



Activity Name	Articulacy – ‘Articulate’ Programme
Date	59 Programmes delivered throughout Tranche 3 (September 2018 – July 2019)
Location	42 target schools and colleges across Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset (see schools involved)
Total number of students	698 Students entered ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (627 Grade 2, 71 Grade 3)
Number of target students	568 Target Students (81% of total exam entries)
Schools involved in the event	All Saints Academy Plymouth, Bideford College, Bodmin College, Buckler's Mead Academy, Chilton Trinity School, Clyst Vale CC, Coombe Dean School, Cullompton School, Eggbuckland Community College, Exmouth Community College, Fowey River Academy, Great Torrington School, Hayle Academy, Heathfield School, Hele's School, Holyrood Academy, Honiton Community College, ISCA, King Edward VI Community College, Marine Academy Plymouth, Mounts Bay Academy, Notre Dame RCS, Pilton Community College, Plympton Academy, Pool Academy, Redruth School, Scott College, St Boniface's College, St Ives School, St James School, St Peter's CoE, Stoke Damerel, Teign School, The Blue School, The Castle School, The Ilfracombe Academy, The Park School, The Spires College, The Taunton Academy, Tiverton High School, West Exe School, Whitstone School

Introduction

Throughout Tranche 3, Articulacy worked in collaboration with Next Steps South West (NSSW) to deliver the 5-day ‘Articulate’ programme to target and non-target students in Year 9 and Year 10 in 42 schools across Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset.

Delivered in groups of up to 13 across a full week, the high-intensity ‘Articulate’ programme takes students off timetable and engages them in a range of activities to help them develop their communication skills and confidence, culminating in an examination for the English Speaking Board (ESB) Level 1 Award in Speech (either Grade 2 in Year 9 or Grade 3 in Year 10) on the final day. The ESB examination requires students to recite a poem or song, read a passage from a book, and give a 4-minute presentation about an area of interest to them. Students work with an Articulacy tutor throughout the week to prepare for the ESB exam, all the while developing their understanding of and aspirations towards higher education (HE) through sustained interaction with Student Ambassadors (SAs), who support all sessions.

Delivery of the ‘Articulate’ programme in Tranche 3 built on the success of the programme in Tranches 1 and 2 of NCOP, and on learning from sessions run under the National Network for Collaborate Outreach (NNCO) for both Devon Collaborative Outreach Network (DCON) and Next Steps Cornwall (NSC). It should be noted that demand for the ‘Articulate’ programme has been high throughout Phase 1 of NCOP, with many schools who had engaged previously with Articulacy requesting to repeat the intervention during Tranche 3. As a result of this demand, and of the evaluation data analysed throughout Phase 1, the intervention remains part of the NSSW Core Offer for Phase 2 of NCOP.

Aims

With its focus on preparing for the ESB exam, and on encouraging students to present in front of and listen to their peers, the ‘Articulate’ programme aims to develop students’ communication, speaking, and listening skills. ‘Articulate’ thus primarily addresses the NSSW barrier of Soft Skills, including increasing students’ resilience and self-belief. Additionally, it aims to encourage younger students to consider higher education as a possible option for their



future, increasing their exposure to HE role models through their contact with SAs. The specific aims and objectives of the intervention are outlined in the table below:

NSSW Barrier to HE	Barrier Aim	Intervention objectives (A-C)
Soft Skills	Increased confidence and motivation to succeed	A. Students report increase in confidence across at least 3 of 6 areas assessed, including spoken communication
	Improved spoken communication skills	B. ESB exam results show successful completion of ESB exam from all students who are entered
Socio-economic factors	Increased identification of self as potential HE student (through interaction with SAs)	C. Students report increased intention to progress to HE

Student Cohort Selection

As a high-intensity interventions, NSSW has always asked target schools to select students from their target student cohort to participate in the ‘Articulate’ programme. In some exceptional circumstances, such as last-minute illness or absence, places have been taken by non-target students, and NSSW closely monitor target student participation rates.

The vast majority (81%, N=568) of ‘Articulate’ participants in Tranche 3 were NCOP target students. These students live in areas with low levels of HE participation (POLAR3 Q1), particularly when Key Stage 4 attainment is considered, and have been identified as medium-high attaining students (on track to achieve 5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above). Furthermore, in order to select the 13 participants for each ‘Articulate’ group, NSSW In School Coordinators (ISCs) were asked to liaise with teachers and allocate places to target students for whom they felt the programme would present the greatest benefit, such as those with lower confidence to talk in front of peers and present to the class.

‘Articulate’ groups were mixed gender, with an overall split of 48% female (N=333) and 52% male (N=365) for all exam entries. Analysis of exam results and student evaluation data includes comparison of male and female results, in order to ascertain whether the programme presented an additional benefit for one group of students in particular.

ESB Exam Results Analysis

Figure 1 below presents a top-level analysis of exam results recorded from 698 entries to the ESB qualification (Grade 2 and Grade 3) during Tranche 3.

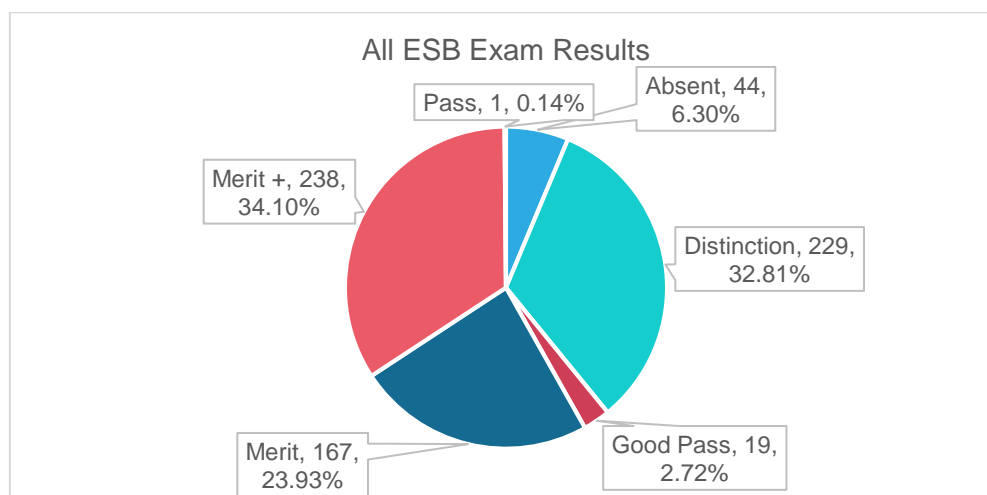


Figure 1 – ESB Exam Results



This data shows that the ‘Articulate’ intervention achieved its second objective of supporting students to successfully complete the ESB examination, as all participants who completed the examination achieved a pass mark or higher. Furthermore, the majority of students (66.9%) achieved the highest two grades (Distinction 32.8%, N=229; Merit+ 34.1%, N=238), evidencing a very positive outcome for a high number of participants. Indeed, only 20 students from the 698 entries achieved lower than a Merit mark in the examination (Good Pass 2.72%, N=19; Pass 0.14%, N=1), suggesting that overall the ‘Articulate’ programme was very successful in preparing students for the ESB qualification.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the proportion of students who were absent for the exam (6.3%, N=44) was lower than had been previously recorded during analysis of Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 data (previous rate of 10.7%, N=49 of a sample of 458 entries). This data shows that the ‘Articulate’ programme was more effective during Tranche 3 in ensuring that all students selected for the intervention completed the full programme and examination, indicating positive progress in delivery of this activity for NSSW target students.

Figure 2 presents a comparison of ESB exam results for the two grades for which students were entered. The majority of students (90%, N=627) were entered for Grade 2, however 71 students were entered for Grade 3. These Grade 3 entries were primarily for Year 10 students who had previously completed the Grade 2 qualification in Year 9 (61%, N=43), although some (39%, N=28) were Year 10 students new to the ‘Articulate’ programme.

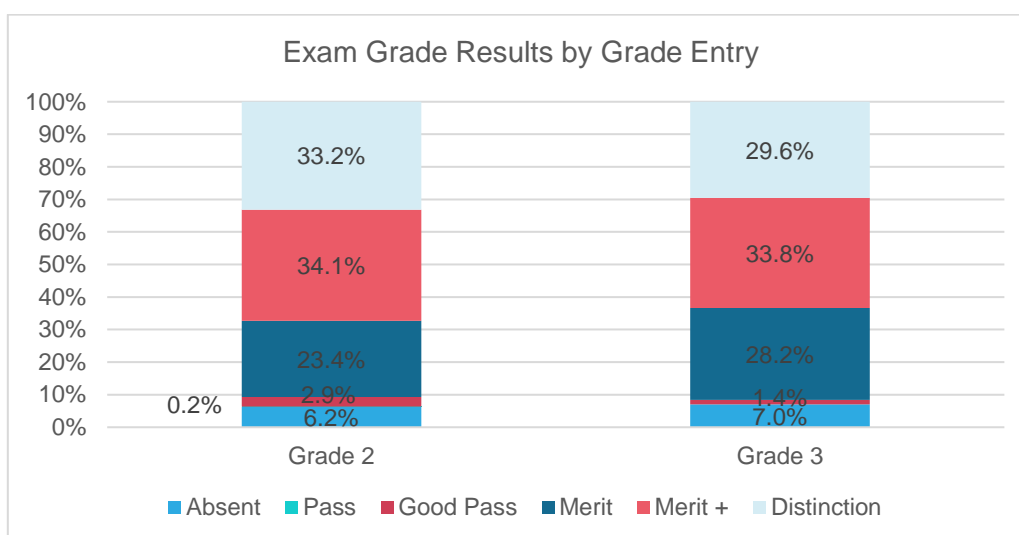


Figure 2 – ESB Exam results by Grade entry

Analysis of Figure 2 indicates that the grade of entry did not significantly affect students’ examination results. A slightly higher proportion of students entering at Grade 2 achieved the highest two results compared to Grade 3 entries (67.3% Distinction and Merit+ at Grade 2, compared with 63.4% at Grade 3), however, overall the data shows that the results for both entry types were broadly similar.

Further interrogation of the ESB examination data for the ‘Articulate’ programme indicates that, as with grade entry, the variables of gender and of student type (target or non-target) do not significantly affect the examination outcome for participants. Comparison of exam results by gender (Figure 3) shows that although female participants achieve a slightly higher proportion of the highest results when compared to male participants (69.9% Distinction and Merit+ results for females; 64.1% Distinction and Merit+ results for males), the higher proportion of Merit results amongst male participants (27.1% compared to 20.4% of female entrants) results in minimal difference between the proportion of males and females achieving the highest three examination results (90.4% for females, compared with 91.2% for males).

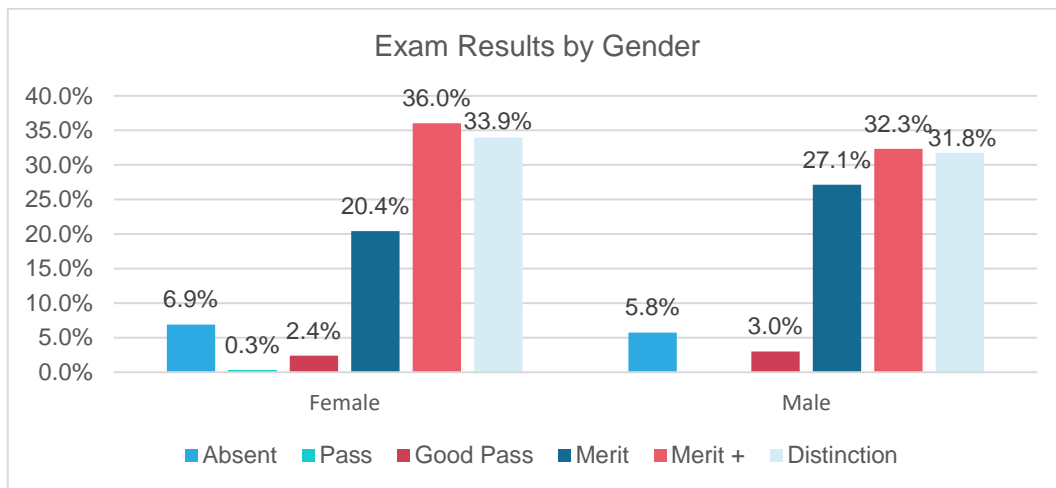


Figure 3 – ESB Exam results by Gender

Similarly, Figure 4 indicates that there is no significant difference in the proportion of target versus non-target students achieving the highest three results (91.9% combined Distinction, Merit+ and Merit for target students; 86.2% combined Distinction, Merit+ and Merit for non-target students). However, it should be noted that there was a slightly higher proportion of absent entries amongst non-target students (8.5% compared with 5.8% of target student entries), perhaps suggesting better engagement with the programme for target students.

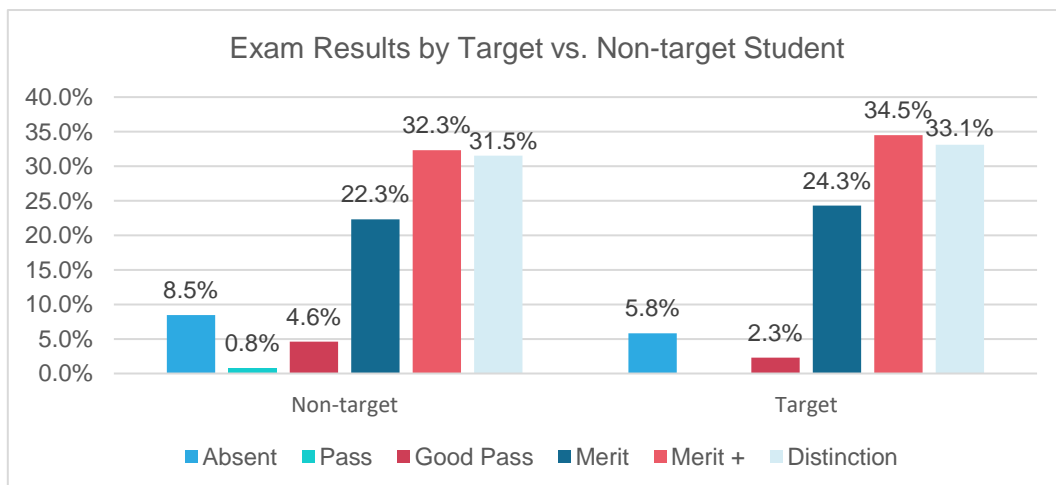


Figure 4 – ESB Exam results by Target vs. Non-target Students

Overall, it can be argued that the ESB examination data for ‘Articulate’ evidences positive impact of the programme on the significant majority of students who took part in the intervention, and on all students who attended the examination, as all students passed the exam and achieved the ESB qualification. It can also be suggested that the high proportion of students achieving a high pass mark (Merit+ or Distinction) is likely to have raised the aspirations and confidence of participants, giving these students a tangible and successful outcome that attests to their hard work and commitment during the programme, and which, in some cases, may increase students’ confidence for future examinations.

Impact Evaluation Design and Data Collection

Alongside results from the ESB examination, NSSW and Articulyacy also asked students to complete pre- and post-activity surveys providing data with which to evaluate the impact of the intervention on students’ perception of their Soft Skills and on Socio-economic factors



affecting HE progression. This survey included an Outcome Star on which students were asked to rate their agreement from 1-10 (where 1 is low and 10 is high) against six statements:

1. I am a confident person
2. I can present information to an audience using visual aids
3. I understand how to communicate using different methods such as tone of voice, body language, gestures
4. I can listen carefully and positively throughout the work of a small group
5. I can respond to questions
6. I am considering university as an option for my future

Comparison of pre- and post-programme responses to these statements enabled evaluation the success of the intervention in supporting students to increase their overall confidence and motivation to succeed. The survey also gathered data relating to students' perception of their spoken communication skills, and regarding their intentions to progress to higher education. Finally, the survey asked students for open, qualitative comments in response to the statement 'Please tell us what you thought of this week'.

Pre- and post-activity impact evaluation surveys were collected from 655 participants, although not all students completed ratings for all statements on the pre- and post-activity outcome stars. In order to present a robust data analysis, the dataset has been cleaned to remove any incomplete surveys, leaving a sample of 628 clean surveys for pre- and post-activity comparison analysis.

Impact Evaluation Data Analysis

The following sections present analysis that interrogates the pre- and post-activity surveys, exploring trends in the data and highlighting any potential conclusions that can be drawn in relation to the programme and its impact on the students and their experience of the barriers to HE progression addressed by the intervention.

Outcome Star Ratings – Analysis of All Student Data

Figure 5 presents the average pre- and post-activity ratings for all six outcome star statements, and shows the increase in students' rating against each of the statements (in green).

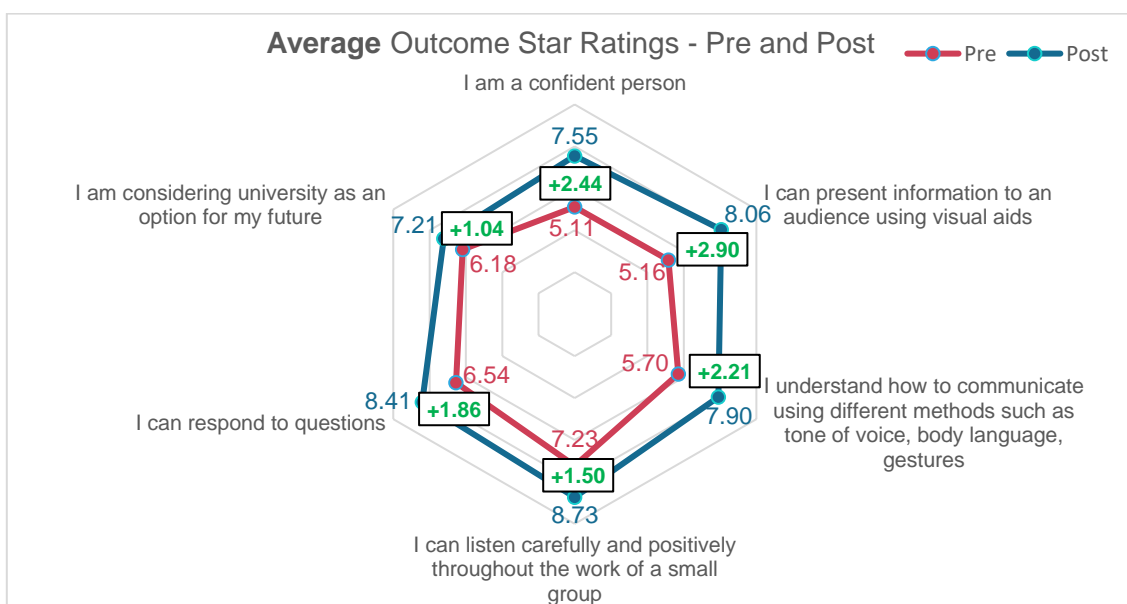


Figure 5 – Average Pre- and Post-activity Outcome Star Ratings



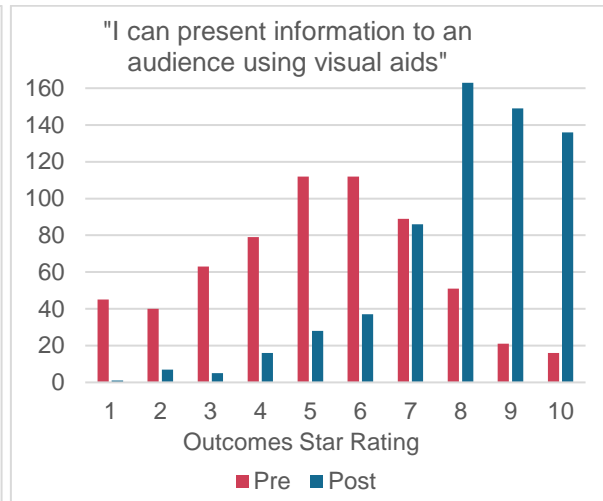
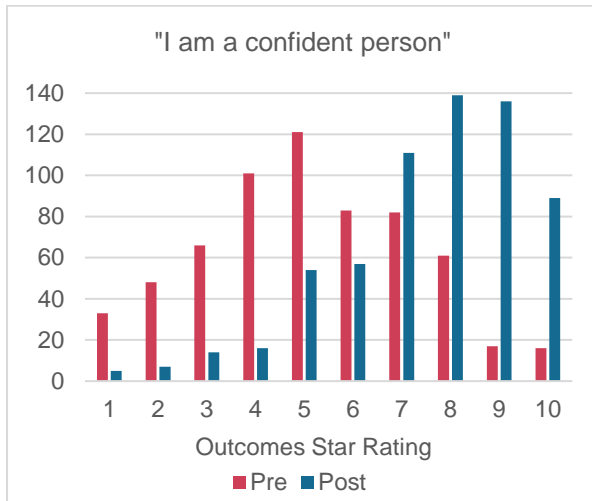
Figure 5 shows that the average rating for all six statements increased by at least 1.04 between the pre- and post-activity surveys, indicating positive impact across all areas evaluated by the outcome star, and evidencing the programme exceeding its first objective ('Students report increase in confidence across at least 3 of 6 areas assessed, including spoken communication'). The greatest increase in the average outcome star rating is found in students' agreement that they can present information using visual aids (average increase of 2.90 points). This data suggests that 'Articulate' was particularly successful in supporting students with the development of communication skills, as is also indicated by the average increase of 2.21 points in students' agreement that they understand how to use different methods to communicate. It should also be noted that students' agreement rating with the statement 'I am a confident person' witnessed the second highest average increase (2.44 points), providing evidence that the programme helped students to address the barrier of Soft Skills by meeting the aim of increasing their confidence and motivation to succeed.

In order to have a more nuanced understanding of this quantitative data, the table below presents a comparison of the average (mean), median, and mode ratings of the pre- and post-activity outcome star statements. In the interests of space, the statements have been numbered according to the list given on the previous page.

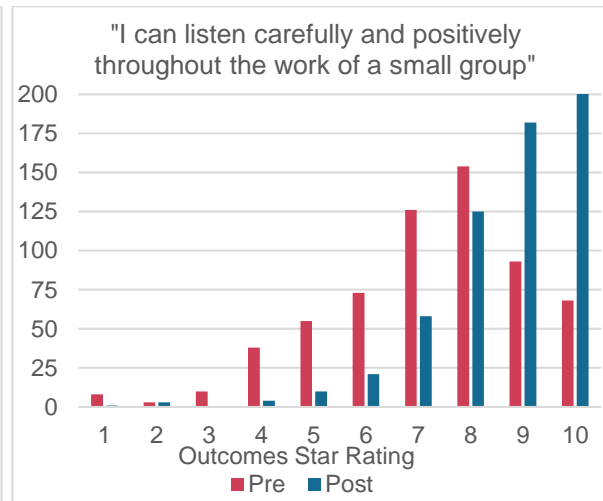
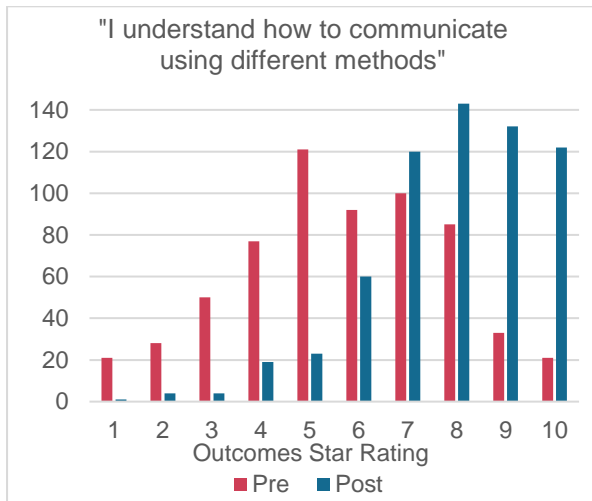
	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4	Statement 5	Statement 6
AVERAGE Pre-	5.11	5.16	5.70	7.23	6.54	6.18
AVERAGE Post-	7.55	8.06	7.90	8.73	8.41	7.21
MEDIAN Pre-	5	5	6	8	7	6
MEDIAN Post-	8	8	8	9	9	8
MODE Pre-	5	5	5	8	7	5
MODE Post-	8	8	8	10	10	10

Although comparison of these three measures of central tendency shows that the average, median, and mode of each statement's pre- and post- ratings are broadly similar for the first three statements, it highlights discrepancies between these measures for the final three statements. This difference is particularly notable with regards the final statement ('I am considering university as an option for my future'), as although the average rating showed little increase in students' agreement with this statement (6.18 pre-activity to 7.21 post-activity), both the median and mode indicate a high frequency post-activity of students strongly agreeing with this statement (as shown through median rating of '8' and mode rating of '10').

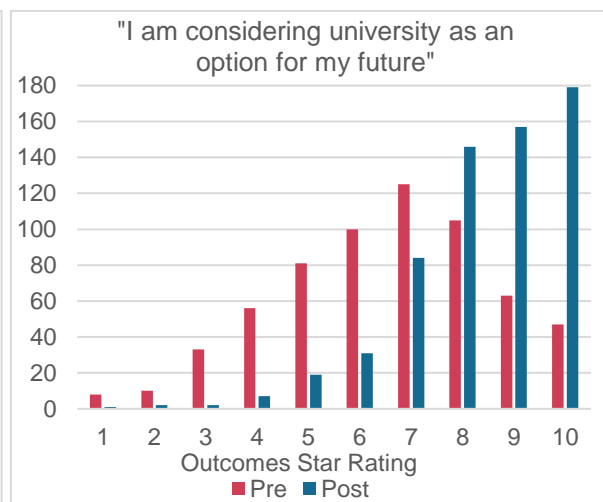
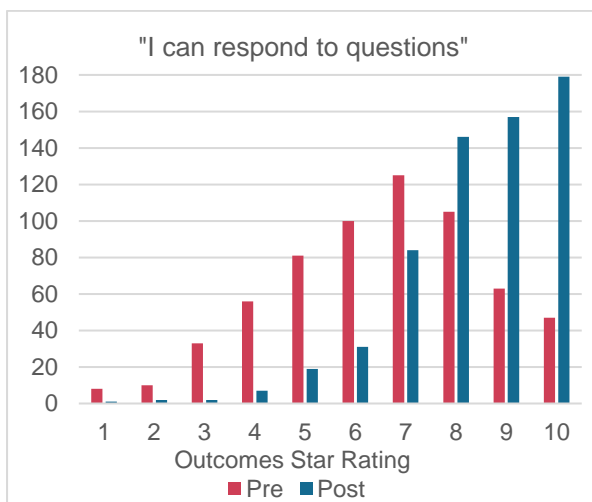
This finding suggests that a greater number of students agree that they are considering HE after taking part in the 'Articulate' programme than indicated by the representation of the data in Figure 5 (average rating), indicating that the programme has met its third objective of students reporting increased intention to progress to HE. The differences between the average, median, and mode of the outcome star ratings also warrants the creation of Figures 6-11 below. These histograms present the distribution of the count of pre- and post-activity ratings for each statement on the outcome star, and show that the greatest number of students agreed most strongly (9 or 10) with the final three statements, including the last statement regarding their future intentions for HE.



Figures 6 and 7 – Count of Pre- and Post-activity Outcome Star Ratings, Statements 1 & 2



Figures 8 and 9 – Count of Pre- and Post-activity Outcome Star Ratings, Statements 3 & 4



Figures 10 and 11 – Count of Pre- and Post-activity Outcome Star Ratings, Statements 5 & 6

From these figures and Figure 5 it can be argued that the pre- and post-activity data indicates impact on students' Soft Skills (increasing their overall confidence, as well as their perception of their specific communication skills) and also suggests that the intervention has helped to



address the barrier of Socio-economic factors by supporting students to consider HE as part of their future plans.

Outcome Star Ratings – Analysis of Student Data by Gender

Given the close proportional similarity in the number of participants by gender for the ‘Articulate’ programme in Tranche 3 (48% female vs. 52% male for exam entries and clean survey responses), this data has been analysed by gender in order to investigate whether the programme had greater impact on one gender group over another.

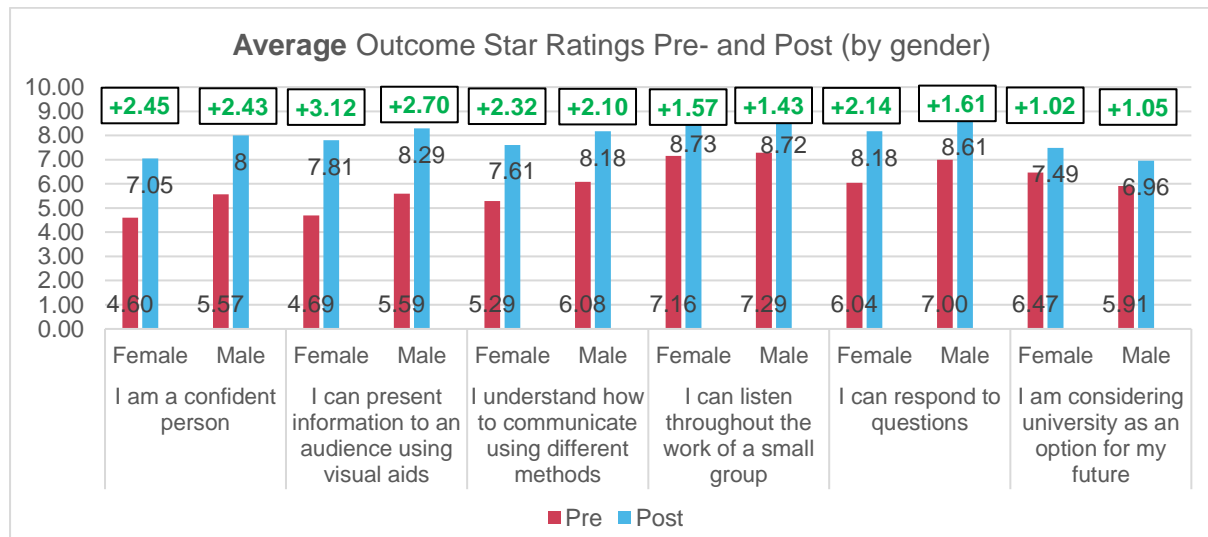


Figure 12 – Comparison of Average Pre- and Post-activity Outcome Star Ratings by Gender

Figure 12 indicates that students’ average ratings for each of the six statements are broadly similar for both genders, suggesting no particular areas of impact that were significantly greater for one group more than the other. Indeed, although male participants have higher average pre- and post-activity ratings in almost all areas, female participants’ data highlights a slightly larger impact on each area for this group than for males, resulting in similar outcomes for both groups.

Analysis shows that both participant groups noted the largest increase in relation to their ability to use visual aids when presenting to audiences, and female participants indicated a significantly larger increase in this area (average 3.12 points) when compared to their male peers (average 2.70 points). The data also indicates that the ‘Articulate’ programme had a greater impact on female participants’ confidence in responding to questions (average 2.14 point increase, compared with average 1.61 point increase for males), although male participants gave an average higher rating in their post-activity surveys (8.61 compared to 8.18 for females).

It is of note that whilst both gender groups reported a similar increase in their overall confidence (an average increase of ~2.44 points for the statement ‘I am a confident person’), male respondents indicated that they were significantly more confident overall than female respondents (male average post-activity rating = 8, female average post-activity rating = 7.05). This data indicates that female participants may need additional support to increase their confidence so that it is equal to that of their male counterparts on the programme. However, the reliability of this self-reported data can be questioned, as one group may be over or under-reporting their level of confidence.

Finally, Figure 12 indicates that although this intervention had a slightly greater impact on male participants’ HE intentions (+1.05 point increase, compared to +1.02 increase for females),



female respondents nevertheless agreed more strongly both before and after the programme that they were considering university as an option for their future. From this data it could be argued that it might be beneficial to engage male participants in more discussions around their HE intentions during the programme, particularly given the national focus on increasing HE participation rates amongst male NCOP target students elsewhere in the country.

Qualitative Feedback – Analysis of All Student Data

Of the clean pre- and post-activity evaluation surveys, 608 students provided qualitative comments in response to the statement ‘Please tell us what you thought of this week’. Analysis of this qualitative data has been conducted by coding individual elements within each response into key themes. As this process allows for multiple themes to arise within one qualitative response, 1570 separate response elements were identified in data analysis, coded into 18 thematic categories. Figures 13 and 14 show the count of responses for each of the 18 themes (Figure 13 shows the 9 most frequently coded areas, Figure 14 shows the nine least frequently coded areas). It should be noted that a thematic area was not coded twice within an individual qualitative comment, and that the count of responses therefore represent the total number of individual students who cited this theme in their feedback.

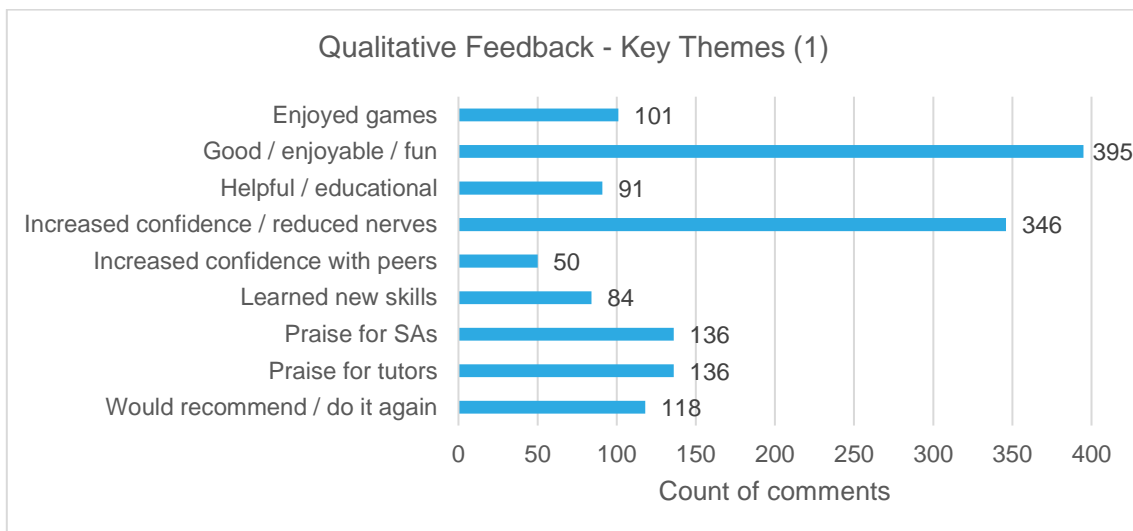


Figure 13 – Count of responses for key thematic areas in qualitative comments (most frequent)

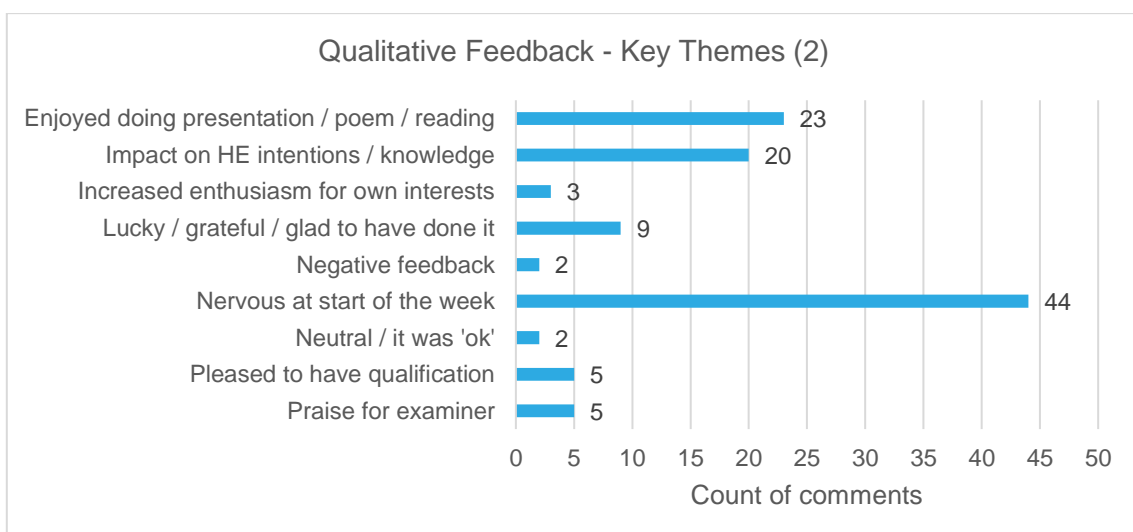


Figure 14 – Count of responses for key thematic areas in qualitative comments (least frequent)



Analysis of Figures 13 and 14 shows that the most frequently occurring comments highlight two important elements of the ‘Articulate’ programme: students noted that it was a positive experience (395 responses coded as ‘Good / enjoyable / fun’) and stated that the intervention supported them to increase their confidence (346 responses coded as ‘Increased confidence / reduced nerves’). This data indicates that the intervention supported a large number of students in addressing the barrier of Soft Skills (confidence), and, given the large number who stated that they had enjoyed programme, it can be argued that ‘Articulate’ is likely to have had a positive impact on their attitude towards education, and perhaps raised their aspirations towards HE. Indeed, some students (20) specifically cited the way in which the intervention had altered their HE knowledge or intentions, and a large number of students (134) made positive comments relating to the Student Ambassadors (SAs) who supported the programme, providing further evidence to indicate a potential impact on students’ HE aspirations.

Students’ qualitative comments also provide evidence to indicate broader impact on their development of Soft Skills, particularly relating to communication (listening and responding to questions) and presenting information to others. 91 students described the programme as ‘helpful’ or ‘educational’, 84 students commented that they had developed or learned new skills during the week, and 50 students noted that the experience had supported them in increasing their confidence working with or presenting to their peers, including students with whom they would not usually work.

Finally, Figures 13 and 14 highlight the large volume of comments from students regarding specific elements of the programme that contributed towards them having a positive experience of the intervention. 23 students noted that they had enjoyed specific elements of the examination preparation, such as learning their poem or giving their presentation, and 101 students specifically noted their enjoyment of the games used during the week, which helped them form relationships within the group and increase their confidence interacting with and presenting to one another. 136 students praised the Articulatory tutors, with many commenting on the support tutors provided and the way in which they helped to increase students’ confidence. Additionally, 118 students either recommended the programme to others, or expressed a wish to take part in the programme again, providing further evidence to indicate that the intervention was well received by many participants.

The table below provides examples of qualitative comments from the post-activity evaluation surveys, and indicates the thematic areas into which responses were coded, in order to provide illustrative examples of each thematic category.

Quotations to illustrate responses	Thematic categories
<i>‘This week has brought up my confidence. I feel so much better about myself. The course is extraordinary, I love it. I like how it’s fun as well as a stress. Trevor was an amazing person as well.’</i>	Increased confidence / reduced nerves Praise for tutors Good / enjoyable / fun
<i>‘I really enjoyed this week a lot. The ambassadors were kind, patient and encouraging. Especially Adi, Ben and Dave. I feel I have grown to become more enthusiastic about the things I love.’</i>	Good / enjoyable / fun Praise for SAs Increased enthusiasm for own interests
<i>‘I thought this week has given me ways of speaking more confidently in public and made me realise that I can do it. It’s made me more able to step out of my comfort zone. I really liked the fact that we would do work on things we have chosen and also played games which broke it up and</i>	Learned new skills Increased confidence / reduced nerves Enjoyed games Would recommend / do it again



<i>also, I felt made me more comfortable and confident. I really recommend this course to anyone'</i>	
<i>'Thank you to everyone on the course for providing this opportunity. I am grateful for the week and qualification. Thanks to the book extract section, I have got back into reading. I really want to do this again.'</i>	Pleased to have qualification Would recommend / do it again Increased enthusiasm for own interests Lucky / grateful / glad to have done it
<i>'I found it really confidence boosting. At the start I was scared but at the end I was a lot more confident and will take the confidence into the outside world as well as school.'</i>	Increased confidence / reduced nerves Nervous at the beginning of the week
<i>'1. I didn't think this would help, but it did. 2. I wasn't thinking about university but now I am. 3. I would do this again 100%'</i>	Helpful / educational Impact on HE intentions / knowledge Would recommend / do it again
<i>'It's helped me majorly open up and build confidence. I built up a lot of skill that will help me later in life. It made me realise I can involve myself and not have to be worried. It made me proud of myself.'</i>	Learned new skills Increased confidence / reduced nerves Increased confidence for working and getting on with peers
<i>'It was fun, so encouraging. Made me more confident around people. Enjoyed presenting, reading and reciting poems.'</i>	Good / enjoyable / fun Increased confidence / reduced nerves Enjoyed doing presentation / poem / reading
<i>'It was a very good experience of what public speaking is like. Our interaction with teacher, assessor and student ambassadors were very happy. I enjoyed the course.'</i>	Good / enjoyable / fun Praise for tutors Praise for SAs Praise for examiner
<i>'Presentation was alright, didn't like doing the poetry.'</i>	Neutral / it was 'ok'
<i>'I don't really have [comments] any but it was stressful.'</i>	Negative impact on confidence / negative experience

Aside from the few negative and neutral comments at the bottom of the table, the other comments included above highlight the impact of the 'Articulate' programme on students' perceptions of their confidence and communication skills. Overall, this qualitative data strongly supports the positive findings shown in the analysis of the quantitative evaluation data analysed in this report, indicating that the intervention helped students to address the barriers of Soft Skills and Socio-economic factors to HE participation.

ISC Survey Feedback – 'Articulate' Programme

In order to counteract self-report bias in the student impact evaluation surveys, we have triangulated this data with responses from NSSW In School Coordinators (ISCs) surveys conducted at the end of the Autumn, Spring, and Summer terms 2018-19. 28 ISCs provided feedback relating to their perception of the 'Articulate' programme in their schools, including data related to the perceived impact of these activities on their students. Responding to statements designed to evaluate perceptions of impact across any NSSW activity, ISCs indicated that they believed the 'Articulate' sessions run by Articulacy were a very positive intervention for the majority of their students, as shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15 shows particularly positive results relating to ISCs perceiving that the activity had raised students' aspirations (100% agreement), that the external staff and Student Ambassadors were approachable and informative (100% and 89% agreement respectively), and that they felt that students had talked positively about the experience after the activity (93% agreement). This triangulated data supports the findings from the student impact evaluation surveys analysed in this report, echoing in particular indications of impact on the



barrier of Socio-economic factors affecting HE progression (students' aspirations). It should be noted that, whilst only 57% of ISC respondents agreed that the majority of students learnt about HE or career planning during the intervention, this lower rate of agreement is to be anticipated, given the focus of the programme on developing students' Soft Skills, rather than specifically focusing on their Knowledge of HE. Nevertheless, three quarters (75%) of respondents agreed that they had noticed an impact on students' conversations about HE and careers as a result of the programme, thus indicating that the intervention still had a positive outcome for students relating to higher education.

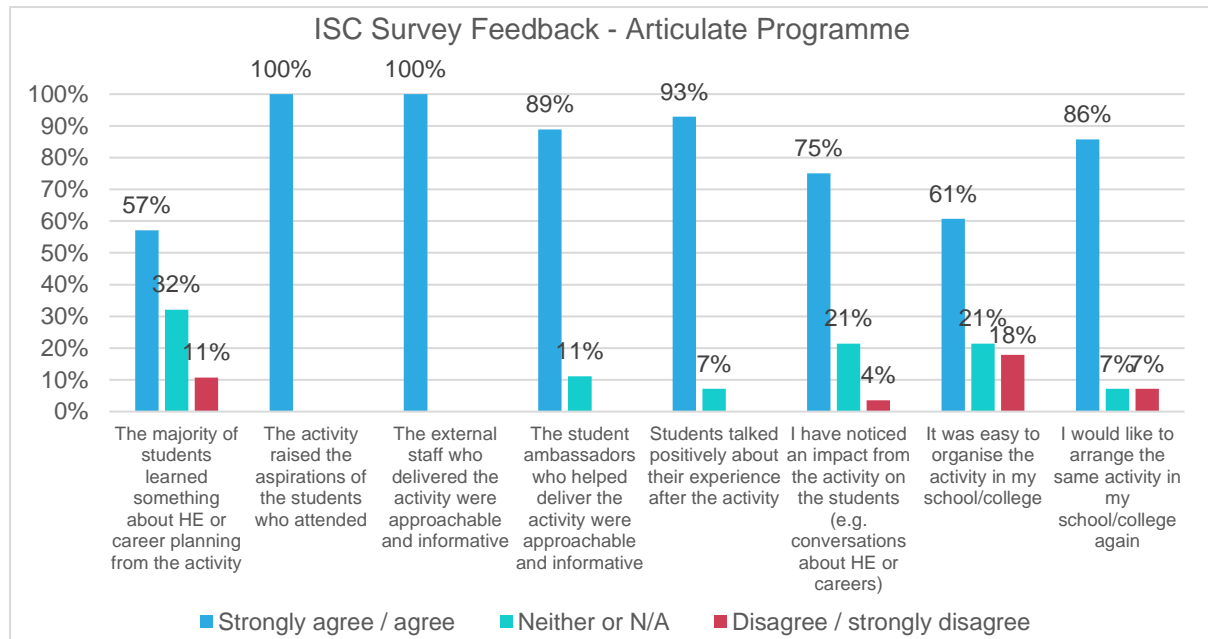


Figure 15 – ISC Survey ‘Articulate’ programme feedback

Data presented in Figure 15 also shows that although ISCs may experience challenges organising this activity in their schools (only 61% agreed with this statement, with 21% providing a neutral response, and 18% disagreeing), the significant majority of respondents (86%) agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to organise the activity again. This finding highlights the positive reception of the intervention, and is further supported by comments left by the ISCs in relation to ‘Articulate’, which included the following feedback:

- *‘It had a hugely positive impact on the students who took part and we are currently in the stages of booking it again.’ (Autumn survey)*
- *‘Darren, the man running the program was fantastic. All students were really engaged and progressed with confidence and all achieved fantastic results. Really worthwhile, raised aspirations and ability to all students involved.’ (Autumn survey)*
- *‘A fantastic opportunity for students [...]. Ran last year with students and they were hugely positive as were their parents.’ (Autumn survey)*
- *‘I cannot be more positive about Articulacy. It is not an easy event to organise, due to having to take student out of lessons for a whole week. However, now that we have run it three times, teachers can see how successful it is and how beneficial it is to the students who took part. The student ambassadors were experienced and brought a huge amount to the weeks.’ (Spring survey)*
- *‘What a fantastic opportunity. The benefits to this activity were evident as I watched their presentations at the end of each week. Their confidence was outstanding.’ (Spring survey)*



- *'I cannot speak highly enough of Articulate. The difference in the students from the beginning of the week to their presentation at the end is outstanding. Taking part again this year.'* (Summer survey)
- *'Excellent activity, the students gained so much completing the Articulatory program.'* (Summer survey)

This qualitative data correlates with student data analysed in this report, as well as with the quantitative data from ISCs in Figure 15, and further indicates that the 'Articulate' programme was engaging and impactful for those who attended. In particular, it reiterates findings relating to students gaining confidence as a result of the intervention, and suggests that it raised students' aspirations, helping them to begin to tackle the barrier of Socio-economic factors that the programme seeks to address.

Conclusion and recommendations

The analysis of examination results and impact evaluation data from students and ISCs presented in this report leads to the conclusion that the 'Articulate' programme was beneficial and impactful for students who participated in this intervention during Tranche 3. It can be strongly argued that the 'Articulate' programme has continued to achieve positive outcomes for the majority of its participants in Tranche 3, both with regards the ESB examination results, and the perceived impact that the intervention has for students on the barriers of Soft Skills and Socio-economic factors affecting HE participation. Feedback from students and ISCs indicates that the programme is well received in schools, with one ISC also noting that they had received positive feedback from parents, and another stating that colleagues elsewhere in the school had noticed how beneficial it is for students.

The only areas for concern raised by analysis of the data relate to some comments from ISCs regarding organisational and logistical challenges in arranging the sessions in schools. However, NSSW have been aware of these difficulties throughout Phase 1 of the project, and, as one ISC notes, believe that schools have a better understanding of the potential impact of the project, resulting in an increased willingness to accommodate the demands of the intervention and enable students to engage fully with the activity.

The primary recommendation to be made from analysis of student pre- and post-activity data is with regards investigating whether more can be embedded into sessions to encourage students to reflect on and increase their aspirations for HE progression, as this was the area with the lowest average rating and lowest average increase in the post-activity data. However, analysis indicates a high frequency of higher ratings relating to students' HE, suggesting that the programme is indeed having a positive impact on students' HE aspirations, and that 'light-touch' rather than significant changes would be most appropriate.

Other recommendations relate to developing the evaluation of this programme, in order to achieve a more nuanced understanding of its impact. Firstly, given that the NSSW offer with Articulatory has developed to feature two different programmes at Key Stage 4 during Phase 2 ('Articulate' and 'Future Me', without the ESB exam), it would be of interest to compare data from these different programmes, in order to understand whether there is an additional motivational impact of the ESB exam on students. Secondly, it is recommended that NSSW and Articulatory investigate possible avenues for exploring the longer-term impact of the 'Articulate' on students, perhaps through delayed post-activity surveys, or through a longer-term follow-up study with participants. Finally, it may be of interest to amend the format of the qualitative data received from students, by asking one or more specific questions in order to elicit responses related to particular areas of impact, such as students' attitudes towards HE, or their development of specific skills.