

# Oracy and youth social action



Amanda Moorghen

## What's the idea?

Young people across the country take part in activities that 'make a positive difference to others or the environment' (Angus, 2019); this is youth social action.

Opportunities to participate in youth social action are frequently talk-rich. Whether collaborating with others or pitching their ideas, students are developing their oracy skills and relying on pre-existing competencies. Arthur et al. (2015) found that **confidence** and **communication** were in the top three 'virtues' developed through social action.

## What does it mean?

The connection between oracy and social action is important because of the relationship with economic disadvantage. Students from less affluent backgrounds are less likely

to meet expected levels of communication than their more affluent peers (Read, 2016; Moss and Washbrook, 2016), and are less likely to take part in youth social action (Knibbs et al., 2019).

High-quality oracy education has been shown to improve access to social action opportunities for students. This involves deliberate instruction from teaching staff, which has benefits for students socially, emotionally and academically.

## What are the implications for teachers?

Oracy should not be seen as a 'stand-alone' activity. It should be integrated with the wider school vision and pedagogical approach. Teachers should be able to use oracy education, as they would other tools, to

meet the individual needs of students, and to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum.

As well as providing opportunities for students to perform, speak publicly and get involved in the local community, building oracy competence and confidence should be built into curricular teaching and learning.

This requires an inclusive and individualised approach to meeting every child's needs, and ensuring students feel enabled and empowered to take part in activities, and to convey information and communicate ideas.

Practitioners interested in youth social action may wish to further explore the role that oracy plays in ensuring that all young people are able to access these opportunities, and have the competence and confidence to thrive.

**TO LEARN MORE, READ THE FULL ARTICLE AT [IMPACT.CHARTERED.COLLEGE](https://www.chartered-college-of-teaching.org/impact)**

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

- » Angus A (2019) Building youth social action in your community. Centre for Education and Youth. Available at: <https://cfey.org/news-and-events/2019/11/building-youth-social-action-in-your-community> (accessed 8 April 2020).
- » Arthur J, Harrison T and Taylor E (2015) Building character through youth social action: Research report. University of Birmingham. Available at: <http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/1967> (accessed 8 April 2020).
- » Moss G and Washbrook L (2016) Understanding the gender gap in literacy and language development. University of Bristol. Available at: [www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/education/documents/bristol-working-papers-in-education/Understanding%20the%20Gender%20Gap%20working%20paper.pdf](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/education/documents/bristol-working-papers-in-education/Understanding%20the%20Gender%20Gap%20working%20paper.pdf) (accessed 8 April 2020).
- » Read C (2016) The lost boys: How boys are falling behind in their early years. Save the Children UK. Available at: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/lost-boys-how-boys-are-falling-behind-their-early-years> (accessed 8 April 2020).