

The Newsletter of SANAKO UK [www.sanako.co.uk](http://www.sanako.co.uk)

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## The power of a language mentor

By **Victoria Mitchell**, Education Officer

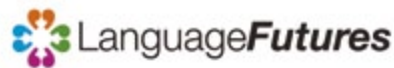


Does your school have language mentors and have you ever considered using adults as mentors in the language classroom? I had not until autumn 2016 when I began the **Language Futures** initiative at the school where I was languages co-ordinator.

If you haven't heard about it yet, Language Futures is an exciting approach for primary and secondary schools interested in broadening their language provision and linguistic diversity. Its core purpose is to generate deep engagement with learning, such that learners are motivated not solely by outcomes but also by the learning process, and that they take responsibility for their learning both within and beyond the classroom.

Language Futures develops languages – all languages, not just the ones offered through the curriculum. It gives pupils the freedom to choose any language that they would like to learn independently. As a teacher, although I could turn my hand to many things, speaking a range of far flung languages was not one of them. Romance languages I could just about manage but Mandarin, not quite.

A core feature of the Language Futures approach is the personalised support offered to pupils by mentors. Language Futures mentors are volunteers with an in-depth knowledge and fluency in a particular language, recruited to provide good models of the language and to advise students on language and learning tasks in the classroom.



A quick sweep of the staff where I worked showed we had Arabic speaking mid-day supervisors, a German graduate and a Spanish native amongst us. Couple that with parents who were Greek, Lithuanian, Mandarin, and Russian speakers to name a few, along with my French and Italian degree and I was feeling enthused. (You can also consider other options, for example fostering links with a local college or University to see if they can provide native speakers.) I encouraged some staff and parents to get on board, gathered a group of keen year 5s and 6s, and undertook a different language project each half term with a successful and

tangible outcome. At the end of the first project pupils chose to teach their peers some maths in the language they had decided to study. It was great to see them take ownership of their learning and put into practice the pronunciation they had learned with their mentor.

Elsewhere, Language Futures has been running successfully in a variety of secondary schools including Linton Village College, where it was developed in 2009. A co-educational comprehensive secondary academy serving a largely rural community, Language Futures has deepened their community links still further by using members from the local area as mentors.

“Mentoring is an integral part of the Language Futures process for us at Linton Village College. We understand that it would not be the success it is without the vital and valuable role that our community mentors play in teaching language, sharing their culture and enriching the experience for all our students.” Siobhan Judge, Language Futures Co-ordinator, Linton Village College.

I cannot recommend Language Futures and its mentors enough. The pupils received support and coaching from fluent speakers, which brought the language to life, and the mentors felt proud of sharing their language. I, for one, am glad I took the leap of faith and made mentors a powerful asset in my classroom.

*Victoria Mitchell is the Education Officer for the Association for Language Learning and is responsible for developing and editing content for language teachers. Victoria is also a part time primary teacher specialising in French and has piloted the Language Futures approach in primary schools in Nottinghamshire.*

## Kingswood School, Bath – Intuitive and reliable software

Roderick Duke, Head of Modern Languages, Kingswood School



At Kingswood, we have the highest aspirations for all of our pupils. Within a community which promotes the importance of shared values, we seek to encourage a real enthusiasm for learning and a spirit of enquiry. At the core of a Kingswood education is our belief that every individual has talents to be discovered and nurtured and that

our challenge is to develop these whilst preparing students for their future beyond school. Kingswood School pupils are really enjoying and benefiting from the many useful functions of the **Sanako Study 1200** system installed last year. With the current changes in language teaching on improved pronunciation, the high quality recording and paired speaking features of the system allow pupils, with discreet teacher support, to enhance the authenticity of their accents in the foreign language being spoken. Teachers can give pupils bespoke feedback and pupils can try to mimic native speaker models.

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This is the second digital language laboratory used at Kingswood School and the language staff opted for **Sanako Study 1200** after careful consideration of other products on the market. We appreciated the intuitive lay-out of the lab and its reliability to enhance the language learning experience during a month long trial.

Staff can collect in pupils' recordings very easily, pre-record questions, and pupils can then record seamlessly in the gaps they add themselves which works well for the new GCSE; role-play, visual stimulus element and general conversation. Kingswood staff have been using tongue twisters to help pupils work on their intonation and pronunciation, and pupils have enjoyed recording themselves getting faster and faster!

## Hills Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge – Preparing for A-Level

Amélie Bowers, Acting Head of Modern Languages



Last September we found ourselves in a difficult position. Our previous language lab, which had struggled for several years to cope with the College's successive IT upgrades, ceased to be of any use.

In addition, the new A-Level, with its increased demands in skills and content for both speaking and listening, meant that we had to change some of our teaching and learning approaches.

For example, it would be impossible to prepare students to write listening summaries without them having full control of the listening tracks.

It was therefore imperative that we acquired new software to enable our students to spend a dedicated period of time developing and honing their speaking and listening skills in our language laboratory. We chose the **Sanako Study 700** version as we wanted to start using our language laboratory again as quickly as possible.

We are now able to seamlessly supplement our learning platform and virtual resources with the **Study 700**, and students enjoy the random pairing facilities and the possibility of being corrected by teachers. Our Year 13 students also like that this system is much more reliable, allowing them to start working as soon as their computer profile has loaded.

However, for my colleagues the best features were the fantastic training we received prior to using the software, as well as its ease of use. The facility to export all students' speaking work quickly was considered a revelation for some whilst others enjoyed the playlist facility and the possibility to prepare materials ahead of the lesson, with the system remembering their profiles. We are now looking at enabling our students to use our resources and the language lab facilities both from their college computers and at home by upgrading next year to the **Study 1200** version.

## Meldrum Academy – Developing independent listening skills

Liegha Lang, PT Languages Meldrum Academy



At Meldrum Academy we work together – staff, pupils, parents and partner agencies – to meet the needs of the individual, so that every pupil can develop his or her personal skills and talents. All members of the Modern Languages team are real enthusiasts for the languages they teach and are keen to encourage pupils to develop their language skills by using a variety of teaching materials and resources, which

hopefully make language learning interesting and also enjoyable.

Based on a desire to allow pupils to practise listening on their own rather than as a whole class, we undertook an investigation of various systems and suppliers, one of which was **Sanako Study 1200**. Following an on-site demonstration to both the languages department and the IT support team,

and an informative visit to an existing user, we decided to select **Sanako** due to the obvious quality of the software. In order to make multi-level teaching easier we use the software in all of our rooms for listening and speaking activities. The activities are taken from a variety of different textbooks and things we have made ourselves. We have made good use of the student pronunciation software, in particular with the less able classes.

Close integration with the existing school network allows students to access the required lesson material from anywhere in the school and their work can be saved to their own area and/or collected back by the teacher in seconds. The students can take a laptop and a headset and be up and running in minutes which allows teachers the flexibility for whole class, group based or individual listening and speaking activities as and when required.

As the students feel more and more confident using the software we will look towards making more use of the Tutor software in getting students to talk to each other and provide peer-assessment.

## ARK Putney Academy, London – Best return on investment

Emilie Sinot, Head of MFL at The Ark Putney Academy



“Although the Ark Academy Putney has a long standing relationship with **Sanako** - it was the first school in the UK to install a fully digital interactive language laboratory in the 1990's when known by its former name of Elliot School – we wanted to carry out a full investigation of all options and suppliers to ensure the best

return on the Academy's investment. We looked at various systems and suppliers, one of which was the **Sanako Study 1200** system.”

“We talked to our IT support team too, and in the end we went for the **Study 1200** due to its versatility, flexibility, reliability, intuitive design and various upgrade options - for example the Academy has recently added various pronunciation testing voice packs.”

“It's still early days for us, but we feel we're making great progress following the initial training session, and all the signs are good – the various activities are proving successful in enhancing the teaching and learning experience for both staff and students alike. We opted for individual student booths with partitions for increased privacy to boost speaking confidence, but fully intend to make use of the school and community download options allowing staff and students to work from almost anywhere.”

Head of MFL, Emilie Sinot, told us about the process behind choosing **Sanako's Study 1200** system for her department:



### Sanako Study 1200 version 9 released



We're happy to let you know that the technical development team has released version 9 of **Sanako's Study** software.

New activities for MFL teaching include **video pairing**, **lesson capture video** and an optional **conference interpreting system** module, alongside a few background updates to keep the software running smoothly.

### Sanako Anywhere



Enabling students to continue MFL lessons at home or on the move is a great way to maximise speaking and listening activities. **Sanako Anywhere** allows tutors to **drag and drop lesson plans** for students to access **at home** or for **independent study**.

### Sanako Pronounce Live

Have you tried out **Sanako's** website to support independent pronunciation practice?



This innovative module for improving oral skills in a target language is a true online solution for pronunciation practice; no installation or downloads are needed.

**Copy and paste** text into the app, **listen** to the authentic pronunciation, then **repeat** what you hear. Ideal for speaking practice – sample it for free at [www.pronouncelive.com](http://www.pronouncelive.com)

### TILT event – University of Sunderland – 4th July 2017

Sanako brings the TILT event to the North East, with a focus on developing speaking and listening skills. We share hands-on, specific training for teachers, giving language teachers practical lesson ideas to improve students' speaking, listening and vocabulary skills.

### Secondary Subject Conference – Harris Chobham Academy – 13th July 2017

**Sanako** will be supporting the Harris Federation as it hosts a conference and exhibition for MFL teachers in the area, and we hope to see some of you there.

### TILT event – Epsom College – Autumn Term 2017

The exact date is yet to be finalised, but **Sanako** is delighted that Epsom College has agreed to host a TILT event for us. Please keep an eye out for confirmation of the date.

To be kept updated check [www.sanako.co.uk](http://www.sanako.co.uk)

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