

THE HFL EDUCATION NATIONAL PRIMARY ENGLISH CONFERENCE 2025:

Powerful Pedagogy: Say It, Read It, Write It

Thursday 6th February - ONLINE



Time	Details	Location	
8:45 – 9:00am	Conference registration Pre-recorded 'how to' and navigation		
9:00 – 9:10am	Conference welcome and introductions		
9:10 – 10:00am	Young Writers - how to free their creativity Valerie Bloom MBE, Poet Some children have lots of thoughts but find it difficult to transfer them onto paper. Others find it difficult to think of anything to write. Yet others are what we would call 'born writers'. The aim of this session is to show how we can get all as close as possible to being in the last category. With the use of games, role play, collective exercises, etc, we'll consider how we can encourage children to think like poets and then to put their thoughts on paper.	Main Stage	
10:00– 10:10am	Break		
10:10 – 11:00am	Adaptive teaching: what does this actually mean in practice? Clare Sealy, Head of Education Improvement for the States of Guernsey Adaptive teaching is advocated as an inclusive strategy, but what does this actually mean in practice? In this session, we will consider how we can adapt the level of challenge for our learners, with straightforward, practical strategies.	Main Stage	
11:00 – 11:20am	Break		
11:20am – 12:05pm	Workshops		Workshop rooms
	Building a reading culture of excellence and success for ALL pupils through a focus on effective pedagogy and	Getting Writing Right: Evidence-based recommendations for teaching writing	

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	<p>research-informed practice.</p> <p>Tracy Swinburne, CEO, Accomplish MAT, Strategic English Hub Lead, Jerry Clay English Hub</p>	<p>Ross Young, Founder of The Writing For Pleasure Centre and PhD researcher for the National Literacy Trust at the University of Edinburgh's Literacy Lab</p>	<p>Sharon Brown, Federation Headteacher, Barley and Barkway Federation</p>	
12:05 – 1:05pm	Lunch			
	Workshops			
1:05 – 1:50pm	<p>Harnessing the Power of Talk to Support Children's Thinking and Learning</p> <p>Julia Snell, Professor of Sociolinguistics, University of Leeds</p>	<p>The Balancing Act: Ensuring children have the skills and knowledge to be confident and engaged readers and writers in EYFS and KS1</p> <p>Charlotte Hacking, Learning and Programme Director, The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education</p>	<p>Powerful phonics and spelling</p> <p>HFL Education Primary English Team</p>	Workshop rooms
1:50 – 2:00pm	Break			
2:00 – 2:50pm	<p>Teaching for Comprehension: Rethinking Our Pedagogical Approach</p> <p>Dr Wayne Tennent, Senior Lecturer – Primary English Education, Brunel University London</p> <p>Historically, 'doing' a comprehension has involved reading a text and answering a series of questions. But what do we do with these 'right' and 'wrong' answers? How do they inform the next steps in learning? And why do we treat the text as somehow neutral?</p> <p>This talk will consider how we might address these questions (and others); and suggest how we might plan, teach and assess for reading comprehension, in a more pedagogically coherent way.</p>			Main Stage
2:50 – 3:00pm	Break			
3:00 – 3:50pm	<p>One Writer's Journey</p> <p>David Almond OBE, Children's Author</p> <p>An apparently perfect finished book is the product of an imperfect, often messy, playful, infuriating, and very human process that begins as we babble and scrawl as a child. In his</p>			Main Stage

	<p>keynote, David will talk about his own writing journey, from childhood to the present day. He will show his notebooks and drafts and show that the beauty and magic of language is accessible to us all. He will talk about the range of his work - novels, stories, picture books, plays – and about how it is inspired by the 'ordinary' world around us, and by people and places and objects and art of all kinds. David will talk about the importance and joy of writing for children, and how he 'came home' as a writer when he began to write for the young.</p>	
<p>3:50 – 4:00pm</p>	<p>Final thanks and conference close</p> <p>Michelle Nicholson, Lead Teaching and Learning Adviser, HFL Education</p>	

WORKSHOPS

Time slot one choices 11:20am – 12:05pm

Building a Reading culture of excellence and success for ALL pupils through a focus on effective pedagogy and research-informed practice.

Tracy Swinburne, CEO, Accomplish MAT, Strategic English Hub Lead, Jerry Clay English Hub

The session will involve delving deeply into developing a team reading culture. We will explore how effective reading culture should permeate everything within a school and how staff can be motivated and driven to consistently champion reading for all children. The session will evidence the impact that effective leadership can have on transformative change for all children and staff.

Getting Writing Right: Evidence-based recommendations for teaching writing

Ross Young, Founder of The Writing For Pleasure Centre and PhD researcher for the National Literacy Trust at the University of Edinburgh's Literacy Lab

This presentation draws on over fifty years of research reviews, including meta-analyses and case studies, conducted by The Writing for Pleasure Centre. It identifies 14 evidence-based principles that have been consistently associated with high-performing writing instruction. These principles, which form the core of the "Writing for Pleasure" pedagogy, include strategies such as building a community of writers, setting clear writing goals, and teaching the writing process. With a solid research foundation, these practices are shown to raise writing standards and accelerate progress for all learners. This session will explore how teachers can implement these principles to foster effective writing instruction in their classrooms.

Talk, Listen, Learn: Introducing Oracy Skills for Young Learners

Sharon Brown, Federation Headteacher, Barley and Barkway Federation

This session will explore the initial stages of cultivating an Oracy culture in two small schools, demonstrating how teachers are integrating Oracy into their teaching practices. By examining these "green shoots"—we will reveal the promising signs of growth and pupil engagement.

Time slot two choices 1:05 – 1:50pm

Harnessing the Power of Talk to Support Children's Thinking and Learning

Julia Snell, Professor of Sociolinguistics, University of Leeds

The talk children experience at school has consequences for their learning and cognitive development. Research has shown that pupils who participate in academically productive classroom discussion – what I and others call 'dialogic talk' or 'dialogue' – make greater progress than their peers who have not had this experience. In England, gains in achievement have been greatest for pupils from less privileged socioeconomic backgrounds, underlining the importance of dialogic talk to social mobility.

However, several challenges confront teachers who seek to promote dialogic teaching and learning, including pressure from high stakes standardised testing and policy demands for teachers and pupils to speak in ways deemed to conform with standardised English and subjective notions of 'appropriateness' and 'articulacy'.

In this session we explore why classroom talk is important to learning, what factors might stifle productive talk in the classroom, and how barriers to dialogue can be overcome.

The Balancing Act: Ensuring children have the skills and knowledge to be confident and engaged readers and writers in EYFS and KS1

Charlotte Hacking, Learning and Programme Director, The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education

In this workshop, Charlotte will introduce the model for teaching that she has developed with Dominic Wyse, Professor of Education at UCL: The Double Helix of Reading and Writing.

The model will help to illustrate what being literate entails, before exploring, through a range of activities based on high-quality children's books, how to implement the model in practice.

Participants will be able to see how to balance the teaching of knowledge and skills with fostering engagement and motivation for reading and writing, leading children to high level outcomes.

Powerful phonics and spelling

HFL Education Primary English Team

This workshop provides teachers with the tools and strategies needed to effectively tackle phonics and spelling challenges for all pupils in the classroom. We will share and draw upon the 'repertoire approach' to help you enhance your pupils' understanding and application of phonological, orthographical, morphological, and etymological awareness. Full of practical ideas and effective pedagogical approaches, this workshop offers valuable insights for everyone.