Aim:
The learning of a foreign language is an integral part of school curricula around the world. The benefits are universal, both individually and to society. In the United Kingdom there is consistent reporting of an apparent reluctance of the British to learn a foreign language (Lanvers and Coleman, 2013; McPake et al., 1999; Watts, 2003) with an ‘English-is-enough’ (Coleman, 2009: 125) attitude and the notion of language learning in Britain being superfluous, based on the position of English as a global commodity (Ensslin and Johnson, 2006).

This poster summarises a small-scale case study in a rural co-educational Languages and Sport specialist school in eastern England. The study explored how Physical Education might offer an avenue of developing interest in French and foster children’s intrinsic motivation to study French.

Method:

- **Year 7 pupils** (n = 87: males =49, females = 38) completed a six week introductory unit of work on Handball in their Physical Education lessons.
- Concurrently, in French lessons they learnt key vocabulary associated with the sport.
- The finale to the unit was an inter-house handball tournament involving everyone, either as players, managers, coaches, officials, spectators, captains, or journalists.
- The main stipulation during the preparation and delivery phases was that communication should be conducted in French.
- Data was collected through a multi-method approach of semi-structured focus group interviews and questionnaires.
- 87 pupil questionnaires (49 male and 38 female) were returned.
- Eight separate group interviews with pupils were conducted after the tournament: four groups of players (n = 25), two groups of spectators (n = 7), two groups of officials and journalists (n = 11).
- Individual interviews took place with the French and Physical Education teachers.

Findings:

**How did you find learning French and then trying to use it when playing Handball?**

- ‘It strengthened our French by using it in a fun way.’ (female pupil)
- ‘It was combining a subject that I liked and one that I don’t like.’ (male pupil)
- ‘You get to expand your vocabulary. You get to use it in a different way.’ (female pupil)
- ‘Could use it in a real situation.’ (male pupil)

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Conclusion:

Creative methods of engaging pupils in learning a language through the use of immediate resources such as other subjects can motivate and capture pupil interest. Physical Education as the vehicle for learning can promote a passion for languages, particularly for boys. One of the advantages captured by this project is that those children who engaged in speaking and listening within an applied context demonstrated increased confidence with less anxiety about making mistakes that can be so visible when speaking in a classroom.