



Rosetta Stone Customer Spotlight:

JEFFERSON R-VII DISTRICT- HAMPTON BAYS

Language learning pen pals hangout online

It's often said that "Language brings people together." Now that expression has come to life in an exciting partnership between two high schools 1,000 miles apart.

Jefferson R-VII School District in Festus, MO values language learning and exposing students to other cultures. The district, located 45 minutes south of St. Louis, faced a shortage of certified language teachers. As a result, developing an online language learning approach began to take shape. "It's tough to get a great Spanish teacher to a remote district," said Robert Kuehnle. The teacher has been instrumental in Jefferson High School's Rosetta Stone® Spanish language courses since 2014.

Taking learning online

Jefferson students have embraced learning Spanish online. According to Mr. Kuehnle, "Students immediately loved Rosetta Stone. They came in and it was self-pacing, which I think was a huge draw for them. One person could be on unit 1, another person on unit 5, and they were in the same classroom."

In the first year, student vocabularies expanded from 15-20 words to about 300 in the course of one semester. "For a high school in the middle of Missouri that's a pretty huge jump—and it's only increased," the teacher added.

Jefferson offers Rosetta Stone Spanish I and II courses. Students earn one high school credit for each level completed. The school also includes optional CLEP testing, giving students the chance to earn college credit for their Spanish.

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Robert Kuehnle, teacher
Jefferson R-VII School



Expanding the program

After years of usage and reporting showing positive results, the district expanded the program. Students in middle school can take three units before reaching high school. That's equal to a half semester of high school work. An additional 250 licenses for elementary students were activated for the upcoming school year. According to Mr. Kuehnle, "Our original dream was to have this for all of K-12, so that by 12th grade we'd be producing students fluent in Spanish with large vocabularies." The district remains committed to that long-term plan for interested students.

In class, Mr. Kuehnle emphasizes culture as well as language. His sentence-based assessments help students consider "If they got dropped into a Spanish-speaking country, could you find your way around?"

Eventually, a path emerged for his students to begin their journey toward that day.

Bringing students together

Five states away in New York, Michelle Marrone, ENL teacher at Hampton Bays Public Schools, had an idea. Her high school students come from Latin America, with as many as 12 students from different countries in one setting. "I am one of the first faces my students see when

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they come into the district," Mrs. Marrone said. The students speak Spanish as their home language and are learning English with the help of the Rosetta Stone program.

Mrs. Marrone wondered if a pen pal program could connect high school classes learning Spanish with her classes learning English. "I looked for a pen pal program through Rosetta Stone, because I wanted my students to see what it was like in the rest of the US. They don't really have an idea of that outside of Long Island."

As it turned out, back in Missouri Mr. Kuehnle was considering a similar program for his Spanish learners. Once he and Mrs. Marrone met through Rosetta Stone, their plans fell into place.

Now in its second year, the pen pal program is growing. Students can free write, though Mrs. Marrone asks students to include three questions. This allows their pen pals to respond to something directly. Student letters are read by teachers before being sent.

After testing other methods, Mrs. Marrone and Mr. Kuehnle now use a shared Google folder to exchange student letters. "It's better than snail mail pen pals because they can go back and see what they wrote and what their pen pal wrote," said Mrs. Marrone.

Students at both schools alternate writing in Spanish and English, allowing them to build skills in both languages

Moving beyond lessons

Some pen pals even share social media handles. According to Mrs. Marrone, "Life is so different in Missouri so they get to see what it's like over Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook. One student has really made a connection with her pen pal so it's great to see she can confide in this person that she had never met before."

It's not unusual for pen pals to want to meet their new friend someday. Only now, it's possible for those face-to-face connections to occur online. Taking their program to the next level, the two schools set up Google Hangouts where students could see and speak with their pen pals.

With more letters and hangouts scheduled, Mr. Kuehnle sees the potential benefits for language learning students in both schools. "It has left lasting impressions that may someday lead to long-term friendships."

JEFFERSON R-VII



About Jefferson R-VII School District

We are passionate about helping children become all they can. Many hours of dedicated service to the students by staff, parents, and the community have resulted in unique schools based on the values of hard work, integrity, responsibility, commitment, perseverance, devotion to others, sharing, and service.

For more information about Jefferson R-VII School District, visit: <http://www.jr7.k12.mo.us/>

About Hampton Bays Public Schools

Our vision is that all students will graduate with a solid academic foundation and a strong character; and with a commitment to the community and a dedication to lifelong learning. We nurture safe and caring learning environments that celebrate intellectual curiosity, diversity, and the individualized talents of each student and adult.

For more information about Hampton Bays Public Schools, visit: <http://www.hbschools.us/>

About Rosetta Stone

Rosetta Stone is a global leader in technology-driven language and learning solutions for individuals, classrooms, and organizations.

Our scalable, interactive solutions have been used by over 12,000 businesses, 9,000 public sector organizations, and 22,000 education institutions worldwide, and by millions of learners in over 150 countries.