

Tranche 3 Impact Report Executive Summary: Articulacy ‘Articulate’ Programme

Introduction and Aims

In Tranche 3, over 698 Year 9 and Year 10 students took part in the ‘Articulate’ programme, run by Articulacy in collaboration with Next Steps South West (NSSW), at 42 NSSW schools across Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset. This high-intensity five-day programme is designed to help students develop their communication skills and confidence through a range of activities led by an Articulacy tutor, and culminates in students taking an examination for the English Speaking Board (ESB) Level 1 Award in Speech on the final day. In addition, students also develop their understanding of and aspirations towards higher education (HE) through sustained interaction with Student Ambassadors (SAs), who support all sessions throughout the week. Thus, the intervention primarily addresses the NSSW barrier of Soft Skills, including increasing students’ resilience and self-belief, whilst also addressing the barrier of Socio-economic factors to HE participation through increased exposure to HE role models (SAs) for the participating students.

ESB Examination Results

698 students were entered for the ESB examination at either Grade 2 (Year 9 students) or Grade 3 (Year 10 students) during Tranche 3, and Figure 1 presents a top-level analysis of exam results.

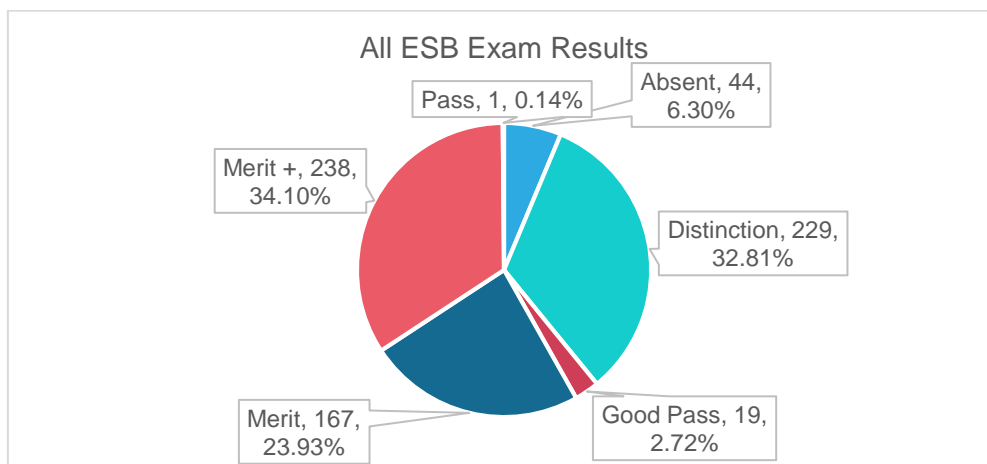


Figure 1 – ESB Exam Results

Analysis of Figure 1 highlights the following key findings:

- All participants who completed the examination achieved a pass mark or higher.
- The majority of students (66.9%) achieved the highest two grades (Distinction 32.8%, N=229; Merit+ 34.1%, N=238).
- 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 programme was very successful in preparing students for the ESB qualification.
- The proportion of students who were absent for the exam (6.3%, N=44) was lower than during Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 (previous rate of 10.7%, N=49 of a sample of 458 entries). This shows that ‘Articulate’ was more effective during Tranche 3 in ensuring that all students selected for the intervention completed the full programme and examination.
- Comparison of results by grade entry (Grade 2 or 3) and by gender (male or female) did not produce any significant differences between entrants, indicating that the programme was equally successful for all participants, regardless of their gender or the ESB grade that they completed.

- Overall, it can be suggested that the high proportion of students achieving a high pass mark (Merit+ or Distinction) is likely to have raised participants' aspirations and confidence, giving these students a tangible and successful outcome, which, in some cases, may increase students' confidence for future examinations.

'Articulate' Impact Evaluation

More nuanced data relating to the impact of the 'Articulate' programme on participants was gathered through pre- and post-activity surveys completed by students. 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 relating to the programme, and an open comments question to gather qualitative feedback from participants.

Quantitative Data

Data was collected from 655 participants, with a clean sample of 628 fully complete pre- and post-activity surveys that have been matched and analysed. Figure 2 presents the average pre- and post-activity ratings for the six statements with which students were asked to agree, and highlights the increase in students' rating against each statement (in green).

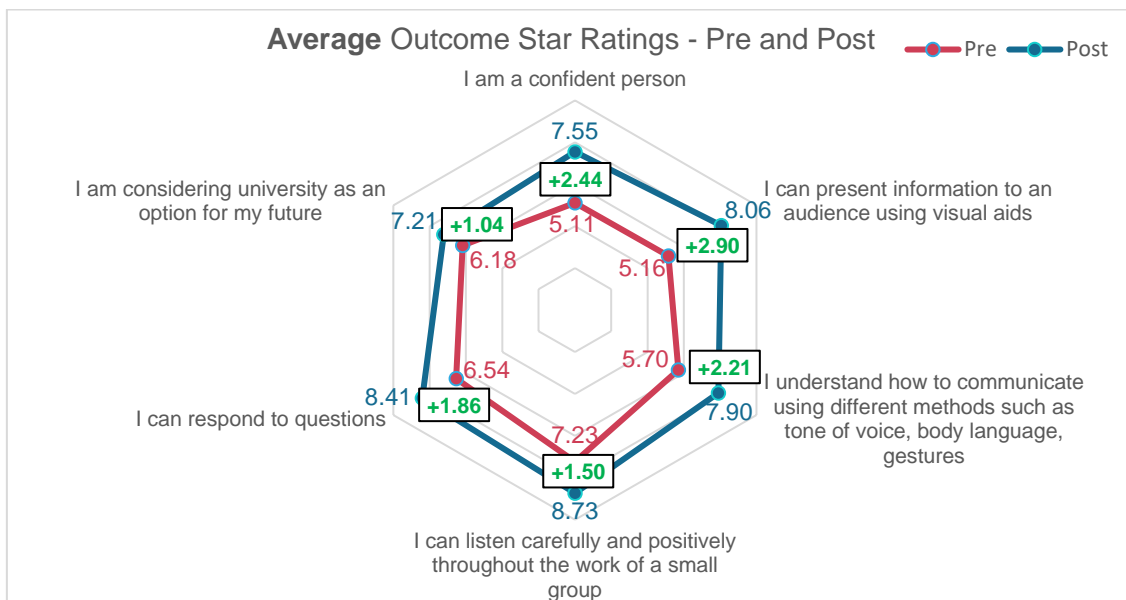


Figure 2 – Average Pre- and Post-activity Outcome Star Ratings

The following findings emerge from analysis of Figure 2:

- The average rating for all six statements increased by at least 1.04, indicating positive impact across all areas evaluated by the outcome star.
- Students' agreement that they can present information using visual aids had the greatest increase (average increase of 2.90 points), with students also increasing their agreement that they understood how to use different methods to communicate (average increase of 2.21 points). This data suggests that 'Articulate' was particularly successful in supporting students' development of communication skills.
- Students' agreement with the statement 'I am a confident person' witnessed the second highest average increase (2.44 points), providing evidence to indicate that the programme helped students to address the barrier of Soft Skills by increasing their confidence and motivation to succeed.



- Although the average of students' agreement with the final statement ('I am considering university as an option for my future') showed little increase (average 6.18 pre-activity to average 7.21 post-activity), both the median and mode of this data show a high frequency post-activity of students strongly agreeing with this statement (as shown through median rating of '8' and mode rating of '10'). Consulting all three measures of central tendency for this dataset shows that after the programme students in fact strongly agreed that they were considering HE, indicating impact on aspirations and the barrier of Socio-economic factors.

Qualitative Data

608 students provided comments in response to the statement 'Please tell us what you thought of this week', and this qualitative data has been analysed through thematic coding of individual elements within each response. As this process allows for multiple themes to arise within one response, 1570 separate elements were identified in data analysis, coded into 18 categories.

Figures 3 and 4 show the count of responses for each of the 18 themes. It should be noted that a thematic area was not coded twice within an individual comment, and that the count of responses therefore represent the total number of individual students who cited this theme in their feedback.

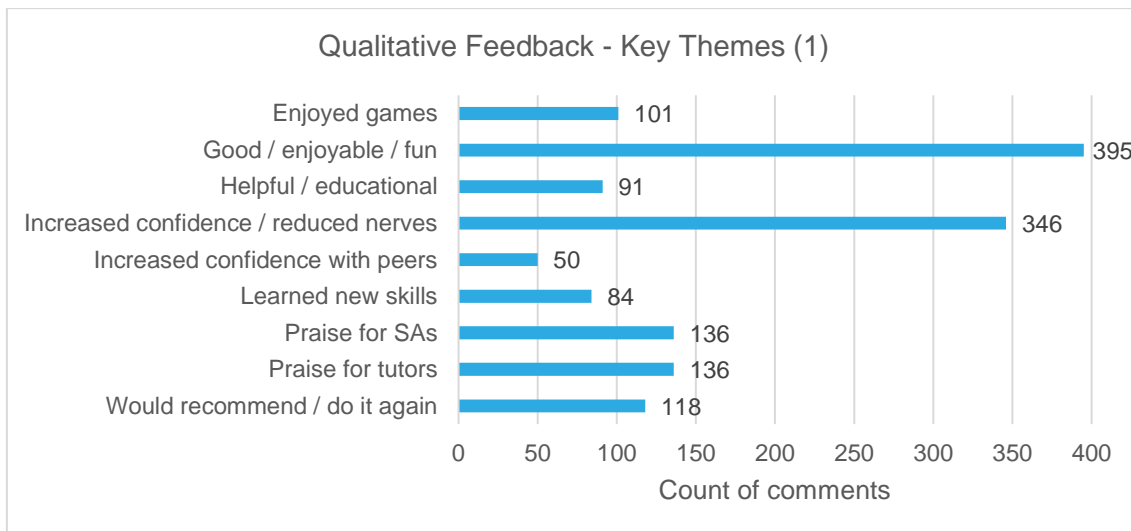


Figure 3 – Count of responses for key thematic areas in qualitative comments (most frequent)

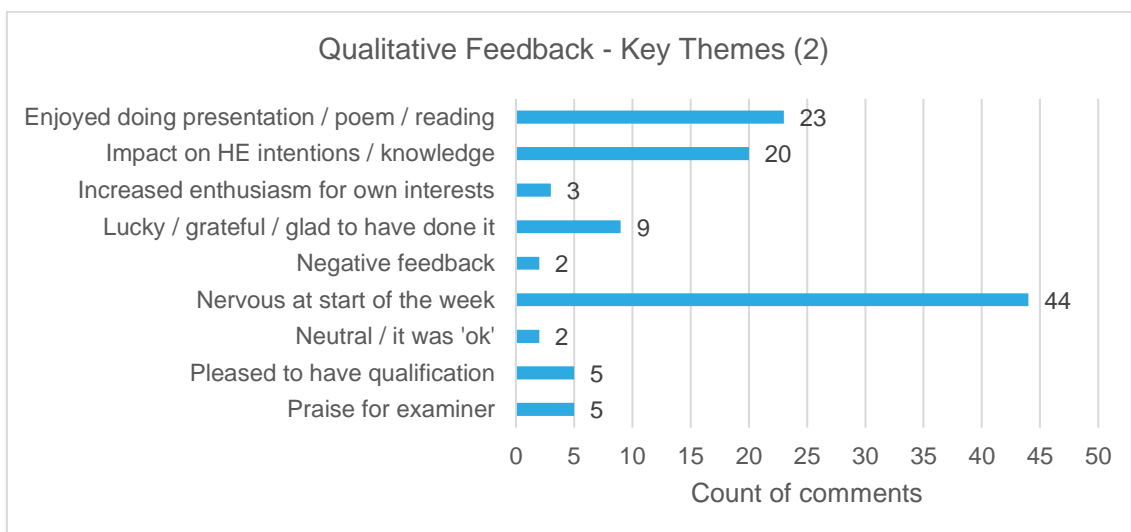


Figure 4 – Count of responses for key thematic areas in qualitative comments (least frequent)

Analysis of this qualitative data highlights the following key points:

- Students most frequently noted that ‘Articulate’ 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’), indicating that it supported a large number of students in addressing the barrier of Soft Skills.
- Some students (20) specifically stated that 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 evidence to indicate a potential impact on students’ HE aspirations and on the barrier of Socio-economic factors.
- Students’ qualitative comments highlight particular areas of Soft Skills development. 91 students described the programme as ‘helpful’ or ‘educational’, 84 students noted that they had learned new skills, and 50 students said that the experience had supported them in increasing their confidence working with or presenting to their peers.
- Many students commented on specific elements of the programme that contributed towards them having a positive experience of the intervention, including preparation for the examination (23 comments) and the games used throughout the week to build students’ confidence (101 comments).
- 136 students praised the Articulatory tutors for their help and support, and 118 students recommended the programme to others, or expressed a wish to take part in ‘Articulate’ again.
- This data, and the small number of negative and neutral comments received, provides further evidence to indicate that the intervention was well received by many participants.

Full qualitative comments that illustrate these thematic categories included:

- *‘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 also, I felt made me more comfortable and confident. I really recommend this course to anyone’* (Learned new skills; Increased confidence / reduced nerves; Enjoyed games; Would recommend / do it again)
- *‘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.’* (Increased confidence / reduced nerves; Nervous at the beginning of the week)
- *‘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%’* (Helpful / educational; Impact on HE intentions / knowledge; Would recommend / do it again)
- *‘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.’* (Good / enjoyable / fun; Praise for tutors; Praise for SAs; Praise for examiner)

Teacher Feedback (ISC Survey data)

In order to counteract self-report bias in the student surveys, we also collected data from NSSW In School Coordinators (ISCs) relating to the ‘Articulate’ Programme. In three ISCs surveys conducted in Tranche 3, 28 ISCs provided feedback relating to their perception of the ‘Articulate’ intervention and the impact of this programme on their students (Figure 5). This triangulated data supports the findings from the student surveys and ESB examination results in the following ways:

- 100% of respondents agreed that ‘Articulate’ had raised students’ aspirations, and 93% agreed that students talked positively about their experience, indicating impact on the barrier of Socio-economic factors.



- Although 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 increasing 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, indicating that the intervention still had a positive outcome for students relating to higher education.
- Finally, although only 61% of ISCs agreed that it was easy to organise ‘Articulate’ in their school or college, 86% of respondents stated that they wanted to arrange the intervention again. This finding underlines the positive reception of the intervention amongst NSSW ISCs, and indicates schools’ keenness to continue to offer this intervention to their students.

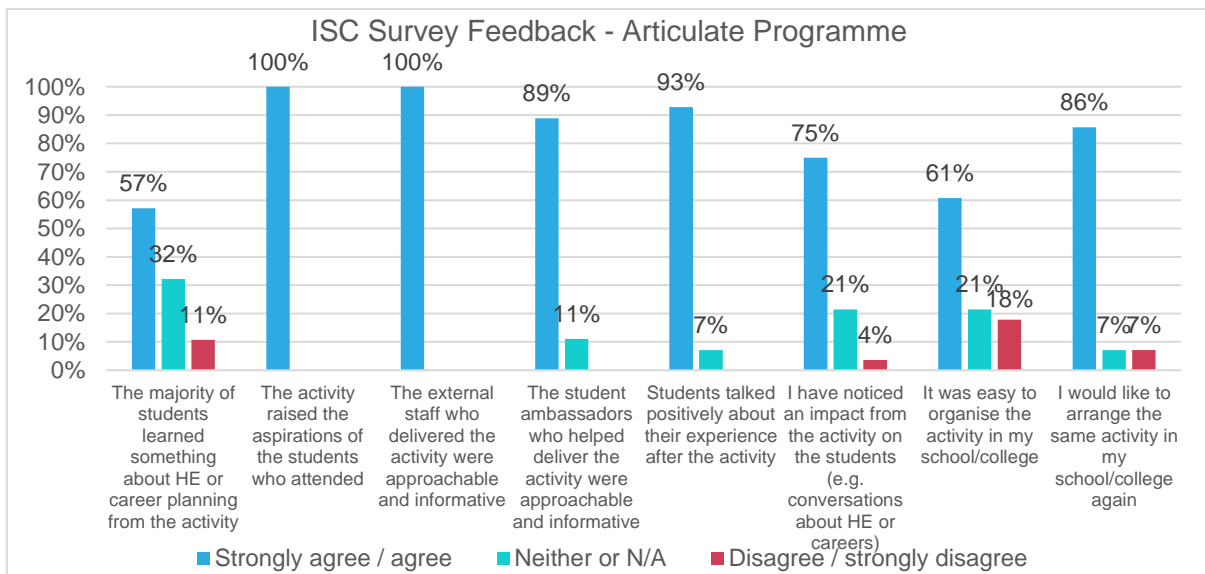


Figure 5 – ISC Survey ‘Articulate’ programme feedback

This ISC survey data aligns with the other positive responses shown in analysis of the ‘Articulate’ programme, and qualitative comments left by ISCs further highlight the positive reception of the intervention:

- *‘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)*

Conclusion and recommendations

The analysis of examination results and impact evaluation data from students and ISCs indicates 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 achieved 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.

Overall, the data suggests very few recommendations for changes to the programme, and those that can be made are summarised below:

- It may be beneficial to investigate 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.
- It may be of interest to compare data from the different Key Stage 4 Articulatory programmes running in Phase 2 ('Articulate' and 'Future Me', without the ESB exam), in order to understand whether there is an additional motivational impact of the ESB exam on students.
- 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.