QUICK START NOTES FOR THE THRASS-IT WINDOW SOFTWARE

The THRASS-IT WINDOW PC Version ISBN 978-1-906295-15-8 *and* Mac Version ISBN 978-1-906295-16-5 are the 2010 '32-bit' revisions of the THRASS-IT PC Version ISBN 1 904912 07 9 *and* Mac Version ISBN 1 904912 08 7. The software is copyright © 1998 Alan Davies & Denyse Ritchie. THRASS-IT WINDOW is not suitable for the Windows XP operation system or earlier systems. The Mac version is for Macs running OSX.

METHOD OF OPERATION: The THRASS-IT WINDOW software is not designed to open full screen and it is viewed through a 640 x 480 pixel window – which can be moved around the desktop and also Minimised.

GENERAL ADVICE: Use a Stop Watch to establish Personal Best Times for individuals, pairs, classes and/or the school. Along with the scores, these times will provide incentive and evidence of progress and/or standard.

INTRODUCTION: THRASS: Teaching Handwriting Reading And Spelling Skills. IT: Information Technology. WINDOW: the programme is viewed through a 640 x 480 pixel. THRASS-IT WINDOW is an easy to use interactive programme, which focuses on the 26 lower-case letters and the 44 speech sounds of English. At its heart is the THRASSCHART, a simple, easy to use reference chart of the 26 letters and the 44 sounds.

THE THRASS APPROACH: THRASS uses a phonographic method to teach literacy skills. It teaches the 44 phonemes (sounds) of English. It also teaches the ways in which these phonemes are represented, their graphemes (spelling choices). Each box on the THRASSCHART represents a different phoneme. The 24 sound-boxes above the Vowel Line represent the 24 consonant phonemes. The 20 sound-boxes below the line represent the 20 vowel phonemes. Within each phoneme-box, the common ways of representing the phonemes are shown by specially selected graphemes. Each word in English is made up of phonemes; each phoneme is represented by a grapheme. For example, 'knight' has three phonemes - (n) (i) (t). A grapheme is described according to the number of letters it uses e.g. 't' is a graph, 'kn' is a digraph, 'igh' is a trigraph.

A MULTISENSORY APPROACH: The skills of Handwriting, Reading and Spelling are linked. Each skill helps to reinforce and support the others. Handwriting reinforces the learning of the 26 letters of the alphabet. THRASS-IT WINDOW shows how to form each of the lower-case and capital letters correctly, but these need to be practised by writing letters and words on paper. THRASS provides a logical method for children and adults to understand English and develop the key skills required for fluent reading, writing and spelling.

WHY USE THRASS-IT WINDOW?: The programme provides an interactive forum for both teachers and learners. For the teacher, it supplies a built-in teaching and assessment tool. For the learner, a flexible learning tool with the opportunity to practise and test their own performance. Teacher and learner can choose to move randomly through various screens depending on specific needs. Assignments can also be customised to the learner's needs e.g. by choosing to focus on one particular skill practice. THRASS-IT WINDOW provides immediate feedback. It supplies the teacher with an on-going analysis of the learner's strengths and weaknesses. Lively colourful pictures and one-player/two player games ensure that learning really is fun.

HOW TO USE THRASS-IT WINDOW: There are six sections, shown on the Main Menu: THRASSCHART; WORDCHART; Handwriting; Reading; Spelling; Assessment. Using these sections, the learner can explore phonemes using the THRASSCHART and WORDCHART, or watch the Letter Formation in Handwriting. The learner can look at the structure of words in Reading or play the Spelling game with a friend. Finally, the teacher can test the learner with the Assessment section.

USING THRASS-IT WINDOW: THREE MAIN WAYS
- By the teacher for diagnosis
The Assessment tests can be used diagnostically to help plan an individual teaching programme and for on-going assessment of progress. When you first use THRASS-IT WINDOW, we recommend that you diagnose the learner's awareness of the following: Letter Names; Letter Formation; Word Recognition and Graphemic Awareness using the tests in the Assessment Section. To do this, let the learner work through the tests. Use the results to plan a customised teaching programme and use the tests to monitor the learner's progress.
- By the teacher for teaching
THRASS-IT WINDOW may be used by a teacher, assistant or parent. It may be used as a teaching tool for individual learners or groups. If you have a good idea of a learner's strengths and weaknesses, you can select whether or not to focus on one area of practice or to let the learner work systematically from start (THRASSCHART) to finish (Spelling). If the learner makes errors you can choose to go into a particular part and focus on the same skill. Alternatively, choose to let the learner proceed through the screens in order.

Access to the Alphabet Controls screen is provided in the top right hand corner of the Main Menu screen. This allows you to change the letters in the Handwriting Section and on letter friezes to: [a] Lower-case only; [A] Capitals only; [aA] Lower-case and Capital.

- By the learner for learning and practise

THRASS uses terms such as: phoneme (speech sound); grapheme (spelling choice); graph; digraph and trigraph (the number of letters in a grapheme). These terms might require some initial introduction. Thereafter, the programme is self-explanatory. For some learners starting with the alphabet and reinforcing the names of the letters provides a useful starting point. Others can go straight to the THRASSCHART. A timer may be used by learners who wish to record how speedily they have completed an activity or game.

THRASSCHART

The THRASSCHART introduces the 44 phonemes (speech sounds) of English. With the use of the letter frieze, the graphemes can be broken down into letter names.

- Skills Practice

This develops an understanding of the relationship between the 26 lower-case letters and the 44 phonemes.

- Using the THRASSCHART screen

In the practice mode, the leaner is encouraged to explore the chart. A click on the phoneme-box will trigger the related phoneme and the THRASSCARD. The letter frieze can be used to spell out words letter by letter.

- THRASSCHART PLAY

The play area makes practising fun. The learner is asked to find phonemes by clicking on the chart. A correct answer is rewarded with points and the THRASSCARD. Both games can be played by one or two players. A revision option is available for the one player game.

WORDCHART

120 THRASSWORDS are displayed on this chart. Each word illustrates one of the grapheme choices shown on the THRASSCHART.

- Skills Practice

To reinforce and emphasise, by example, the graphemes displayed on the THRASSCHART.

- Using the WORDCHART screen

In the practice mode, the learner is encouraged to explore the WORDCHART. The 120 THRASSWORDS are shown to demonstrate each of the grapheme choices used in THRASS. A click on a written word will trigger the related spoken word and the THRASSCARD.

- WORDCHART PLAY

The play area makes practising fun. The learner is asked to find words by clicking on the chart. A correct answer is rewarded with points and the corresponding THRASSCARD. Both games can be played by one or two players. A revision option is available for the one player game.

HANDWRITING

The Handwriting Section introduces the names of 26 letters of the alphabet and shows the learner how to form them correctly. Learners name and write the lower-case and capital letters. The alphabet is also introduced.

- Skills Practice

Recognition of the letters of the alphabet and their correct formation.

- Using the HANDWRITING Screen

The practice area encourages free exploration of the alphabet in any order. The formation of each letter is demonstrated through animation.

- HANDWRITING PLAY

The first part focuses on letter names. After hearing a letter name the learner finds the letter in the frieze. A correct answer triggers the display of an enlarged letter. In the second part, the learner shows the letter's start point by clicking on it. Points are awarded for correct answers. Lower-case and/or capital letters may be displayed on the alphabet frieze in both the PRACTICE and the PLAY, using the control panel accessed from the Main Menu. A revision option is available for the one player game - to revise the name or start point.

READING

The Reading Section looks in closer detail at the 120 THRASSWORDS. The learner is encouraged to type the words and then to analyse them into number of phonemes, phoneme order, consonant or vowel phoneme and type of grapheme or each THRASSWORD. At the start, you need to choose the 1 or 2 player option.

- Skills Practice

Recognition of the phonemes in a word. Practise in changing the graphemes into phonemes. A search facility is available for the one player game only, allowing instant access to each of the 120 THRASSWORDS. The game is linear, starting with 'bird' and ending with 'glove'. With two players, the words are in random order.

- Using the READING Screen

This focuses attention on the structure of the 120 THRASSWORDS. The phoneme and letters in a grapheme are heard before the learner is asked to copy the word by typing it. Points are awarded for correct answers.

The games require the learner to analyse the word to find the number of phonemes in it. The learner then works out the order of the phonemes. The learner also specifies whether a particular phoneme is a consonant or vowel, and whether it is a graph, digraph or trigraph. There is a revision option for the one player game.

SPELLING

The Spelling Section introduces the learner to 120 graphemes (spelling choices) used to represent the 44 phonemes of English. This section is divided into two areas - Graphemes and Blends.

- Skills Practice

This teaches recognition of the graphemes. It provides practice in changing phonemes into graphemes. A search facility is available for the one player game, allowing instant access to each blend or grapheme word. If the two player game is chosen, the words appear in random order.

- GRAPHEME PLAY

The learner focuses on one phoneme-box at time. The learner has the opportunity to practise spelling the grapheme and the whole word. For each word, the phoneme and letter names are heard and highlighted. The learner is then asked to spell the whole word by typing it.

- BLENDS PLAY

A Consonant Phoneme Blend (CPB) may be represented by graphs or a combination of graphs and digraphs. This section involves breaking the blends down phoneme by phoneme and spelling out each word by typing it.

ASSESSMENT

The Assessment Section enables the teacher to design a learning programme for the learner and to assess the learner's progress. It can also be used as a diagnostic tool. This section is divided into four areas: Letter Tests, Word Recognition Tests, Grapheme Tests and Phonographic Tests.

- OVERALL TEST RESULTS

The software records the results produced by ALL learners during one session. The accumulated results can be accessed from the EXIT screen available from the main menu.

- TEST RESULTS SUMMARY

By scrolling through the name list the teacher is able to view the results produced by each learner. Only incorrectly answered questions are displayed in the list. Wrong answers are shown in red.

LETTER NAME TEST: A letter name is heard. The learner clicks the corresponding letter on the alphabet frieze. The test is available using lower-case or capital letters (by using the controls on the main screen).

HANDWRITING TEST: This assesses letter formation. A letter is displayed on screen and the learner shows the letter's start point by a mouse click. The test is available in lower-case or capital letters.

WORD RECOGNITION TEST: This assesses the learner's ability to recognise a word by sight. A picture is displayed along with four versions of the word. The learner is asked to find the correctly spelt word by clicking on it. The 8 tests cover the 120 THRASS WORDS. Each test contains 15 pictures and the word choices.

GRAPHEME TEST: This assesses graphemic awareness. A phoneme-box is shown at the top of the screen. The learner is required to type in the correct grapheme to complete the THRASSWORDS. There are a total of 9 tests each containing 5 phoneme boxes. These 9 tests cover the 120 THRASSWORDS.

PHONOGRAPHIC TEST: This test is used to assess spelling, phonemic and graphemic awareness. A picture is show on screen. The learner is required to type the THRASSWORD and enter the number of phonemes. Then the learner identifies the keygrapheme, type of grapheme and the consonant or vowel phoneme. The 15 tests each contain 8 words. The tests cover all the 120 THRASSWORDS.

VIEWING THE TEST RESULTS: The results can be viewed by the teacher or learner after each test using the Yes/No facility. Only questions given incorrect answers are listed. Wrong answers are displayed in red.

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