Preparing learners to communicate in the 21st Century

Challenge

The vision for language learning at Harrogate Grammar School is for all students to achieve a good level of competency in two languages in addition to their mother tongue, with many students studying these to GCSE level and beyond. The school required a solution to support learners studying more than one language, especially languages outside of those offered in classroom instruction. Harrogate Grammar School needed a flexible language-learning solution for Year 7 through to Year 13. Already offering the core languages French, Spanish, German, and Italian, the goal was to consolidate existing language-teaching programmes and provide an e-learning solution as an extension in the four core languages. Another aim was to further personalise learning that would fill the gaps by expanding the current language offering beyond the core languages taught in the classroom. One of the requirements from Harrogate was to have the ability to support Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) students with English and to offer language-enrichment programmes for learners as well as streamline support for special-needs students. It was decided that Harrogate staff would have access to the programme as a reward. As a result, the whole package would increase language and cultural awareness throughout the whole school community allowing even families of learners the option to learn languages.

Implementation

Utilising the Rosetta Stone® Classroom online solution, Harrogate initially rolled out the solution to Harrogate School staff to help ensure effective implementation and teacher endorsement. In September 2011, the programme was rolled out to the students, introducing them first to the programme through assemblies to gain buy-in. These sessions focused on the importance of learning languages and they built the momentum needed to launch the programme. Offering 25 languages to learners, Harrogate used the solution to supplement their classroom instruction for French, Spanish, German, and Italian. For other languages, learners could use the computer room at lunch times and enrichment periods during school hours, and they also could access all languages at home. Learner progress was monitored by Rosetta Stone Manager, the administrative tool, to ensure effective usage of the programme.

At a Glance:

Harrogate Grammar School strives to enable students to develop their potential to the full and to grow into mature and confident young people who are prepared for the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities of adult life. In order to fulfill this aim the school offers a caring environment within which students can share in a wide range of academic, sporting, aesthetic, spiritual, and social experiences.

Harrogate was selected to become one of the UK's first Teaching Schools in 2011.

"Rosetta Stone provides our students with the opportunity to study almost any language they want. That allows us to personalise language learning in a really powerful way."

—Jamie Gutch, Faculty Leader
Harrogate Grammar School Modern Foreign Language Programme

Benefits

The following benefits have been realised since implementation in September 2011:

- Increase in competitiveness with other schools and an increase in the ability to attract students with multilingual backgrounds because of language support offered
- Long-term vision for students from the school to be proficient in two languages plus their native language by the time they leave
- Focus on the traditionally weaker oral communication and listening skills in blended learning
- Ability to personalise language learning across the whole ability spectrum

Focusing on implementation

Harrogate Grammar School effectively launched their Rosetta Stone online solution through a well-designed roll-out programme. The school first established goals and objectives by working closely with the Rosetta Stone Client Relationship Manager and communicated this plan to its staff. To ensure a successful implementation, the programme was offered first to Harrogate staff as a trial to prepare them to support learners. For introducing students to the programme, the school offered assemblies by academic grade. Surveys provided the opportunity to gain buy-in from learners, and to gather ideas as well as answer questions. After each session, learners were enrolled and were able to access the solution either at school or from home.

Promoting language learning

In addition to explaining the solution during six assemblies for approximately 250 learners per session, Harrogate promoted its programme through a different channel: They put posters in their foreign language classrooms. Letters and e-mails were sent to staff, parents, and non-linguists explaining the benefits of the solution. To ensure that students knew how to gain access to the online solution, they were e-mailed the online link, usernames, and passwords. In addition, tutors and staff followed up to make sure learners had this needed information. Learners were recognised during assemblies for exemplary usage of the program and were awarded certificates and T-shirts as prizes. Families of learners were encouraged to participate in the programme to promote a community of learners. Over 140 staff and parents of Harrogate learners participated to build proficiency in a new language.

Building skills for the classroom

The Rosetta Stone solution provided Harrogate with the ability to supplement the language-learning classroom. Blending the programme into their French, German, Spanish, and Italian courses allowed learners to develop skills outside of classroom instruction. With a focus on oral communication skills, learners gained the confidence to speak the language they were learning. The programme allowed learners to focus on developing speaking and listening skills. In addition, the solution opened up communication in the classroom, helping to develop accents and providing additional exposure to developing conversational skills.

Expanding their language offerings

Prior to the implementation of the Rosetta Stone solution, Harrogate offered four languages through classroom instruction: French, Spanish, German, and Italian. Once the solution was implemented, Harrogate was able to offer students 25 languages to study. Expanding the language offerings through Rosetta Stone allowed learners to study more than one language at the same time. Offering language programmes beginning at age 11, Harrogate has set a goal of having learners proficient in two languages plus their native language. Charles Verity, a student in Year 10 stated: "I like it because I can learn languages that I have always wanted to learn." In addition, for languages still offered in the classroom, the Rosetta Stone solution offered supplemental learning through expanding vocabulary and language structures for learners. Jamie Gutch, Faculty Leader, stated: "Rosetta Stone provides our students with the opportunity to study almost any language they want. That allows us to personalise language learning in a really powerful way."

Realising benefits

Harrogate increased its offering of languages by over six times in the programme of modern foreign languages, growing the available languages from four to twenty-five, an increase of 700%. Over 45% of the school has accessed a language other than those offered in classroom instruction, with the most popular languages being Japanese and Chinese. Implementing the Rosetta Stone solution has increased the school's competitiveness in the market and has helped the school attract students with multilingual backgrounds because of the language support offered.

Harrogate also found the Rosetta Stone solution to be especially effective with special-needs learners. For students that couldn't participate in a mainstream language lesson, the Rosetta Stone solution provided individualised instruction and a motivating environment to acquire linguistic knowledge. Many of these students became the highest individual users of the solution.

About Rosetta Stone

Rosetta Stone is the global leader in language-learning software. We have over 20 years of experience in developing award-winning innovations that improve the lives of people and operations of organisations each and every day.

Our proprietary and proven immersion method leverages interactive technologies to replicate the environment in which people learn their first languages, and to activate learners' natural aptitudes for learning a new language regardless of their language backgrounds.

We offer our clients scalable solutions for a variety of needs, from single classrooms to entire organisations and individual learners. Our solutions are implemented in over 20,000 schools, in more than 17,000 private and public sector organizations, and are used by millions of learners in over 150 countries throughout the world.

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