

Proyecto Habla – Speak Spanish Project 2019/20

Seaham School report:

Durham University students attended Seaham High School each Monday for 2 hours to work with students studying Spanish in KS3 and KS4. Students in KS3 were of a range of abilities – from mixed ability classes in Year 7, set classes in Year 8 to those who opted for GCSE Spanish in Year 9. Year 10 students were 85% Higher tier candidates at GCSE and 15% at Foundation level.

Durham University students acted as language assistants and mentors focussing on Speaking and Listening. Students worked on speaking photocards, role plays and general conversation questions. This mirrors the AQA GCSE Spanish exam. We practise these skills throughout from Year 7.

Year 7s had their first opportunity to talk with another Spanish speaker rather than just their class teacher. Their reaction and response time on everyday conversational Spanish questions has increased due to this.

Year 8s worked on topic-based questioning, engagement in all speaking and listening tasks was huge and students enjoyed taking part in the project as it differed to normal classwork.

Year 9s felt incredibly supported by the university mentor, when it came to having more time to discussing grammar, tenses and how to improve their spoken Spanish.

Year 10s exam technique in preparation for the speaking exam has been fantastically supported by the 1:1 and group speaking sessions. All students' performance increased in February mock exams.

Feedback received from the Head of Spanish at Seaham:

'I have seen a notable improvement in students' pronunciation, spontaneous speaking and overall confidence throughout this project. This has allowed the students to work on a 1:1 basis which they just don't always get time to do within a class of 30. Students feel more engaged and have looked forward to their Monday Spanish sessions. As a school we are definitely planning to continue with this project whether it be face to face or via virtual means.'

Feedback received from the high-school pupils benefiting from the project:

'I feel more confident when answering speaking questions.'

'I am quiet and don't like talking in front of the whole class, but have really enjoyed working with the university students.'

'I have enjoyed practising how to say words properly in Spanish.'

'I am not too scared anymore when being recorded in my speaking mocks.'

'The university students were really happy and it was nice to talk in Spanish to someone other than my teacher.'

Feedback received from Durham student mentors:

Four second-year students in Spanish (Daniel Barnes, Amy Cohen, Daniel Craven and Rebecca Hanks) took part in the project as mentors. They have described their tutoring experience in the following way.

Daniel Barnes - Second Year Spanish and Russian student

'Tutoring at Seaham High School was an invaluable experience that really opened my eyes to a future career path in teaching! It was a great experience to go in on a weekly (or sometimes bi-weekly) basis and not only see the progress of the students in terms of their Spanish, but also in terms of watching their confidence grow! Also, the tutoring was really well taken by the students and it was great to see their excitement when they saw us! The experience was really well organised! It was an absolute pleasure to take part in the programme!'

Amy Cohen – Second Year Spanish and German student

'I found the experience of partaking in Proyecto Habla very enjoyable and rewarding. I felt it help me with my language skills, as well as interacting with students, which will benefit me with future volunteering and job prospects. I am very grateful to have had this opportunity.'

Rebecca Hanks – Second Year Spanish and French student

'I found this tutoring experience to be extremely useful and rewarding. The activities I was given to aid the students were easy to understand and fun. I felt like I was able to gain a good understanding of teaching as a career from partaking in this project.'