



THRASS UK News Media Centre  
[www.thrass.co.uk/nm.htm](http://www.thrass.co.uk/nm.htm)

Press Release

16 December 2008

## **GROUNDBREAKING FREE PHONICS SOFTWARE FROM THRASS UK TO BE PART OF MEMORY 4 TEACHERS PROJECT**

The THRASS (Teaching Handwriting Reading And Spelling Skills) synthetic phonics programme is widely accepted as having the potential to more than double the normal rate of progress for reading and spelling in English, and THRASS UK is now delighted to be part of the exciting new Memory 4 Teachers ICT project that is being promoted by the RGS Media Group.

The inclusion of groundbreaking free THRASS software in the Memory 4 Teachers project will make the THRASS programme readily available to thousands more teachers and educators across the UK. Through Memory 4 Teachers, 800,000 teachers and educators will be provided with free fully interactive memory sticks, in which will be embedded free educational resources to help them manage their ever-increasing workloads. Worksheets, lesson plans, homework guides as well as many other useful tools will be readily available and the memory sticks will also provide access to selected websites and free file storage.

THRASS UK will be helping teachers and educators by contributing a full presentation of the THRASS synthetics phonics programme to both the Educational Resources section of the memory sticks and also to the associated Web Channel. The presentation will contain a wealth of information on how to use THRASS, demonstration lessons, case studies, guidance on choosing the most appropriate resources and a link to the main THRASS picture-based training website. But the biggest prize of all will be the inclusion on the memory sticks of the full version of the groundbreaking THRASS Phoneme Machine 6.0 software.

Phoneme Machine 6.0 is the latest version of this amazing software that uses moving human lips to pronounce the sounds (phonemes) in hundreds of frequently used English words, thereby developing a good understanding of the 44 sounds (phonemes) and the 120 main spelling choices (keygraphemes) of English. It will be

launched in January 2009 at the BETT Show (the world's largest educational technology event) and will include a Cued Speech option that will enable deaf children to be taught using synthetic phonics.

The THRASS Phoneme Machine is an excellent resource for teachers, assistants and parents for learning about, and also teaching, the fundamental building blocks of English in an entertaining and fun way. It is suitable for learners of all ages and abilities and has been found to be particularly helpful for use with children starting to read, children finding reading difficult and those for whom English is not their first language.

There are three sections to the Phoneme Machine: the interactive Calendar, the Word Grid and the Phoneme Grid. In the interactive English Calendar, children's voices say the days, dates, months, numbers, colours and letter names. Interactive Calendar Charts for other European and African languages can be downloaded and added, and printable calendar charts are also available. In the Word Grid and the Phoneme Grid, a female voice and moving human lips pronounce the words and phonemes and a male voice names the letters. In the Cued Speech option, which can be turned on and off in the Phoneme Grid, the shapes, positions and movements of the hands are displayed alongside the moving human lips, with the cueing for each of the 500 basewords of English demonstrated in a video box.

The Memory 4 Teachers project will also give teachers the opportunity to become familiar with the THRASS SING-A-LONG Family Reading Resources that use 44 songs that teachers and parents can sing with children to explain the 44 sounds and 120 main spelling choices of English. Singing has been shown to accelerate learning and improve the memory, and the songs have wonderful imaginative titles such as "The moon fell out of the sky", "A great big gorilla" and "You don't get pandas in Africa", and really memorable tunes in different musical styles and dance rhythms from around the world. The SING-A-LONG resources include an interactive book, an audio CD, a 96-page hard-back book, a colouring book, a sheet music book and a MOVE-A-LONG with SING-A-LONG DVD.

Alan Davies, Executive Director of THRASS UK, is extremely pleased with the latest developments: "THRASS UK is delighted to have the opportunity to provide guided training and speech, reading and spelling skills resources for teachers and, in

particular, to be able to share with them the latest version of the groundbreaking Phoneme Machine. We are certain that all teachers, including teachers of children with hearing impairments and other learning difficulties, will find it invaluable.”

The THRASS synthetic phonics programme meets all the criteria for a good phonics programme published by the UK Department for Children, Schools and Families, and is being used with resounding success in thousands of schools across Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean and the USA. Wherever it is used, it surpasses all expectations and using THRASS in a balanced language curriculum can more than double the normal rate of progress for learning reading and spelling for primary and secondary school children, including dyslexics and those for whom English is not their first language.

It is an indication of the significance of THRASS that in South Africa it is being sponsored by Absa Bank, a member of the Barclays Group, through the THRASS Absa TalkTogether Project. In addition, the THRASS Accredited Certificate is already a compulsory module for Foundation Phase student teachers at six South African universities.

### **Notes to Editors**

The THRASS extensive picture-based training website for schools and parents with access to a wide range of resources and support materials, and extensive evidence of the widespread success of THRASS and details of THRASS Professional Development Courses is at [www.thrass.co.uk/teaching.htm](http://www.thrass.co.uk/teaching.htm)

For full details of the Memory 4 Teachers Project, visit [www.memory4teachers.co.uk](http://www.memory4teachers.co.uk), where teachers can also register for the free USB memory stick.

Issued by: THRASS UK News Media Centre [www.thrass.co.uk/nm.htm](http://www.thrass.co.uk/nm.htm)

Mike Meade, Media Director, +44 1829 741413 Mob: +44 7970 151 738  
[mikemeade@thrass.co.uk](mailto:mikemeade@thrass.co.uk)

Chris Griffiths, International Development, +30 266 203 1207  
[chrisgriffiths@thrass.co.uk](mailto:chrisgriffiths@thrass.co.uk)