



# Case study: Talk for Writing in languages in primary and secondary schools

## How the Talk for Writing approach really helps to engage pupils

The Talk for Writing methodology lends itself well to foreign language learning and this is exactly what teachers Juliet Park and Wendy Adeniji have implemented in their new primary languages scheme.

The innovative scheme uses stories, songs and games and has a strong phonics focus in order to build children's confidence through highly interactive language learning. The Talk for Writing approach helps learners to extend sentences in French and Spanish by effectively recognising and using high frequency verbs, opinion phrases, connectives and nouns. Popular stories such as The Enormous Turnip and The Hare and the Tortoise are used in the scheme to help learners internalise high frequency phrases and accurate pronunciation through carefully constructed, simple story lines which involve lots of repetition.

Unlike many schemes which overload learners with long lists of nouns across a wide range of topics, this scheme focuses on understanding the structure of a sentence and the function of each word. By the end of year 3, learners will be able to build sentences confidently and accurately which many year 7 learners currently struggle to do. This approach ensures that learners will gain a good grasp of French or Spanish grammar and an ability to manipulate the language in an active and engaging way. The scheme ticks the government requirements and will also impress the Ofsted inspector!

The phonics element ensures that learners are able to develop pronunciation with confidence and make a strong connection with a sound and how it is written. This is a particularly important skill as it promotes independence and provides support as their bank of vocabulary develops.

The scheme also supports teachers who are less confident linguists. A series of short videos show a native speaker demonstrating actions for the high frequency phonics which often cause pronunciation problems in French and Spanish, which are fun for learners to practise. The ample sound files which are found in both the teaching resources and also hyperlinked to the lesson plans enable teachers to check pronunciation of key words before a lesson

and/or rely on them to deliver the lesson. The scheme also includes the use of apps which can be used on Smartphones or tablets for extended learning in the classroom or at home.

Primary schools such as Montenev in Sheffield, teaching school Mottram St Andrew in Macclesfield, part of the Silk alliance and Hartholme Academy in Lincoln, the winner of the Innovative School of the Year award are using the scheme to boost the language skills of their learners. Kate Scott, Headteacher from Hartsholme, part of the EOS alliance says, *"We are excited about this scheme of work. Our staff are familiar with the Talk for Writing methodology and the progressive style of the scheme along with the phonics focus and innovative use of technology ticks all the boxes."* Non linguists Heidi and Katherine from Mottram St Andrew are confident of the delivery of the scheme based on the way the materials support teachers with little language skills.

Juliet, who is Director of languages in Sheffield, says that the Talk for Writing approach in KS3 and 4 Spanish lessons has been inspirational. *"Controlled assessment planning and preparation can be a dull affair, however the Talk for Writing approach has made lessons far more exciting and engaging for both learners and teachers and has also greatly enhanced performance in writing tasks. This approach has led to a significant number of learners exceeding their targets by 1-2 grades and many have commented on how much more motivated and confidence they felt."*

As a foreign language will become a compulsory part of the curriculum from September 2014 for children from Y3, schools need to be thinking about their languages offer and how this will impact on their local secondary schools. Equally secondary schools need to think about how they can support their local primary schools and ensure there is joined up thinking in the languages on offer.

If you are interested in receiving sample resources from the scheme, please email [hello@languages.co.uk](mailto:hello@languages.co.uk) or, for a workshop on Talk for Writing in foreign language teaching, please contact [julietpark@icloud.com](mailto:julietpark@icloud.com).