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Press Release

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## **THRASS UK TO BE KEY PARTNER IN MAJOR NEW ICT PROJECT FOR TEACHERS**

THRASS UK is delighted to announce that it is to be a key partner in the forthcoming Memory 4 Teachers project, a major new ICT initiative in the UK education sector.

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 the inclusion of THRASS software in Memory 4 Teachers will make the THRASS programme readily available to thousands more teachers and educators across the UK.

The Memory 4 Teachers project has been developed in association with local authorities and teacher unions to provide support to teachers and educators in addressing their ever-increasing workloads. The project aims to provide 800,000 teachers in the UK with free fully interactive memory sticks, in which will be embedded free educational resources for their easy reference, as well as access to selected websites and free file storage. Worksheets, lesson plans, homework guides as well as many other useful tools will be readily available.

As part of the Memory 4 Teachers project, teachers have specifically requested the inclusion of guided training and speech, reading and spelling skills resources for teaching children with hearing impairments. In response to this demand, THRASS UK will be contributing the latest version of its groundbreaking Phoneme Machine software to the project. The Phoneme Machine uses moving human lips to pronounce the sounds (phonemes) in hundreds of frequently used English words and the latest version, Phoneme Machine 6.0, which will now be launched in January 2009 at the BETT Show (the world's largest educational technology event), will include a Cued Speech option in which the shapes, positions and movements of the hands will be displayed alongside the moving human lips, with the cueing for each of the 500 basewords of English demonstrated in a video box.

But the Phoneme Machine isn't just for teaching children with hearing impairments; it is an excellent resource for teaching children of all ages and abilities the fundamental building blocks of English in an entertaining and fun way. THRASS UK will also be contributing a range of other resources to the memory sticks, suitable for teaching learners of all ages and abilities, and there will be a link to the THRASS UK website, so that it will be easy for teachers to obtain further information.

The Memory 4 Teachers project is being promoted by RGS Europe Ltd. The RGS Media Group has been working with the public, voluntary and private business sectors providing creative and cost efficient media solutions specifically within the UK education sector since 1998. The education sector is a particularly sensitive and specialised market place, and RGS has worked on some of the largest projects ever undertaken within this sector including Sainsbury's Active Kids, Tesco's Computers for Schools and Tesco's Great School Run. Memory 4 Teachers joins these prestigious campaigns as the latest education initiative that RGS is promoting.

Alan Davies, Executive Director of THRASS UK, is extremely pleased with this latest development: "THRASS UK is delighted to have been invited to be part of this exciting project and to have the opportunity to provide guided training and speech, reading and spelling skills resources for teachers of children with hearing impairments. However, the software that we are providing isn't just for teachers of children with hearing impairments and we are sure that it will be extremely useful to all teachers. "

And Simon Caplan, the Memory 4 Teachers Campaign Director, is also delighted: "We had a specific request from teachers of children with hearing impairments for access to guided training and speech, reading and spelling skills resources and we are extremely pleased that THRASS UK has accepted our invitation to undertake this fundamental role in the project."

THRASS, pioneered by British Educational Psychologist Alan Davies, is a whole-school synthetic phonics programme for teaching learners of all ages and abilities using pictures and keywords. It helps learners to understand the building blocks of the English language by teaching them about the 44 phonemes (speech sounds) of spoken English and the 120 graphemes (spelling choices) of written English.

THRASS meets all the criteria for a good phonics programme published by the UK Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and the THRASS programme 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, and also for 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)

THRASS UK expects to launch the Phoneme Machine 6.0 in January 2009. Anyone who wishes to be informed when the software becomes available for download, should visit [www.thrass.co.uk/cuedspeech.htm](http://www.thrass.co.uk/cuedspeech.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.

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