

NALDIC Review

Talking Pen - Mantra Lingua

For fifteen years Mantra Lingua has been publishing dual-language materials and other resources that promote linguistic and cultural diversity within the curriculum. These include dual-language books, CD-Roms, friezes, maps, and most recently a new technology called Talking Pen. The Talking Pen is an MP3 player that can store and play audio files. It has a tip that interfaces with tiny microdots impregnated into text-based resources, such as books and charts that deliver contextualised audio to the user via 'hotspots' on the printed surface. Audio can take many forms, including sound effects, music, songs and spoken text in any language. Interactivity can also be programmed into resources such as topic questions and answers.

Without the need for a computer, the technology can deliver audio to a user via the pen's integrated speaker, through headphones or connected external speakers. Learners can work individually, or collaboratively in pairs or groups to access audio support for tasks embedded within the pen-enabled resources. The pen and associated resources, at best, support inclusive practice and a personalised approach to learning.

Mantra Lingua's Key Stage 1 and 2 bilingual texts have been pen-enabled. On the first page a user initiates the Talking Pen by touching a start button that signals to the internal software what resource it is working with. The user then selects either English or another language by touching the relevant language 'hotspot'. On the corner of every page a learner can access the corresponding audio extract. Multiple language versions can be stored on the pen's hard-disk. A user can switch between languages by pressing a button on the side of the Talking Pen or selecting the other language 'hotspot' at the beginning of the book.



For full details. go to <http://www.mantralingua.com/index.php?page=home>

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