



## **Reading in colour : to what extent does a colour-coded grapheme system aid English primary children to read French?**

As a lecturer at the University of Plymouth, I am responsible for teaching educational theory and practice to students who wish to become Primary teachers. These teachers will have to teach Primary Foreign Languages (PFL) from Y3 to Y6 even if they have no specialism in French.

It was through Gabrielle Bogart, a French teacher working in Plymouth, that I was introduced to 'Facilecture', which she uses to teach PFL. I found this approach very interesting as it uses a system of coloured graphemes to represent French vowel sounds. I based my Masters research on 'Facilecture' and met the author, Francis Ribano, who helped me encode French texts I was using in my research work into colour coded texts to use with the children I was teaching.

Part of my research involved teaching French to a group of Y5 and Y6 English children, in a primary school in Devon, over a 14 week period of 30 minute classes. Having completed my research, I am able to conclude that 'Facilecture' is a very useful system for teaching children to decode in French. The colour coding helps children to pronounce words far more correctly than ordinary black print and therefore to match the word with its meaning more easily, as they can hear and read it accurately. It has not only given the children a lot of confidence in the traditionally tricky area of reading, but as a method of teaching, it proved invaluable to me and to the other two teachers who used 'Facilecture', one of whom was not a specialist teacher of French

I can clearly recommend using 'Facilecture' as a way of helping teachers teach and children read French. If it were to gain widespread acceptance in other English schools, it would be possible to evaluate it using a greater sample, over a longer period. I have begun this research process and am happy to share my findings with those who are interested in them.

Howard Cotton, November 2010

Lecturer in Languages and Literacy  
University of Plymouth

Contact : [h.cotton@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:h.cotton@plymouth.ac.uk)