



Case Study: Talk for Writing saves the day in Thailand!

When I set off on holiday to Thailand this summer, little did I realise how useful my Talk for Writing skills would be. I am a Foundation Stage teacher working at Penn Wood in Slough. Penn Wood was one of the first Talk for Writing schools and we've embedded Talk for Writing into everything we do. This year, I was lucky enough to spend the summer travelling around Thailand and took part in a voluntary programme to help rehabilitate elephants living with the Karen Tribe. To my delight, it turned out the programme included teaching English to some of the children living in the village.



After school, the children came to meet us in the village as they were very keen to practise their English with us. It's fair to say I was unprepared for the meeting. I'd expected us to play some games and have a chat with the children but we soon found that we had several little, and some not so little, faces expectantly waiting to see what we were going to do. Being the only teacher, all eyes quickly turned to me and I had to think on my feet to come up with something. This is where working at a Talk for Writing school came in handy!

We spent the next hour retelling the story of The Gingerbread Man (which we changed to The Biscuit Man) using actions we created together. Some questionable acting skills and animal noises

were used to explain the meaning of the words to the children, but by the end of the session they all understood the plot of the story and were able to use the English words. We then developed this further to get them to write and draw pictures of the key characters in the story.



As Talk for Writing had proved to be such a success, the next day we used it to teach the story of Little Red Riding Hood to the younger children who spoke very little, if any, English. They loved joining in with the actions and shouting out the key words.



The repetitiveness of the stories and the actions proved invaluable in involving the children in the retelling and securing their understanding of the words used. As we had no resources to hand, Talk for Writing strategies worked perfectly.