



CASE STUDY:

Leigh Academies Trust

Using Adobe Spark to bring Modern Foreign Languages to life.





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Leigh Academies Trust was founded in 2008 to help schools revolutionise their educational approaches. Now encompassing over 20,000 students between the ages of two months and 19 years, this multi-academy trust is on a mission to shape lives and transform communities with high-quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. The trust's recent adoption of Adobe Spark has proved instrumental in making this mission possible, with Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) teachers taking this opportunity to inspire their learners.

Spark was introduced to Leigh Academies Trust during the second lockdown, when MFL teachers across the trust were invited on a digital champions training course organised by Daniel Bull, Head of Digital Engagement, and which included Adobe Spark. Stewart Dearsley, Head of MFL, believed that bringing Adobe Spark into the MFL classroom would be a key way of integrating creativity with education using technology - and with dedicated MFL/Spark tutorials and live sessions with a former MFL teacher now working for Adobe, teachers would have all the support they need.



"When we became aware of Adobe Spark, we were struck by the benefits it had for us."

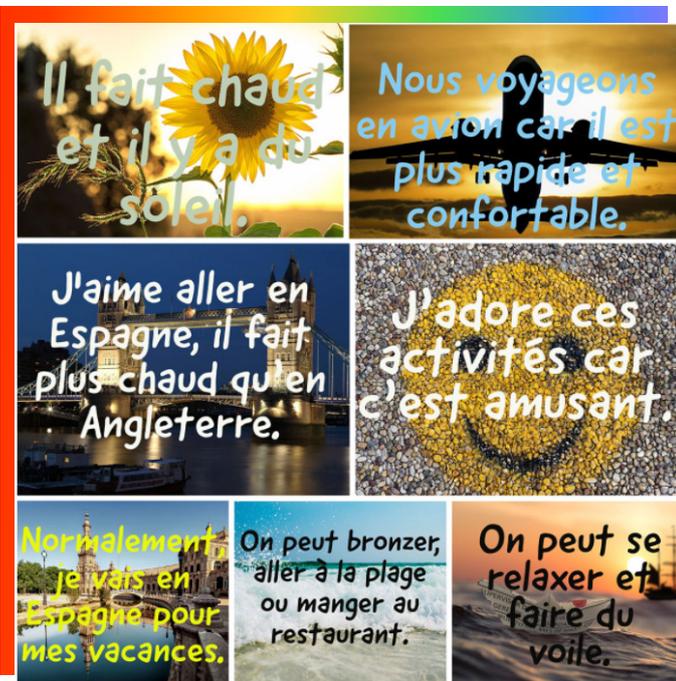
Daniel Bull, Head of Digital Engagement

Going cross-curricular: Daniel Bull on using Spark "powerfully and productively"

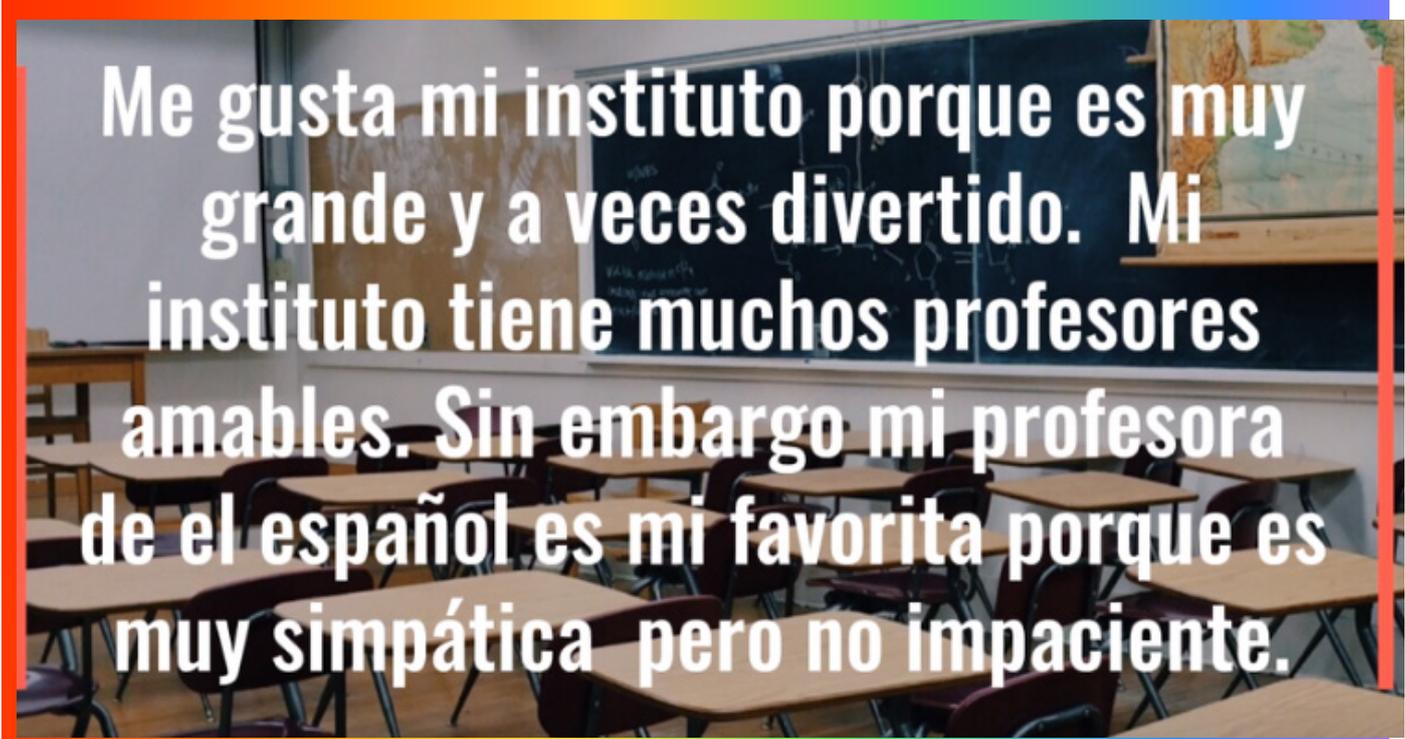
Adobe Spark is often used in art and design subjects, but, as Daniel explains, the tools it offers are far more wide-reaching and can be used across the whole curriculum. "It's not about art and design," he tells us. "It's about creativity, problem-solving, and using dual coding to embed voice, imagery, and text, as a way of reinforcing learning."

He goes on to say that engaging students in this way was critical in helping them retain more information and develop a passion for learning. To do that, Leigh needed to use Adobe Spark "powerfully and productively," bringing multimodal learning into the classroom.

One such subject was Modern Foreign Languages, where Adobe Spark is being used by teachers to bring traditionally book-based



Student work, courtesy of Leigh Academies Trust



Me gusta mi instituto porque es muy grande y a veces divertido. Mi instituto tiene muchos profesores amables. Sin embargo mi profesora de el español es mi favorita porque es muy simpática pero no impaciente.

Adobe Spark has a lot of different functionalities and interesting ways for us to use language for a specific purpose. It's important to find a solution that helps us determine what we can do to bring Modern Foreign Languages to life and make it more realistic. But it can't be a gimmick. It needs to have a foundation in teaching to make sure the tasks students are doing are making them learn and progress, at the same time as helping them engage."

Michelle Beard, Spanish teacher at Mascalls Academy

Student work, courtesy of Leigh Academies Trust

translation tasks to life for students. Michelle Beard, a Spanish teacher at Mascalls Academy, found it particularly helpful at solving the many challenges students faced in the subject, including confidence around speaking and the repetitiveness involved in learning a language.

Using Adobe Spark to bring learning to life

As Michelle explains, when learning a language, students are required to practise the same thing on repeat, which can often feel tedious for those whose passions don't lie in languages. "My challenge as a teacher is to make it different each time, and Adobe Spark makes that really easy," she says.

Rather than having to translate sentences in their books, with Spark, students are able to carry out translation tasks by using images, videos, subtitles, and voiceovers to explore the topics in a more engaging way. Michelle says that this frames the tasks in a totally different light, making them feel less repetitive by

allowing students to get creative and hands-on.

For Karen Pooley, an MFL teacher at The Leigh Academy, this was a game changer for students who don't like languages. As she says, "it brings their work to life." Many students simply can't express themselves when working from a book - but with technology, they can.

Adobe Spark also played a role in building confidence in students who didn't typically want to speak in class. "Confidence with speaking is a real barrier in language learning," Michelle tells us. By using Spark, she found that some of her shyest students soon became comfortable with adding voice overs to their work. She says, "I went from having around 10-20% of students who were happy to turn their microphones on, to suddenly having around 75-80%."

For Michelle, that in itself speaks to the success of Adobe Spark in improving soft skills in students.

Karen also found that the quieter children in her class suddenly found a medium to express themselves and became more engaged after using the voice over and video features of Adobe Spark.

Removing the barriers of technology: how Adobe Spark helps teachers

While integrating creative technology into education is a key part of the Leigh Academies Trust's digital strategy, Daniel says that it can pose challenges to teachers who aren't tech-savvy. "We don't want technology to be a barrier or complication in what we're doing."

Even Michelle admits that it can be overwhelming to change-up your usual teaching methods. To remove the barriers of technology, and avoid teachers getting stuck in the patterns of how they like to do things, schools need digital solutions that are user-friendly, centred on learning, and worth the leap of faith.

This is exactly what Adobe Spark offers. Teachers like Michelle and Karen are able to use their Spark knowledge and share it with colleagues across the trust, making it more accessible and easier to integrate.

In fact, the integration of Adobe Spark with education also helps teachers by facilitating independent learning. Daniel says, "too often, teachers think they have to do all the work, but with Spark, the students can create the resources."

For Daniel, the goal of this approach is for more staff across the Trust to look at how teachers like Michelle and Karen are using Adobe Spark, and to think, "I can do that as well!"

"We just need people to think outside the box," Daniel says. "It's all about creative thinking, and figuring out how we can do things differently in a way that produces an improved result." Michelle adds that as a teacher, you have to be okay with taking a risk and embracing new ideas when it comes to technology, because the value of student engagement far outweighs the learning curve.

About Adobe Spark

Adobe Spark is an integrated web-based program free to schools that empowers students to learn by creating visual stories. With the ability to create graphics, videos, and even web pages, Spark is simple to set up and makes it easy for teachers to engage their students in a way that improves learning outcomes, builds confidence, and really lets them shine.

If you're a Modern Foreign Languages teacher interested in using Adobe Spark in your school, contact us at [email] to see how we can support you directly with curriculum-linked tutorials and MFL Spark challenges.



"I found the kids picked it up quicker than I did. They managed to quickly create a professional looking video that they were proud of, and showed me what to do!"

Karen Pooley, MFL teacher at The Leigh Academy



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