

INTERWRITE Lessons

Thomasson Memorial

Using the InterWrite SchoolPad with Deaf and Hearing Impaired Children

Access to information and the opportunity to express ideas are vital factors in every child's education. Staff at the Thomasson Memorial School in Bolton are justifiably proud of the way computer technology is used to enhance the education of their deaf and hearing-impaired pupils. Pupils at this special school for the deaf have a wide range of communication needs and Bill Wilson, the Head of school, and his team use laptops, data projectors and interactive white boards to help deliver the curriculum.

Teaching in a group situation works best when both teacher and pupils can take an active part in the lesson. This is where the InterWrite SchoolPad came to the rescue.

Each classroom is equipped with a laptop, data projector and ordinary whiteboard, the pupils sit at desks in a horseshoe formation around the board. The group is intent on the animated story projected on the board and the teacher is using an InterWrite SchoolPad to control the proceedings.

The teacher is able to sit in front of the children maintaining good eye contact while using the SchoolPad to stop and start the story, highlight words and add written comments for all to see. But, there is an added bonus allowed by this system. When a pupil wants to add a written comment to the story - the InterWrite SchoolPad is past to them to interact with the presentation.

The advantages of using the SchoolPad with deaf and hearing impaired children are:

- The teacher can be in the best position for communication with

the group and still have full control over the image on the whiteboard.

- The pad can be passed around the class allowing pupils to make written and sketched contributions.
- Pupils can take control of the learning material.
- Pupils can interact with the whiteboard without leaving their seats.
- Pupils can work collaboratively and interact with each other.

The InterWrite SchoolPad is also useful in situations where several activities are taking place in a class.

Using a wireless SchoolPad and data projector helped children to work together and develop communication, language and turn taking skills. For Example, two pupils work in front of an ordinary whiteboard. An interactive computer presentation created by the teacher is projected on the board and the pupils' task is to choose appropriate adjectives in a story. The two pupils are able to focus on the board and interact with the information by passing the lightweight SchoolPad between them. The teacher, working with a group at the other end of the classroom, is able to view the whiteboard to keep an eye on the pairs' progress whilst encouraging independent learning.

One teacher at Thomasson Memorial School sums up by saying, "The SchoolPad is very useful and adds a new dimension to our work."

Case Study from Mike North and Sue Stevens
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Students use the SchoolPad to interact with the teacher's lesson.



With the SchoolPad, a teacher can present while all the students in the classroom can answer from their seats.