social divisions are formed and maintained in England. Students at private schools tend to achieve better grades than those attending state funded schools, and privately educated students are significantly over-represented at the best universities and, eventually, in high powered jobs. Private schools encourage and even teach students to debate issues, to ask questions, and to develop confidence in expressing their views. State school students, unless they are in a school that focusses upon oracy, are very unlikely to have had any training or experience of peer debate or deep discussion with a tutor (Perez-Adamson & Mercer, 2016). This is relevant because it suggests that some students from disadvantaged backgrounds may not only be entering school with limited language capabilities but also, possibly, with the view that rich language resources are not for them.

About two-thirds of students at the school where this research took place are eligible for pupil premium funding. In addition, the majority of students at the school come from a range of ethnic heritages including black Caribbean and white working class. It is acknowledged that there are limits to the extent to which access to pupil premium funding can explain, ethnic and gender gaps in educational attainment (Strand, 2014). However, considering the high proportion of students at the Pilot School who access pupil premium funding (and the lack of published data on ethnicity and gender), 'disadvantage' will be discussed in terms of socio-economic status.

Carroll (2009) explains that pressures created by poverty lead to an emphasis on living externally rather than paying attention to internal thoughts, reflections, and questions. Such 'imaginings' may be thought of as 'unrealistic', individuals are labelled as 'dreamers', and there is a predominant view that it is too dangerous to be open to new learning: "better to be right, even if wrong, than not to know"(p. 212). Uncertainty and questioning brought on by reflective conversations bring confusion and insecurity, Carroll suggests, and this is all the more threatening when basic needs are at stake. This is at odds with what Howe (2009) suggests by considering the specific mechanisms that lead to students making gains in their learning. It was found that students proposing ideas led to the highest post-test gains. This indicates that the act of critical engagement, thinking, reflecting, considering a problem are skills that stay with students and most likely enable them to make gains at a later stage.

Linked to this, Reay (2006) expresses concerns about schools that do not have access to historical understandings of social class, especially the historical positioning of the white working class within education, members of which, she contends, are alienated and disaffected in the current system because schools often position such pupils as learners with

inadequate cultural backgrounds. Moreover, the dominant state school culture does not reflect the culture, values, and lives of some groups who can feel 'looked down upon' for their 'stupidity' by teachers and pupils from middle class backgrounds (Reay, 2006). This is also corroborated in literature on black Caribbean boys which proposes that low teacher expectations are a significant factor in contributing to their low attainment in schools (Strand 2014). Overall, students from some disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to see school as a way of achieving their goals and are satisfied with 'scraping by' because they come from families that have had little school success themselves (Demie & Lewis, 2014). Such 'aspiration', or pupils' and parents' desire to remain in school post-age 16, is commonly stated as a significant contributor to underachievement in education (Strand, 2014; Select Committee on Education, 2014). As such, in order to implement and develop oracy in schools that serve disadvantaged communities, it is important to recognize that schools have to contend not just with limited or impoverished language but also, possibly, with students' attitudes to reflecting and thinking, and the fact that membership within their groups and communities may be dependent upon maintaining a limited relationship with school, at least to some extent (Carroll, 2009; Reay, 2006).

In addition, teachers who work at schools serving disadvantaged communities have to grapple with significantly increased mental health risks among the student population. The inequalities that have been described support a negative operation of power on a societal level which results in increased levels of fear, mistrust, insecurity, and conflict across whole communities (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). Marginalized groups such as the white working class and the Black Caribbean communities can experience a 'marginalized identity', while issues of poverty and social status that correspond to such an identity significantly increase the risk

of emotional difficulties and limit the abilities of caregivers to provide children with secure early relationships (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018). It follows that the Pilot School is likely to have a significant portion of troubled and disaffected pupils with significant difficulties emerging from lacking a sense of belonging in school, and emotional problems brought on by dysfunctional family backgrounds and socio-economic disadvantage.

5.1.2 Retaining control

Oracy differs from standard subjects such as literacy and numeracy as it is dependent upon students and teachers relating to each other and on teachers abdicating some control to allow students to talk in groups. Psychoanalytic thinking as applied to education offers some valuable insights with regard to the relational experience of learning which supports understanding of why some teachers may resist letting go of control. Some contend that psychodynamic approaches are outdated and irrelevant (Burch & Campbell, 2013), especially since the field has mainly resisted gold standard research practices. However, psychoanalytic approaches are becoming increasingly difficult to discount when considering models that support and develop processes of change, considering the findings from the recent Tavistock Adult Depression Study, one of the first randomized controlled trials of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, which showed that the long-term impact of the approach was significantly associated with good outcomes, as opposed to other treatments (Fonagy et al., 2015).

The concept of Transference is useful in illuminating some of what might contribute to teachers' anxieties with regard to abdicating control. Psychoanalytic practitioners suggest that student contact with a teacher is likely to revive in the student many of the emotions that they experienced in the past in relation to caregivers because of their similar status (Salzberger-Wittenberg, Williams & Osborne, 1983). Both are in positions of authority and

both are tasked with supporting the child's development. Freud (1912) coined the concept of Transference which proposes that conflicts, feelings, and expectations linked to past experiences of significant figures could be transferred on to other people in our lives. This would explain why a teacher could be treated by students in ways which are inconsistent with the way in which they view themselves. For instance, knowing that they have been consistent, but being treated as though they have been extreme or unjust. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that such 'out of context' responses result from students' assumptions about authority figures, and the extent to which students have learned to regulate and manage anxieties and impulses within themselves.

As explained in section 3.2, if a child has experienced a disrupted attachment, they are likely to develop a negative or chaotic internal picture which leads to assumptions about the external world and influences the present in ways that impact upon their perceptions, interpretations, and behaviours (Bowlby, 1969). Psychoanalytic theory expands upon Attachment theory in several ways, relevant to students relationships with their teachers, it considers how such 'disrupted attachments' can be 'projected' on to individuals that the young person comes in contact with. Students who exhaust teachers by, for example, challenging, insulting, and undermining, may, in fact, be relating to their teachers in this way as a result of an unconscious parallel process which is consonant with the spirit of their relations with caregivers. Moreover, in busy and chaotic school environments teachers are unlikely to have the space to think about this, particularly since the subject of pupil and teacher attachments and relations is one which teachers generally find difficult and uncomfortable to consider (Jackson, 2002). As such, their response could be to 'react to' rather than 'reflect upon' students' behaviour, which can lead to severe and restrictive class dynamics in which the teachers tightly retain control. According to Salzberger-Wittenberg

(1983), an understanding of Transference might protect teachers from feeling personally attacked by students who are hostile, and may also make them aware that trust with which a child approaches them is likely to be due to loving impulses strengthened by good relations at home.

5.1.3 Group work in the classroom

In this study it was found that teachers struggled to trust students to work together effectively in groups, especially outside the structured oracy lessons. Teachers highlighted that some classes or groups within classes 'got it' more than others, and they had to be mindful of particular students who tended to 'take over'. Whilst there was some mention of teachers setting ground rules for working together at the beginning of the oracy teaching, teachers did not reflect extensively upon this and, as such, it is possible that the supportive and creative group work reported was limited to some of the work within the structured oracy lessons and assemblies.

The SPRING intervention indicates that significant improvements in group work in regular classroom lessons were found when following the SPRING group working principles outlined in section 2.4.1.3. This included training and support from the research team, and 12 weeks of teachers working with students specifically on good group working principles (Christie et al., 2009). Sustaining and developing group work required significant commitment and focus from teachers and Baines et al. (2009) contend that such commitment was probably a major factor in the positive impact of the intervention. However, this process was not accounted for in the studies. Overall, it seems that when group work in the classroom is taken for granted and not thought about, it poses something of a paradox. When it is working well,

it can be highly creative and productive, but teachers resist group work owing to how chaotic and disruptive it can become (Galton & Williamson, 1992).

A psychoanalytic understanding of group processes might be helpful for teachers to make sense of why some groups function better than others, and observations of the interactions may support teachers to learn both how to organize the groups in terms of size and personalities, tolerate a degree of 'off task' behaviour, understand its origins, and to some extent bring the group back on task (Youell, 2006). Bion (1961) differentiates between a 'work-group' and a 'basic-assumption' group. A 'work group' is one that is on-task and functioning well, whereas a basic assumption group is off-task. Bion proposes that for a group operating within 'basic assumption', experience takes on a psychotically anxious and unconscious life of its own, different in form and function to the individuals within the group, with group members unconsciously working towards lowering and displacing anxiety.

Bion discusses several kinds of anti-task behaviour, one of which is 'dependent' group behaviour, where a group unconsciously elects a leader with members projecting all their hopes on to such a leader, while others become passively dependent. This process is similar to the well-known concept of groupthink (Janis, 1982). To this end, Bion looks at how individuals have particular 'valences' and how these are increasingly exposed in the group situation, where anxieties are commonly intensified. Youell (2006) describes how individuals may find themselves acting out of character in group situations, for instance, becoming very angry or opinionated, defending a view in an uncharacteristically dogged fashion or feeling entirely flat. She contends that such responses may result from powerful group projections, and that gaining an understanding of the particular roles that individuals take in groups is a first step towards altering behaviour or influencing the behaviour of others in a group. When

these kinds of valences and behaviours are not managed well, vulnerable children can become scapegoats, while more confident children can become elevated to bullies taking a moral high ground and 'projecting' unwanted fears and thoughts on to more sensitive children, for example.

5.2 Influencing relationships: Summary and discussion

The theory developed in this study proposes that the oracy intervention improved relations between students and offered teachers the space to develop closer relationships with students. Students were encouraged to bring and to discuss topics of interest, meaning, and value in a school context where they were not being assessed, this communicated that teachers were authentically investing in students, which in turn motivated them to participate in oracy and offered them opportunities to have their ideas witnessed and validated by their teachers and peers. Students were reported to have an experience of being noticed, of being in charge, and of receiving positive attention. Teachers reflected that this led to students experiencing a feeling of safety and belonging in school. Furthermore, teachers indicated that oracy gave otherwise low-achieving students a fresh opportunity to achieve, regardless of their attainment or behaviour in other subjects. Moreover, teachers indicated that it was helpful for students to have the opportunity to engage their parents in oracy achievements, such as public speeches, so that their families could support them in challenging narratives associated with belonging and achieving in school. This finding responds to both the first and the second research question, as it encompasses both teachers' responses to challenging or worrying pupils, and the impact of oracy on relationships in the setting.

5.2.1 Linking oracy and attachment interventions

There appear to be links between the findings discussed in the previous section and the attachment-based interventions that were discussed in Chapter 3. Attachment based interventions such as Emotion Coaching support students with emotional difficulties by providing teachers with tools and strategies to develop emotionally empathic and attuned relationships. They suggest that, if a teacher can repeatedly provide a different experience from one that is feared, pupils then have a chance to adjust their picture of the world and to grow based on different responses. Repeated experiences of empathy and offers of psychological attunement give the brain the chance to build new connections which support the regulation of emotions and behaviour (Siegel & Byron, 2011). Some teachers stated that the closer relationships that emerged, or were at least supported by the oracy teaching, led them to engage in relational rather than behavioural strategies when difficulties arose, which seem closely linked to the attachment-based interventions which have been described.

The SPRING studies reviewed in section 2.4.3.1 indicate that improvements in collaborative learning occurred alongside improved social relations. This is corroborated in this study, further supporting the view that high-quality talk-based interventions and good social relations seem to mutually reinforce each other. The P4C intervention was reported to result in a significant reduction in student dependence upon adults and in anxiety and led to greater self-confidence. This finding is somewhat corroborated in this study. Teachers described how under-confident students benefitted from having language structures that they could use to participate in discussion, which could suggest a reduction in anxiety and an increase in self-confidence. In addition, accounts of worrying or challenging students becoming engaged in the oracy teaching would indicate that students could also have become less dependent upon adults. However, anxiety, adult dependence, and self-confidence were

not specifically measured in this study. Overall, however, this indicates that oracy and other high-quality talk-based learning approaches may also organically offer some of the same benefits offered by attachment interventions.

5.3 Identifying and supporting students who were worrying or challenging: Summary and discussion

The perceived positive influence that oracy had on relationships between teachers and students and among students in this study appeared to have been positive for all students described as worrying or challenging, e.g. those with poor language skills, those who attracted negative attention, and those who were socially vulnerable. The relational benefits for students who attracted negative attention were emphasized and discussed in the last section. However, the theory developed in this study suggests that oracy impacted upon students with poor language skills and those who are socially vulnerable in distinct ways. As such, these sub-categories will be discussed in turn.

5.3.1 Distinguishing students who had difficulty with language

Teachers identified that that there was a clear divide with regard to the vocabulary of middle class students and that of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Teachers were able to identify a significant portion of students who struggled with language and were beginning to make a distinction between:

- students with reduced language abilities;
- students with more complex needs.

This finding responds to the first research question in the sense that the oracy curriculum offered a forum through which teachers could support students with impoverished language with the cognitive (e.g. identifying what makes a good argument), linguistic (e.g. choosing

words precisely), and social and emotional (e.g. showing proof of listening) resources which, over time, supported students to feel increasingly confident in using language to express themselves and work with others. While students with impoverished language appeared to benefit from the focus upon language, there was evidence to suggest that teachers struggled to know how to support students with increasingly complex needs.

5.3.1.1 The complexity associated with identifying language needs in secondary school

The finding that a significant number of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds appeared to struggle with language or have limited language abilities is corroborated in the wider literature. As discussed in Chapter 1, Sage (2005) found that 75 per cent of students at a secondary school had a form of SCLN, and, in a deprived area of Manchester, 50 per cent of secondary age students were assessed as having severe language difficulties, meeting criteria for statements of SEN (Ainscow et al., 2012). In Chapter 1 a distinction was established between students with impoverished language and those with long-term and persistent needs. Evidence suggests that both categories of need are significantly under-identified in schools.

As discussed, it is expected that 7.6 per cent of all UK children starting school will have a persistent and long-term developmental language disorder. However, analysis of the SEN data suggests that only 2.6 per cent of children are identified as having SCLN (Gascoigne & Gross, 2017). The lack of identification of such difficulties suggests that many children with persistent and long-term language needs progress through school, a factor which masks a significant underlying language difficulty. This might explain why some teachers in this study stated that some students had trouble accessing the oracy teaching, and that it was tricky to know how to differentiate the learning in order to include them. However, the issue of

identifying and supporting students who had trouble accessing the oracy teaching is further complicated by the fact that students with impoverished language can also find it difficult to engage with language-based learning by the time they reach secondary school because SCLN is a risk factor for literacy, learning, and mental health difficulties (Gascoigne & Gross, 2017).

Research focussing upon language development (as opposed to the functional dynamics of talk for learning in the classroom) has established significant links between language and literacy. Language and phonological skills are the foundations of literacy development and subsequent academic achievement, and almost all children with SCLN experience some difficulty learning how to read and to write (Snowling & Hulme, 2012). Students with impoverished language difficulties have significant difficulties with reading comprehension and with writing and spelling (Dockrell & Howell, 2015). This is corroborated by research focussing upon children with English as an additional language which shows that such children tend to do well with decoding words, but without a good foundation in the target language they struggle with reading comprehension and higher order metacognitive skills (such as summarizing, clarifying, and predicting) that are needed for reading comprehension (Geva, 1998).

In addition, the research reviewed in Chapter 2 establishes links between students' level of language and their reasoning or problem-solving skills which become increasingly important as children progress through school. Moreover, compounding difficulties and low achievement in school can impact upon young people's beliefs about themselves as learners, also known as 'self-efficacy', which further contributes to their achievement in school (Strand, 2014; Select Committee, 2014; Reay, 2006; Lewis & Demi 2014; Bandura, 1982). A pupil's self-belief is likely to be influenced by teachers' perceptions of their students, other students'

perceptions of them, as well as opportunities to express values in context and succeed in school (Bandura, 1982). Linked to this, the Bercow: Ten Years On Report (2018) indicates that SCLN is a significant mental health risk factor. Children with SCLN in the pre-school and early primary years are approximately twice as likely to develop SEMH difficulties as children with typical language development when followed up over time. Furthermore, 81 per cent of children with emotional and behavioural disorders have significant unidentified SCLN (Hollo, Wehby & Oliver 2014).

Considering the links between SCLN and other difficulties, it is perhaps unsurprising that young people who have been previously identified as having SCLN in the early years are often re-categorized with a different kind of SEN when they reach secondary school, commonly a moderate or specific learning difficulty, or SEMH (Gasicogne & Gross, 2017). This is important because interventions for learning are dependent upon how teachers understand students' needs. The under-identification and re-categorization of an underlying language need can mean that children access interventions that do not target their primary need, which further compounds difficulties. The focus upon reading and writing in schools means that interventions often target these skills, rather than being focussed upon the spoken language skills that underlie them (Lee, 2018). Equally, students re-categorized as having SEMH can be referred to mental health services which do not attend to or treat the underlying language needs.

5.3.1.2 Does oracy disadvantage students with complex needs?

Teachers have argued that students who present as 'shy' (but may in fact be contending with possible language and/or mental health difficulties), may experience increased and unhelpful pressures due to the speaking demands of an oracy curriculum (Millard & Menzies,

2016). However, practitioners at the Oracy School contend that oracy can offer pupils opportunities to overcome anxieties related to speaking in front of others. Teachers have developed strategies to support such students, for example, through the use of sentence stems, discussion guidelines, individualized targets for talk, and the use of discussion counters. This is, potentially, an area in which EPs can offer important support. First, the fact that oracy inspires a conversation about how to cope with 'shy' pupils is important, as such pupils can go un-noticed and their difficulties can consequently become ingrained. A psychological assessment of and possible intervention with 'shy' students who do not make progress in oracy despite the first-line interventions described would seem to be helpful so that students do not internalize a negative view of themselves as speakers.

Similarly, it could be argued that oracy leaves students with complex language needs at a disadvantage, particularly those who struggle to process, understand, and respond to language due to the 'added' language demands placed on these students. However, Lee (2018) contends that focussing upon oracy can in fact support pupils with SCLN in the following ways: (i) Students with SCLN may need specialist modifications, however, overall they need to practice in order to get better at using and understanding language; (ii) the structures emphasized by oracy, such as group roles, are beneficial as it is easier to take part in a discussion if the added task of working out one's role in a group discussion is taken away, and (iii) the focus upon meta-cognition, which is implicit in oracy teaching, is a vital skill for pupils with learning and language needs to identify when they do and do not understand, and to clarify when they are unsure.

5.3.2 Empowering students who were socially vulnerable: Summary of findings

It was reported that some socially vulnerable students became increasingly confident in expressing themselves through the oracy intervention, because they had access to language tools and structures, such as being given group roles and engaging with smaller group work. Linked to this, oracy teaching exposed a group of otherwise socially vulnerable students who used the oracy platform in order to share personal stories of disempowerment, which in turn became a source of strength. This finding is linked to the first research question, leading teachers to perceive students in new ways, and offering otherwise vulnerable students opportunities to shape the school culture with their narratives.

5.3.2.1 Narrative approaches in education

The studies reviewed in Chapter 2 do not measure or account for students using high-quality talk interventions to develop empowering narratives. However, the wider literature supports the view that having opportunities to express one's values and beliefs in the school context is helpful for students at risk of developing emotional difficulties linked to disadvantage and feelings of being disaffected with school (Steele, 2010). Bruner (1986) establishes that narratives help us to order our experiences and to construct reality. Consonant with this, Michael White, one of the founders of narrative therapy approaches, contends that it is beneficial to develop 'rich' stories about one's life, as such stories offer opportunities for change (White, 2004). When young people's emotional difficulties become overwhelming, their 'internal narrative' has often become single storied, limited and superficial (White, 2004). As such, developing a rich narrative can enable students to see that they have options of which they were previously unaware. An individual might be encouraged to question and expand upon the dominant narrative of being 'in care' or 'wearing a hijab', as was seen in this study. Developing a rich narrative of one's experiences thus allows

students to reclaim other aspects of their identities, rather than focus solely upon those which have felt dominant and disempowering in a given context, such as school.

Considering the extent to which some students' home environments may operate according to different social norms to those of their school environments, narrative approaches would seem to be relevant when supporting some students from disadvantaged backgrounds to further engage with school. As has been seen in this study, oracy teaching offers a valuable platform through which to develop rich stories, and the telling of narratives is implicit in oracy. However, it is important for narrative approaches to be managed safely, which is an area that EPs are well placed to support.

Person-centred approaches based on developing detailed narratives have become increasingly popular in EP work, considering the person-centred focus of the 2014 SEN Code of Practice. EPs also use narrative approaches in therapeutic work with pupils who are vulnerable, displaced, or disaffected in schools, for example, through story-telling (Sunderland, 2000) and sand tray work (Campbell, 2004). On an organizational level, there is evidence to suggest that schools with advanced oracy practices have use the data generated by students to respond to students' needs. To this end, and as mentioned in Chapter 1, the Oracy School has developed a psychological 'well-being' curriculum which runs alongside the oracy curriculum.

5.4 Implications for practice

The findings discussed above have implications for both the continuation of the oracy curriculum at the Pilot School and for EP practice.

5.4.1 Implications for the continuation of the oracy curriculum at the Pilot School

- Teachers are likely to benefit from specialist support in order to manage the interpersonal and group dynamics implicit in oracy teaching. Teachers must be given time to engage with such support and the school could work with their psychology service or the Oracy School in order to develop appropriate structures.
- Students who have trouble accessing the oracy lessons would benefit from assessment by an SLT with appropriate training in the complexities that can emerge from long-standing unidentified speech needs at the secondary school level.
- The EP working in the school should liaise with the SLT in order to identify and support students whose progress in oracy is being affected by difficulties related to mental health, learning, or students' views of them as learners.
- The narratives generated by students in the oracy curriculum may offer important information about how the school can create structures of support. The school would benefit from recognizing students' views as such and engaging school consultants (such as their EP service or the Oracy School) in order to consider this information.

5.4.2 Implications for EPs

The implications described above which refer to educational psychology can be generalized to EPs seeking to support schools contending with their duty to teach speaking and listening skills as part of the national language and literacy curriculum. In addition, considering the extent to which oracy supports pupils who are vulnerable to or coping with

SEN, EPs would benefit from becoming informed about oracy and forging links with organizations, such as Voice 21, which have developed resources to support teachers and students to get talking in class. Overall, this research supports the view that EPs are well placed to raise the profile of oracy approaches within their LAs. Moreover, considering the extent to which an oracy curriculum appears to expose SCLN and co-occurring difficulties with literacy, learning, and mental health, it would seem important for EPs to advocate for SLT input when organizing oracy interventions at the secondary school level in order for teachers to have resources with which to differentiate, and support, the assessment and identification of pupils with complex needs. Also, focussing upon oracy in schools, which links organically with narrative therapeutic approaches, could offer an opportunity to further commission narrative work at the individual and group levels.

In addition, EPs are uniquely placed to support teachers with the relational dynamics implicit in oracy teaching. One such source of support is a Work Discussion Group (WDG). These are groups that are set up between a facilitator and a group of teachers and usually run on a weekly or bi-weekly basis with an agreed open or closed membership base. They were initially developed by child psychotherapists and have proved to be effective in helping teaching staff to develop and enhance their observational skills in order to explore and understand the underlying meanings of behaviour, the unconscious dynamics of groups, and the complex dynamics that can develop between teachers and pupils (Jackson, 2002). Rather than offering strategies or solutions, WDGs offer teachers a space to think, and the process of expressing difficulties in words and having them heard can empower teachers and restore their sense of their skill, thus preventing the reactions that can reduce and undermine talk-based learning approaches. Based on the findings and the literature reviewed, WDGs could support oracy by giving space for teachers to think about: (i) the complexities associated with

supporting oracy approaches among disadvantaged students, so that oracy is not reduced to discrete teaching which is then not developed in the classroom; (ii) their responses to students who challenge or worry them, and (iii) the group processes that can both inhibit and develop students' capacity to work together.

5.5 Dissemination

Following completion of this study, the researcher will attempt to meet with the oracy lead at the Pilot School in order to communicate findings and implications as they relate to the school. The research will be presented to the EP team within the LA where the Pilot School is located on July 4, 2018 and to Trainee EPs at the Tavistock Clinic on July 20, 2018. A printed copy of this thesis will be deposited at the Tavistock Clinic library.

5.6 The limitations of this study

One significant limitation of this research is that the participants are likely to have been those teachers with the most positive views of oracy overall and, as such, the reported influence on relationships and the impact on the identification and support for students who were worrying or challenging is likely to reflect the most positive experiences. Of the 16 teachers who met the criteria for this study, less than a third were recruited for interview. This has been considered in this discussion and located within the reported resistance, which has informed the implications and future directions. However, perspectives from teachers who felt less positive towards, and even those who resisted oracy on the whole would have enriched this research.

In addition, some of the findings may have been strengthened by the use of other methods. Observing interactions between teachers and students and between students over time would have strengthened the findings vis-à-vis the purported relational benefits of the

oracy teaching, and standardized measures of psychological wellbeing over time would have further triangulated the findings relating to students' gains in social and emotional wellbeing.

The researcher's keen interest in oracy and her educational psychology training will have influenced, in particular, the construction of the theory. For instance, it is likely that a researcher with a different knowledge base may not have picked up on nuances such as the extent to which oracy was accessible to students with special needs. This would imply that if this research had been conducted by a trainee counselling psychologist, for example the theory that emerged may have had a different focus altogether. To this end, there was data that was unused, especially with regards to a possible 'recalibration' of relationships between teachers. A focus on this might further expand upon identifying the support structures that shape teachers' best oracy practice in schools.

5.7 Directions for future research

The following directions for future research have been identified:

- Research that focusses upon the impact that oracy has on literacy at the secondary school level.
- Research which explores the mechanisms through which EPs can support schools to develop their oracy practices.
- Research which focusses upon identifying the support structures that shape teachers' best oracy practice in schools that serve disadvantaged communities.
- Research which explores best practice between SLTs and EPs in supporting students with special needs to access oracy.

5.8 The researcher's reflections

As I grew mindful of the extent to which labels such as SEMH can mask underlying language needs at the secondary school level through this research, it felt increasingly important to hold on to the idea of students who challenge or worry their teachers in order to construct understanding of whether an oracy curriculum could function to support teachers to cope with vulnerable pupils in spite of any specifically identified, unidentified or re-categorized need.

In order to avoid repetition, I have, at times, described students with emotional needs or language needs. These terms have been informed by the analysis in which I attempted to stay true to the spirit of how these students were described by their teachers, which sometimes was, undefined, confusing or they described an 'inkling' that something was not quite right. I was then able to abstract the information through the analysis, which seemed more helpful than applying pre-existing labels to the students at interview. Such an approach could have cut off important thoughts about what the oracy lessons were revealing to teachers about their students.

To this end, the experience of conducting this research has recalibrated my perspective, to an extent, and this will have direct implications for how I take up the role of EP. While I understand that a student's level of language is important to consider in practice, my views on this matter have been developed and refined. Having the opportunity to think about common difficulties that appear in EP referrals such as literacy, learning, and mental health from a 'language informed' position has deepened my understanding of each of these difficulties and will prevent me from engaging in practice which does not consider possible underlying language needs, when assessing for, implementing, or recommending literacy,

learning, and mental health interventions. I have also grown interested in the unique ways that an EP can support the development of oracy in schools.

5.9 Summary and conclusions

A Grounded Theory based on the Pilot School being recalibrated as a result of the oracy curriculum has been constructed in this study. Students were educated in ways of using language as a tool to deepen thought processes and to develop problem-solving skills, plan actions, and review them both with others and independently. In addition, the curriculum appeared to recalibrate students' relationships with each other and with their teachers as students had space to communicate their thoughts and values, and were taught to listen and to respect the views of others. Students were reported to feel authentically invested in as a result of having a class in which they were not being assessed, which, in this study, inspired participation and led to closer relationships between students and teachers in some cases. The constructed theory suggests that such a 'relational recalibration' was helpful to students with emotional difficulties and this has been linked to the evidence suggesting that repeated experiences of empathy and offers of psychological attunement give the brain the chance to build new connections which support the regulation of emotions and behaviour. The theory also indicates that oracy was a source of empowerment for some socially vulnerable students who used the oracy platform in order to tell stories and attempt to influence the school culture. Moreover, the intervention gave teachers an opportunity to focus explicitly upon the quality of students' spoken language, to identify students with language needs, and to consider the complexities associated with supporting such students.

A key limitation of this study has already been highlighted, which is that the teachers who opted to participate are likely to have been those who had the most positive view of

oracy. As such, teachers' expressed fear of abdicating control, of minimizing the oracy teaching, and of resisting group work in classes outside the oracy lessons has been located within literature which explores the impact of disadvantage on education. As a result, it has been suggested that teachers need space and support in order to engage with the implicit relational demands that oracy teaching places on them. Such resistance is an important factor that could impact upon the growth and development of oracy approaches, particularly in schools that serve disadvantaged communities.

Implications for EPs include working closely with speech and language therapists at the secondary school level in order to identify and support students who have difficulty accessing the oracy. In addition, EPs are well placed to support teachers to cope with the resistance to developing oracy by giving them a space to reflect upon rather than to react to the challenges and opportunities that might emerge from letting go and allowing students to talk together in groups.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: UK education policy naming of concepts closely related to oracy

Spoken language (2014 National Curriculum)
Oral language (expert panel report for the National Curriculum review)
Communication (introduced as a key skill in the 1999 curriculum reforms)
Communication and language (in England's Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)
Speaking and listening (National Curriculum for English since 1988 and in GCSE English specifications until 2014)
Talking and listening (in Scottish Nationals)
Oracy (in the curriculum for Wales and the National Oracy Project which ran from 1987 until 1993)

Appendix 2: List of search terms

Oracy OR Dialogue* OR Speaking and Listening OR Spoken OR Communication OR Talk OR Language	AND	Class* OR Education* OR Instruct* OR Learn* OR School OR Student OR Teach* OR Assess OR Pedagogy OR Reading OR Writing OR Maths Or Science OR Literacy	AND	Group OR Collaborator*	AND	United Kingdom OR Britain OR UK OR England OR Scotland OR Wales OR Northern Ireland

Appendix 3: Summary of articles

Total number of articles sourced

Articles emerging from database	192
Articles emerging from Voice 21 & EEF	16

Criteria and number of articles discarded

Articles discarded for referring to language as a system in itself	178
Articles discarded for low overall quality scores (CASP and Long (2005) criteria) and whether articles were pertinent to the literature review question	7
Articles discarded for referring to niche areas of oracy e.g. oracy and interactive whiteboards	4
Articles discarded for including participants younger than Y4	1

Appendix 4: Table of studies

Study	Design	Intervention	Length of intervention	Intervention setting	Intervention participants	Control participants	Overall rating of comparison group used
Studies of oracy and collaborative learning							
Mercer (1999)	Mixed methods	TRAC programme	10 weeks	7 Primary schools	60 (Y5)	64 (Y5)	2
Mercer (2004)	Mixed methods	Thinking Together	23 weeks	7 Primary schools	109 (Y5)	121 (Y5)	2
Mercer & Sams (2006)	Mixed methods	Thinking Together	23 weeks	7 Primary schools	109 (Y5)	121 (Y5)	2
Christie (2009)	Two groups pre-post	SPRING	1 year	24 Schools	24 Classes (age 10-12 over 522 approximate)	71 (Age 10-12)	1
Howe (2007)	Two groups pre-post	SPRING	1year	24 Schools	24 Classes (age 10-12 over 522 approximate)	71 (Age 10-12)	1
Howe (2009)	Two groups pre-post	SPRING	1 year	24 Schools	24 Classes (age 10-12 over 522 approximate)	71 (Age 10-12)	2
Baines (2009)	Equivalent groups	SPRING	1 year	14 Schools	39 (Y4 & Y5 groups)	33 (Y4 & Y5)	1

Trickey & Topping , (2007)	Equivalent groups	Philosophy for Children	16 months	6 Primary schools	105 (Age 10)	72 (Age 10)	2
Trickey & Topping, (2007)	Equivalent groups	Philosophy for Children (follow-up)	Previously 16 months	6 Primary schools	96 (Age 12)	52 (Age 12)	2
Gorard , Siddiqui, Huat See (2015)	Two groups, pre-post	Philosophy for Children	12 months	48 Primary schools	1550 (Y4 &5) 1366 post test	1609 (Y4&5) 1455 post test	1
Studies of teacher input in to oracy							
Jay (2017)	Three level clustered RCT design	Dialogic Teaching	8 month	76 Schools	38 Schools (2492 pupils)	38 Schools (2466 pupils)	1
Mercer (2009)	Qualitative	Dialogic Teaching	N/A	N/A	12 Teachers	N/A	N/A
Hanly (2015)	Two groups pre-post	Thinking Doing Talking Science	11 months	21 Schools	655 (Y5)	20 schools	1
Crawford (2014)	Two groups pre-post	The LIT Programme	8 months	41 Schools	22 Schools (Y7, 660 pupils)	19 schools	3
Mercer (2017)	Two group pre-post	Cambridge Oracy Assessment Toolkit	1 year	2 Secondary schools	12 Students	12 Students	3
Studies of oracy and social emotional processes							
Tolmie (2010)	One group pre-post	SPRING	1 year	24 Schools	575 Students	N/A	N/A
Trickey (2006)	Two groups pre post	Philosophy for Children	16 months	6 Primary schools	119	52	2
Wegerif (2005)	Qualitative	Thinking Together	1 year +	N/A	N/A	N/A	2

Study	Measures	Results	Overall rating of results
		Studies of oracy and collaborative learning	
Mercer (1999)	• Ravens test (group & individual) • Recordings of focal group (8 in total, 4 intervention 4 control)	• Qualitative and quantitative analysis of discourse showed a marked shift in target children's use of language in accord with the aims of the teaching programme. • Children's group post test scores on the Ravens test improved, scores did not reach statistical significance. • Children's individual post test scores on Ravens test were significantly higher than those in control classes.	1
Mercer (2004)	• Pre- and post-intervention measure of target words (intervention only) • Pre- and post-Intervention comparison length of turns in talk which exceeded 100 characters (intervention only) • Blind assessment of pre- and post-discussions (intervention only)	• Greatly increased incidence of indicator words indicative of Exploratory Talk in the children's discussions after the intervention. • Significantly more elaborated contributions to the discussions made by children post-intervention (1 – 46). • Blind assessors correctly identified the children's discussions as post intervention in 5 out of 6 cases. • SAT scores of target classes increased significantly more than those of control classes. • Children in target classes gained significantly better scores in reasoning exercise post intervention than controls. • Target pupils performed significantly better than the control pupils after intervention, taking into account the pre intervention performance levels of both groups. • Target pupils performed significantly better than the control children, taking into account pre intervention performance levels.	1

	• SAT scores • Pre and post comparison of reasoning exercise between target and control. • Ravens test, group • Ravens test, individual		
Mercer & Sams (2006)	• Pre and post video recording of focal group in each target class carrying out computer based activities. • Video recordings of other groups of children in the same classes engaged in joint activities during Thinking Together lessons. • Post intervention audio recordings for interviews with teachers and children. • Pre and post intervention tests of children's	• Both qualitative and quantitative analysis of children's talk in groups showed significant increases in discussion which resembles Exploratory Talk amongst target classes. • SAT results show that children in the target classes improved their assessed attainment in maths significantly more than those in control classes.	1

	knowledge and understanding in maths and science (SAT).		
Christie (2009)	• STOP observation measure (based on exploratory talk and features of dialogue associated with problem solving such as pupils proposing ideas, disagreeing, explaining their reasoning, referring back and reaching consensus) • Observational measure of quantity of group work within the classroom	• Peer dialogic interaction and quality of learning in classrooms significantly improved over time.	1
Howe (2007)	• Tests of evaporation, condensation, force and motion • STOP observation measure.	• Pupil understanding progressed from pre-tests prior to the programmes to post-tests afterwards and the results suggest that group work played a critical role.	1
Howe (2009)	• Science tests. • Recordings of group discussion .	• Unresolved contradiction has post delay effects on attainment (only post delay, not immediate). • Joint construction may lead to immediate gains in attainment that are 'superficial'.	1

Baines (2009)	• Video observations of group tasks.	• Higher levels of participation, engagement, active and sustained discussion, high level inferential joint reasoning, lower levels of group disruptive blocking behaviours.	2
Trickey & Topping , (2007)	• CAT administered before and after the intervention	• Significant standardized gains in verbal and non-verbal and quantitative aspects of reasoning, consistent across intervention schools. • Boys and girls made significant gains. The highest quartile of pre-test ability showed the smallest gains. Controls did not gain in any respect.	2
Trickey & Topping, 2 (2007)	• CAT	• Significant pre-post cognitive ability gains in experimental group in primary school were maintained towards the end of their second year of secondary school. • Higher achieving students were advantaged in sustaining these gains. • The control group showed an insignificant but persistent deterioration in scores from pre to post-test follow up.	2
Gorard , Siddiqui, Huat See (2015)	• Key Stage 2 attainment. • CAT administered before and after intervention.	• P4C had a positive impact on Key Stage 2 attainment. • Pupils using the approach made approximately two additional months progress in reading and maths compared to the control group. • Biggest advantage was for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, who made three months of progress in maths, four months of progress in reading and two months of progress in writing. • Results on the CAT showed mixed results. Pupils who started in the programme in Y5 showed a positive impact, but those who started in Y4 showed no evidence of benefit, taken together the results suggested that P4C resulted in a small improvement in CAT scores. • All of the gain in the CAT scores came from the verbal subscale. • There was very little difference between treatment and control groups in terms of qualitative, non-verbal and spatial elements of the CAT.	1

Studies of teacher input in to oracy			
Jay (2017)	• English, Maths and Science Level 10, GL Assessment. • KS2 results at a later date • Project team evaluation of teacher and pupil talk in both conditions	• Children in DT schools made two additional months progress in English and science, and one additional month of progress in maths compared to children in control schools. • Children eligible for FSM made two additional months progress in English, science and maths compared to FSM children in control schools.	2
Mercer (2009)	• Audio recording of teachers	• 2 of the 12 teachers were found to use Dialogic Teaching on a consistent basis.	2
Hanly (2015)	• Author designed measure of science attainment • Pupils attitudes towards science • Performance in English and maths at KS2	• Y5 pupils in intervention schools made three additional months progress. • Positive effects on pupils eligible for FSM. • Positive effect on girls and pupils with low prior attainment. • Positive impact on pupils attitudes to science.	1
Crawford (2014)	• Tests of reading ability • Interviews with teachers	• Students in intervention condition made 1 month of progress, did not reach statistical significance.	2/3
Mercer (2017)	• Oracy assessment tool	• Students can be assessed for their oracy skills based on cognitive, linguistic, physical and social-emotional categories. • Need for baseline tools such as videos.	1
Studies of oracy and social emotional processes			
Tolmie (2010)	• People in your class measure	• Significant pre to post intervention gains found in work and play relations.	2

	• Observations of classroom dialogue (based on exploratory talk) • Groupwork management of interaction (STOP measure) • Teacher evaluation at end • Teacher CLEF form (end)	• Levels of transactive dialoge and group working skills showed similar improvements and accompanying reductions in variation over the course of the intervention. • Increased positivity in play relations in teacher ratings of the quality of group work skills.	
Trickey (2006)	• Myself as a Learner Scale	• Significant reduction in student dependency on adults and anxiety, greater self-confidence, with girls tending to gain more than boys.	2
Wegerif (2005)	• Recordings of children's talk	• Creative utterances in dialogue that do not necessarily include 'reasoning' are important for children to develop reasoning ability. • Creative utterances in classroom dialogue are indicative of good social and emotional processes between teachers and pupils as well as among pupils.	2

Appendix 5: Appraisal tool prompt sheet

Criteria for critiquing qualitative research based on the CASP qualitative appraisal tool (CASP, 2010a)

1. Is the study relevant to your research question?
2. Does the paper address a clearly focused issue?
3. Is the choice of a qualitative method appropriate?
4. Was the author's position clearly stated?
5. Was the sampling strategy clearly described and justified?
6. Was there an adequate description of the method of data collection given?
7. Were there procedures for data analysis/interpretation described and justified?
8. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?
9. Have ethical issues been taken in to consideration?
10. Is there a clear statement of findings?
11. Were all possible outcomes/findings considered?
12. Are the findings valuable?

Criteria for critiquing quantitative research based on the CASP quantitative/case control appraisal tool (CASP, 2010 b)

1. Is the study relevant to your research questions?
2. Does the paper address a clearly focussed issue?
3. Is the choice of study method appropriate?
4. Did the study achieve a good response rate?
5. Is the confounding and bias considered?
6. Are the data collection tools reliable (do they measure what they say they do) and valid?
7. Are you confident for the researcher's choice and use of statistical methods, if employed?
8. (Case-control study) How comparable are the cases and controls with respect to potential confounding factors?
9. Were all possible outcomes/results considered?
10. Are the findings valuable?

Criteria for evaluating mixed methods research based on the 'Evaluation tool for mixed methods study designs' (Long, 2005)

1. Are the aims of the paper clear?
2. Is the relationship of the study and the area of topic review clear?
3. Is sufficient detail given about the setting? Is the setting appropriate and/or sufficiently specific for the examination of the research question?
4. Is the sample (informants, settings and events) appropriate to the aims of the study?
5. Is the achieved sample size sufficient for the study aims and to warrant the conclusions drawn?
6. Are the outcome criteria clear?
7. Is there sufficient breadth (e.g. contrast of two or more perspectives) and depth (e.g. insight in to one perspective)?
8. Have ethical issues been adequately addressed?
9. If there was more than one group analysed, were the groups comparable before the intervention?

10. How were important confounding variables controlled (e.g. matching, randomisation, or in the analysis stage)? Was this control adequate to justify the author's conclusions?
11. Is the process of data collection adequately described?
12. Is adequate evidence provided to support the analysis?
13. Are the researcher's own position, assumptions and possible biases outlined?
14. Is the conclusion justified given the conduct of the study?
15. Are implications for policy/practice outlined?

Appendix 6: Participant information sheet

Information Sheet

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Title: Does building a culture of 'Oracy' in a school impact on teachers' ability to cope with students emotional needs in learning?

Who is doing the research?
I am training to become an Educational Psychologist. I am doing this piece of research as a part of my course.

Would you like to take part in research?
I would like to invite you to take part in my research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part, I wanted to offer some information about why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the information carefully and decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the aim of the research?
The aim of the study is to find out about teacher's experiences of working with young people with behavioural difficulties through the Oracy curriculum.

Who has given permission for this research?
The Local Authority where I am placed has given me permission to do this research with teachers who would like to take part. The training institution that I am studying at is called the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust and they have given me ethical approval to do the research.

Who can take part in this research?
I am looking for Y7 teachers who are working with Y7 pupils and are able to talk with me about their experiences of working with behaviourally challenging pupils through the Oracy curriculum.

Do I have to take part?
You do not have to take part, and it is up to you to decide. If you decide to take part you are free to withdraw (stop taking part in the research) at any time, without giving a reason. This will not affect any work you are doing with X School now or in the future.

What will happen to me if I take part?
You will be invited to come and meet me at X School. On the first day that we meet, I will explain what we will do and we will talk for a short time (no longer than 30 minutes) about your experiences of working within the Oracy curriculum. About a week after we first meet, we will meet again to think a bit more (no longer than an hour) about your experiences of working with behaviourally challenging pupils through this curriculum. I would like to make audio recordings of our meetings to help me remember and think about things that were said during them. The recordings will be stored anonymously, using password-protected software. You can ask for the recordings to be stopped or deleted at any time. The recordings will be deleted once I have typed them up.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
There is not much research that looks at teachers experience of working with behaviourally challenging young people through an Oracy curriculum so I would like to explore this with a view to sharing the findings with the EP service and other schools.

What will happen to the findings from the research?
The findings will be typed up and will make up my thesis which will be part of my Educational Psychology qualification. I will share some of the findings with the X School and there might be times where I share the findings with other professionals working with young people. I would like to tell you about the findings of the research if you would like. We can talk about the ways in which you would like to know about the findings such as me explaining them to you in person or me sending them to you.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with this research?
You can change your mind at any time and if you want to stop, you can leave at any time without explaining why. Any research data collected before your withdrawal may still be used, unless you request that it is destroyed. If it has reached the point that it has been anonymised to the point that I can no longer retrieve your data I will not be able to remove your data and it will not be traceable to anyone, including me.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
Yes. I will follow ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence. All information that is collected will be kept strictly confidential. All records related to your participation in this research study will be handled and stored appropriately. Your identity on these records will be indicated by a pseudonym (a made up name) rather than by your name. The data will be kept for a minimum of 5 years. Data collected during the study will be stored and used in compliance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998).

Are there times when my data cannot be kept confidential?
If you tell me something that makes me concerned about the safety of you or someone else then I might have to share that information with others in order to keep you or someone else safe. However, I would always aim to discuss this with you first when possible. Because I am meeting with between 6-8 teachers, there is a chance that you may recognise some of the things you said in my research. To protect your identity, your name will be a pseudonym so that others are less likely to be able to recognise you and what you said.

Further information and contact details
If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of the research, please contact me:
Email: X
Telephone: X

If you have any concerns about the research then you can contact Paru Jeram who works for the Tavistock and Portman research department. Her contact details are:
Email: pjeram@tavi-port.nhs.uk, Telephone: 020 7435 7111

Appendix 7: Recruitment e mail

Dear Y7 Teachers,

I'm a Y3 Educational Psychology Trainee, completing a research project about building a culture of 'Oracy' in a school, and I would be really interested in hearing about your experiences through an interview that should last no more than 50 minutes.

I realise that there has been a lot of interest in X School recently, and demands placed on your time. As a token gesture, *I would like to offer each teacher that participates a 10 GBP Amazon Voucher* as a thank you for taking part.

There is not much research that looks at teachers' experience of working with worrying or behaviourally challenging young people through an oracy curriculum, so I would like to explore this with a view to sharing the (anonymised) findings with the EP service and other schools within the borough. I realise that oracy is in its beginning stages at X. That's okay, I'm really just interested in hearing about where you're at with it, and what if any impact it has had on your views of pupils who are vulnerable in some way.

I've attached an information sheet, for your reference. If interested, please let X know and we will schedule an interview at a convenient time for you.

Thank you in advance for considering this and best wishes,

Clara

Appendix 8: Interview schedule

Research Question	Sub-Question	Interview Prompts
Does an oracy curriculum affect the way teachers cope with students who challenge or worry them in some way?	How is oracy working in this school?	What does oracy mean to you? How is it utilized? What sense do you have of how it informs practice? What does oracy look like, in practice in the oracy lessons? In your classroom? To what extent has it changed the way you teach, if at all? What have been the enablers/barriers? Do you feel adequately supported in carrying out the oracy intervention?
Does an oracy curriculum affect the way teachers cope with students who challenge or worry them in some way?	What does 'challenging or worrying behaviour' mean in this setting?	What is your experience of working with pupils who challenge or worry you in some way? Can you describe an experience of working with such pupils? Are you aware of a behaviour policy or pastoral services? Has this been supportive? What, if any, changes would you like to see in the policy? Can you think of an ideal way of supporting students who are vulnerable or worrying? How, if at all, has the oracy intervention changed the way you cope with students who challenge or worry you in some way?
What are teachers' views on any impact that an oracy intervention has on student and teacher relationships in the school setting?	Is there a link between the oracy intervention and the way teachers cope with students who are challenging or worrying? Can any tentative conclusions be drawn about the effects of the oracy intervention on such students?	What is your perception of how or why the oracy intervention is making a difference to pupils who are emotionally vulnerable, if at all? What, if any, impact has the programme had on pupils' relationships with each other? What, if any, impact has the programme had on teachers' relationships with pupils? On teachers' relationships with each other? What, if any, impact has the programme had on teacher/pupils' engagement with the school?

		Would you choose to go back to teaching without the oracy intervention? Why or why not?

Appendix 9: Example of 'probing'

Interviewee: If you're kind of thick, then you don't have that same kind of need to know stuff, so you might not be aware of really anything and then that becomes a problem in oracy when you can't really be in charge of anything, you're not really allowed to show off.

(Later)

Interviewer Okay and in terms of oracy serving those kids that maybe, you know, are sort of challenged intellectually, do you think that may be a way in, or no? Please feel free to say if no.

Interviewee: If everyone was told to do a speech on what they thought of Donald Trump then, potentially, some kids are going to stand up for like ten seconds and just go 'He's an idiot', and then that probably will be the entire speech. If they're allowed to talk for five minutes about football, then they will. So, yeah, I mean, I think generally the brighter kids tend to pick more complicated subjects, just naturally, but then if you've got one that struggles talking about football as best they can, then that's equally valid.

Appendix 10: Interview transcript

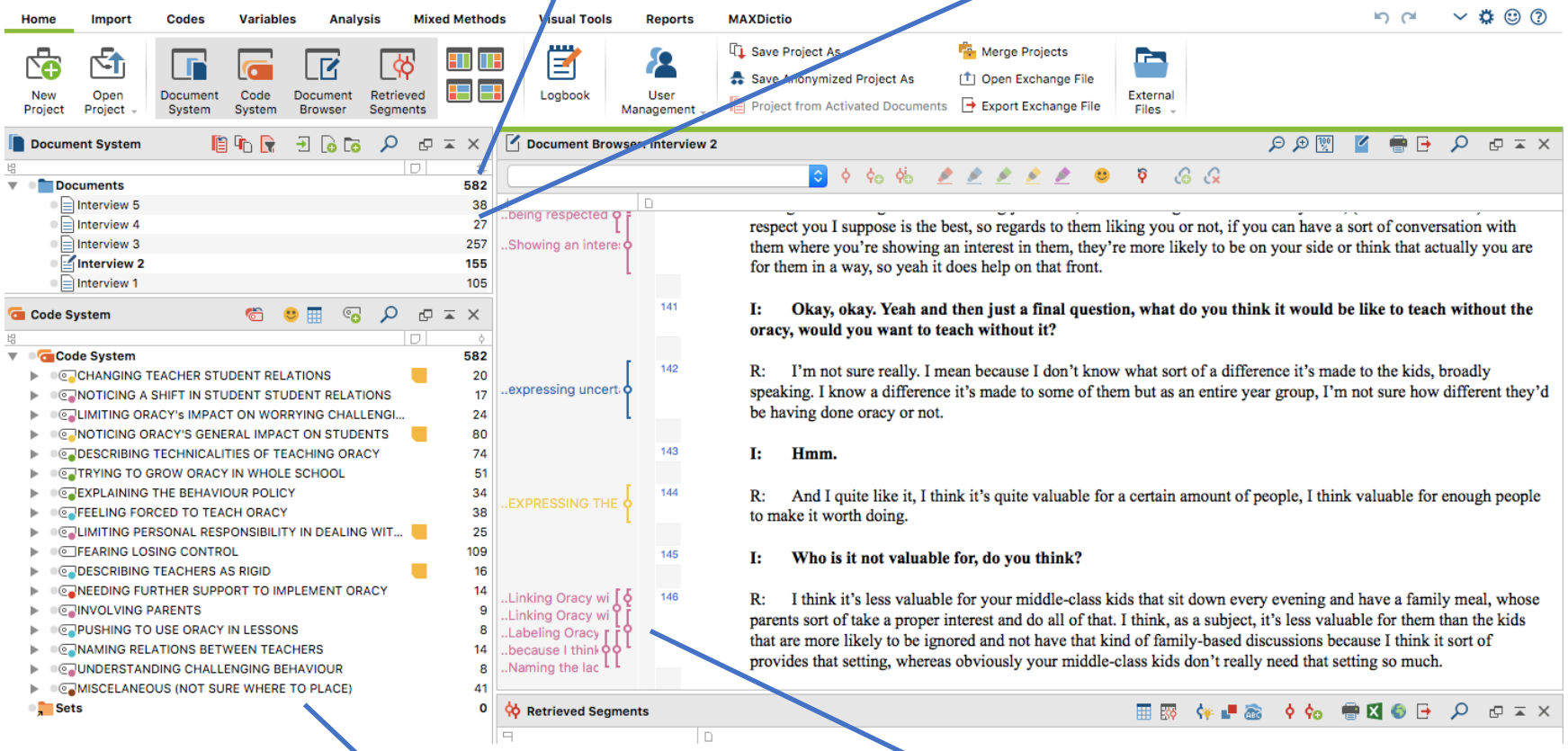
Transcript has been removed to preserve anonymity

Appendix 11: Analysis

1. Overview of the analysis

582 coded segments across 5 interviews

Interviews 4+5 generated fewer codes as part of theoretical sampling



Line by line codes were organised in to focused codes and sub-categories

line by line codes.

2. Example of line by line coding

Line by line coding involved the use of descriptive language to capture and condense meaning and action in the discourse

140

R: I think it does, if you can have a laugh with them about something they're interested in then the best behaviour management strategies are kids liking you. Well, I mean it's arguable but certainly it's a, (inaudible 0:26:15) kids to respect you I suppose is the best, so regards to them liking you or not, if you can have a sort of conversation with them where you're showing an interest in them, they're more likely to be on your side or think that actually you are for them in a way, so yeah it does help on that front.

141

I: Okay, okay. Yeah and then just a final question, what do you think it would be like to teach without the oracy, would you want to teach without it?

142

R: I'm not sure really. I mean because I don't know what sort of a difference it's made to the kids, broadly speaking. I know a difference it's made to some of them but as an entire year group, I'm not sure how different they'd be having done oracy or not.

143

I: Hmm.

144

R: And I quite like it, I think it's quite valuable for a certain amount of people, I think valuable for enough people to make it worth doing.

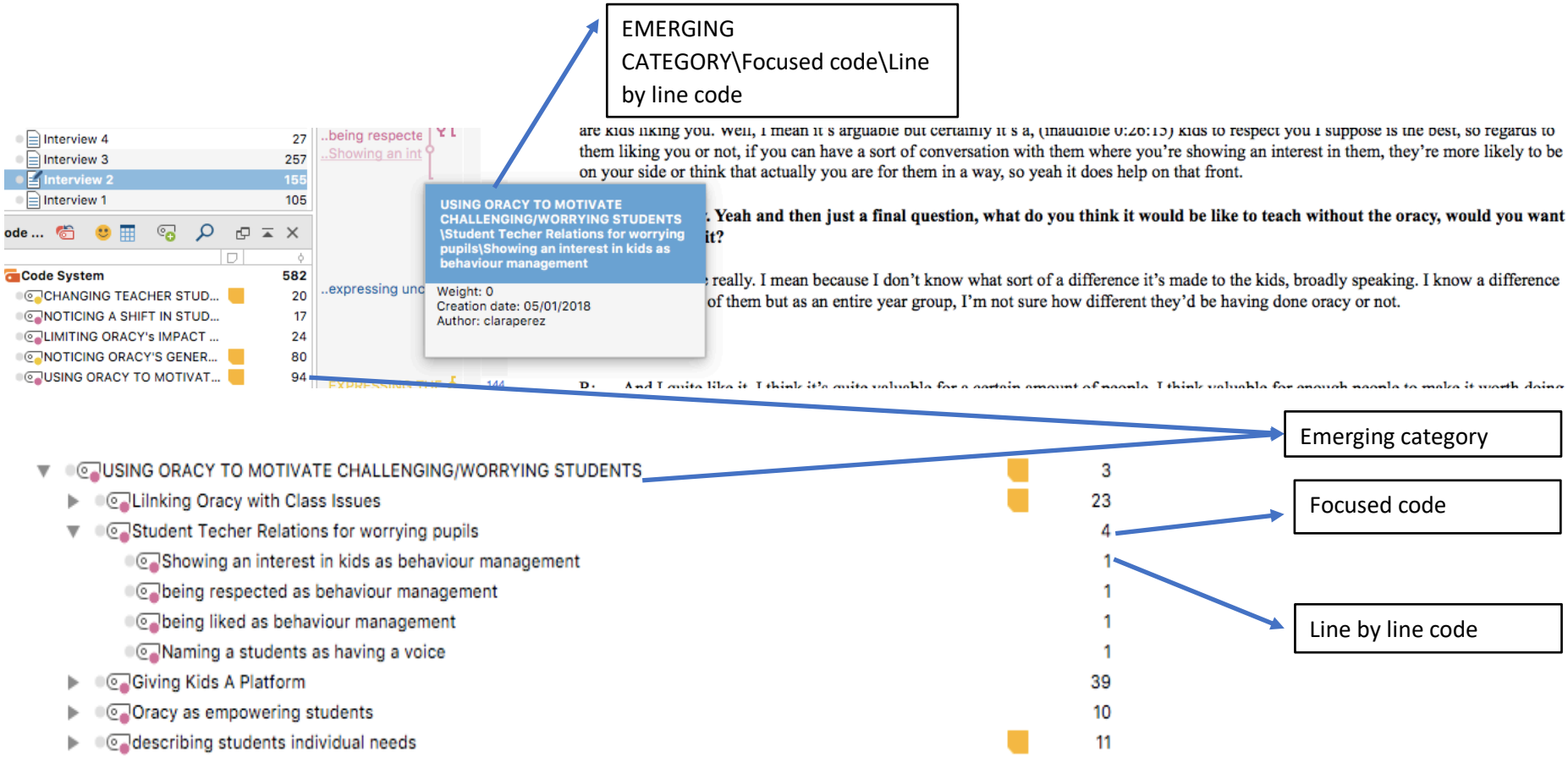
145

I: Who is it not valuable for, do you think?

146

R: I think it's less valuable for your middle-class kids that sit down every evening and have a family meal, whose parents sort of take a proper interest and do all of that. I think, as a subject, it's less valuable for them than the kids that are more likely to be ignored and not have that kind of family-based discussions because I think it sort of provides that setting, whereas obviously your middle-class kids don't really need that setting so much.

3. Organisation of line by line codes, focused codes and emerging categories

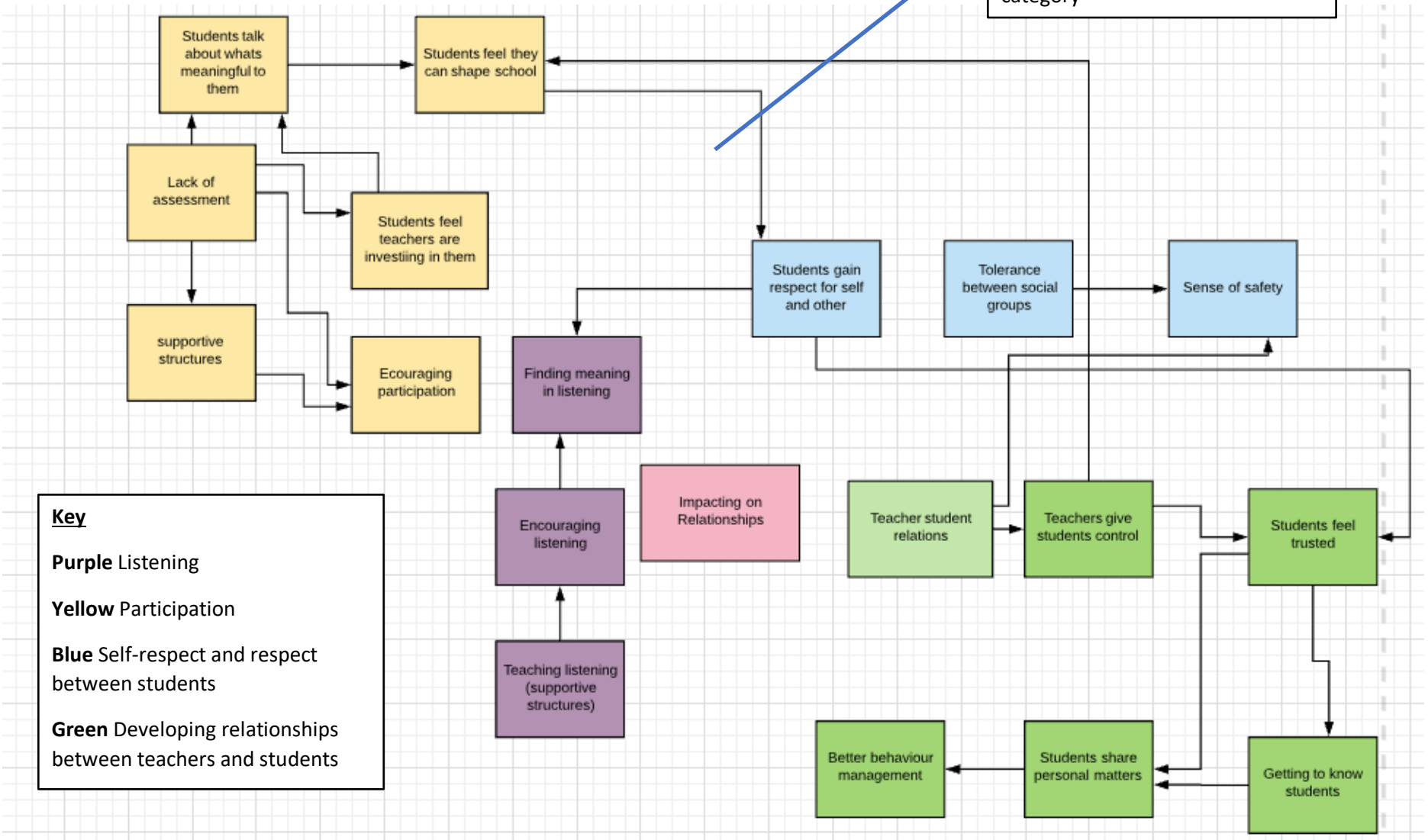


4. Examples of memos used throughout the analysis

Level of analysis	Label	Example Memo
Line by line coding	Showing an interest in kids as behaviour management	This links explicitly with attachment interventions
Focused coding	Student teacher relations for worrying pupils	Intervention appears to be having a general relational impact on all students, but the teacher seems to be talking about behaviour strategies, which would presumably refer to those kids who attract negative attention? As he has the space to hear about their views and interests, he can use a more relational approach when such students are misbehaving.
Emerging sub-category	Using oracy to motivate worrying pupils	This sub category seems like it belongs on a bridge between the possible 'relationships' category and the possible 'students who were worrying or challenging' category. All students would seem to benefit from the relational impact of oracy, when it is well delivered. Oracy could increase "feeling of belonging" (are there links between this and the work of Geoffrey Cohen?) But teachers do talk distinctly about language difficulties, shy behaviours, and those who are challenging… so that would appear to warrant its own section. The links between 'relationships' and students with negative behaviours, possibly even shy behaviours seem strongest, so I will need to find a way of keeping the 'relationships' section distinct from this, to communicate the overall relational effect of oracy and still express the links with 'worrying or challenging' students.
Sub -category	Developing relationships between teachers and students (green area in the diagram below)	See section 4.2.4.4
Category	Influencing relationships	See section 4.2.4

Visual diagrams which could be easily edited supported the thinking process when sorting the nuances and boundaries of each category

5. **Influencing relationships category diagram**



Appendix 12: Ethical approval

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Quality Assurance & Enhancement
Directorate of Education & Training
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2548
Fax: 020 7447 3837
www.tavi-port.org

Clara Perez-Adamson

By Email

8th August 2017

Re: Research Ethics Application

Title: Does building a culture of Oracy in a Secondary School impact on teacher's abilities to cope with students emotional needs in learning?

Dear Clara,

Thank you for submitting your updated Research Ethics documentation in response to my email dated 10.07.17, I am pleased to inform you that subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee your application has been approved. This means you can proceed with your research.

If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Best regards,

Lisa Dean
Quality Assurance Administrator

T: 020 938 2659
E: ldean@tavi-port.nhs.uk

cc. Adam Styles, Course Lead

Appendix 13: Consent form

The Tavistock and Portman NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Research Title: Does an 'Oracy' curriculum make a difference to secondary school pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs?

Please initial the statements below if you agree with them:	**Initial here**
1. I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the chance to ask questions.	
2. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.	
3. I agree for my interviews to be recorded.	
4. I understand that my data will be anonymised so that I cannot be linked to the data.	
5. I understand that my interviews will be used for this research and cannot be accessed for any other purposes.	
6. I understand that the findings from this research will be published and available for the public to read.	
7. I am willing to participate in this research.	

Your name…….....Signed……Date…../…../…..

Researcher name…Clara Perez-Adamson

Signed Clara P Adamson

Date…../…../…..

Thank you for your help.