MULTILIT Book Levels:

Towards a new system for levelling texts

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Abstract

This paper describes the development of a new system for levelling texts to enable the selection of appropriate books for use in the instruction of low-progress readers. Following a summary of the relevant literature providing empirical support for the importance of matching students to books to optimise reading progress, the MULTILIT Book Levels System is described and its development detailed. Various methods for placing students on these levels are suggested and described.

Primary school teachers frequently face the task of finding books at the right level of difficulty to accommodate the specific needs of students with differing levels of reading skill. Teachers of low-progress readers, in particular, face this challenge on a regular basis. This paper describes the development of a book levelling system for use by teachers when attempting to match low-progress readers with text at an appropriate level of difficulty.

The importance of placing both beginning and remedial readers on text that is instructionally appropriate has become increasingly recognised in recent years (Clay, 1991; Fry, 2002; Wheldall, Colmar, Wenban–Smith, Morgan, & Quance, 1992). Opinion has converged on the view that such students need to be working with text at an instructional level that is neither too hard (and therefore intimidating for the student), nor too easy (and thereby providing few learning opportunities). Wheldall (1995) has referred to this as the Goldilocks principle - not too easy, not too hard, but just right. In response to the growing body of empirical support for matching students to books to optimise reading progress, the MULTILIT Book Levels were developed.

Following a consideration of the existing empirical and theoretical literature (summarised below), the development and components of the MULTILIT Book Levels system are described. This is followed by an outline of suggested methods for placing students on appropriate MULTILIT Book Levels.

Rationale for Placing Students on Levelled Text

Levelled text refers to reading materials that represent a progression from easier to more difficult texts (Brabham & Villaume, 2002). Several reasons for using levelled books are elucidated in the research literature. The three main purposes of levelling books will be discussed with reference to relevant empirical research. The first two reasons relate to the relationship between the reader, the text and the task. The third reason describes the use of

levelled text to assess students' current reading ability, to track progress and to identify struggling students.

Reason 1: To optimise reading progress. Educators must consider the importance of matching reading materials to the reader and the task in order to ensure maximum instructional efficacy (Brabham & Villaume, 2002; Jamison Rog & Burton, 2001/2002; Weaver, 2000). Testing each child on random books until one is found that is at the right instructional or independent reading level is both time-consuming and impractical. Brabham and Villaume (2002) refer to the need for teachers to have access to levelled text to allow them to choose reading materials that fit the instructional needs of all students, rather than relying on grade-level materials.

Guided reading, using instructional level texts, has been identified as an important component of literacy instruction (Brabham & Villaume, 2002; Lanning & LaMere, 2000). For instructional purposes (primarily guided reading), an accuracy level of 90-95% is suggested (Jamison Rog & Burton, 2001/2002; Lanning & LaMere, 2000; Paris, 2002) so that students have the opportunity to utilise reading strategies (such as decoding) in a supportive environment. Donovan, Smolkin and Lomax (2000) consider instructional reading level to be the "highest level that could be read satisfactorily with assistance" (p.310).

The readability of text has been identified as a critical variable in highly effective remedial reading procedures such as Pause, Prompt and Praise (Glynn, McNaughton, Robinson, & Quinn, 1979). The efficacy of this tutoring program has been demonstrated in numerous studies (see, for example, Glynn & McNaughton, 1985; Wheldall & Colmar, 1990; Wheldall, Colmar, & Freeman, 1991; Wheldall & Glynn, 1989). Wheldall, et al. (1992) remark that "book level may be at least as important as the tutoring methodology; in fact, the effectiveness of the tutoring methods may be contingent upon appropriate book level" (p. 179).

Reason 2: To provide opportunities for successful independent reading. Another important reason for levelling books is to ensure that students experience success, rather than frustration, when reading independently. This assurance of success when reading for pleasure is particularly important for struggling readers for whom motivation is often an issue (Worthy & Sailors, 2001). Independent reading activities include silent reading at school, reading for pleasure at home and reading to find information for a project. Independent reading level is considered to be around 96-100% accuracy (Jamison Rog & Burton, 2001/2002; Paris, 2002). Simply put, an independent reading level is "the highest level that could be read easily and fluently without assistance" (Donovan et al., 2000, p. 310).

Several studies have looked at students' self-selection of recreational reading books and have typically found that students, in particular struggling students, choose books at an inappropriate level. Kragler (2000) found that above average students were generally choosing books that were too easy while below average students were typically choosing books that were too hard, that is, within their frustration level. The term frustration level text is generally considered to be text read at less than 90% accuracy (Jamison Rog & Burton, 2001/2002; Paris, 2002). Donovan et al. (2000) found that only around 15% of books selected by first and second grade students were at their actual independent reading level.

Reason 3: To monitor reading progress. Another persuasive argument for having books levelled is to assist educators in assessing children's reading development and to identify struggling students (Jamison Rog & Burton, 2001/2002; Paris, 2002). To ensure that students are progressing well, regular monitoring of performance is essential. Standardised tests are time consuming and should really only be carried out every three to six months, making them unsuitable for frequent use by classroom teachers. Having books levelled allows teachers to test students at regular intervals to determine their approximate current reading level, both independent and instructional. The current reading level may be defined

as the highest level text the student can read independently (96-100% accuracy). With access to levelled text, students who were failing to make adequate progress may be identified and given appropriate intervention.

The relationships between the reader, the text and the task are clearly deserving of consideration, particularly when educating low-progress readers. While determining the reading level of a student is apparently relatively straightforward, assigning an age or grade level to text is a complex issue. The readability of the text must be determined and considered.

Methods for Levelling Books

The term *readability* (as well as its synonyms *decodability* and *comprehensibility*) has been defined as the difficulty level of text (Reynolds & Fletcher-Janzen, 1990, p.915). For the purpose of this review, the term readability will be used when referring to the difficulty level of the text or book, irrespective of the method used.

The two main methods of estimating the difficulty of text are readability formulae and levelling procedures. A readability formula is defined as an objective numerical formula used to calculate the age or grade level of text (Fry, 2002). A levelling procedure is specified as a method used to estimate the readability of text, considering certain subjective factors of judgement (Fry, 2002).

Although the functions of readability formulae and levelling procedures are alike, the methods involved and the variables that need to be considered are quite different. While readability formulae are objective, and in most cases can be applied using a computer program, levelling procedures tend to be more subjective as they take into account factors such as content, format, and illustrations (Fry, 2002; Weaver, 2000). The strengths and weaknesses of each approach will be addressed following a brief history of each approach.

Readability formulae. According to Fry (2002) syntactic difficulty and semantic difficulty are the two measures upon which most traditional readability formulae are based. Syntactic difficulty is usually estimated by calculating sentence length. Word difficulty, frequency, familiarity and length are considered to be facets of semantic difficulty (Fry, 2002; Brabham & Villaume, 2002).

Fry (2002) asserts that readability formulae were a "part of what became known as the scientific movement in education" (p.290) which began in the 1920s. This was an era of testing students' reading ability and IQ using national standardised tests. Word frequency counts led to vocabulary controlled reading series. Until the mid-1980s, these were the staple reading diet of primary aged students (Fry, 2002).

These series, however well graded, were criticised for their repetitive language and contrived stories (Fry, 2002; Goodman, 1986; Hoffman, Roser, Salas, Patterson, & Pennington, 2001). It was the move away from vocabulary controlled and carefully graded books to "whole-language" or "real books" in the late 1980s (Hoffman et al., 2001) that created the need for a reliable way to level books (Fry, 2002). While real books were thought to be more interesting, they were not graded, which made it difficult for teachers to choose appropriate materials for their students (Fry, 2002; Hoffman et al., 2001; Jamison Rog & Burton, 2001/2002). A way of levelling or grading real books to allow easy matching of books to students' level of reading skill was clearly required.

Lively and Pressey proposed the first readability formula in 1923 (Lively & Pressey, 1923). Their method was to compare 1000 words from a book to an extensive most frequent word list (from Thorndyke's Teacher's Word Book). Since then a plethora of formulae have been developed and published to estimate text difficulty (Fry, 2002; Klare, 1984).

In an attempt to make the determining of readability faster and simpler, Edward Fry published his two-factor (syllables and sentences) formula in 1963. This widely used formula

was designated for application in grades 1 through 12. To determine the grade-level of a book, the user looks up on a chart the average number of syllables and sentences in three 100-word passages (Fry, 1977; Klare, 1984).

In addition to the numerous two-factor formulae, formulae were developed that employed the cloze procedure to determine the difficulty of text. The first such formula was developed by Coleman in 1965 (Klare, 1984). Every Nth word from a text was replaced with a blank, which the student was required to fill in. The cloze procedure, although reputable, is considered to be time consuming to score and it does not allocate grade levels to the results (Allen, 1985).

A major advance, in terms of both reliability and efficiency, was the introduction of computerised readability formulae. This increased level of sophistication allowed larger samples and often, entire books to be analysed. The Lexile Framework, the ATOS, and the Degrees of Reading Power are three computerised readability formulae used by large book publishers (Fry, 2002).

The validity of readability formulae has been primarily supported by research examining the correlations between the various formulae (Fry, 1977). Britton and Lumpkin (as cited in Fry, 1977) compared five of the most widely used readability formulae at the time and found close agreement in grade level designation and almost perfect agreement in ranking. This close agreement is very possibly due to the fact that similar syntactic and semantic variables are considered when applying most formulae to text.

Readability formulae are not so reliable when tested using students' actual reading performance as the criterion index for assigning a reading age or level. Fuchs, Fuchs and Deno (1984) examined the adequacy of six readability formulae to predict passage difficulty. When compared to the actual reading scores of two hundred and seventy one students, the

readability formula scores were found to be poor predictors of passage difficulty. Moreover, they mostly failed to agree with each other.

Readability formulae have also been criticised for being too objective (Bailin & Grafstein, 2001; Beals, 1989; Brabham & Villaume, 2002; Weaver, 2000). In particular they do not consider the impact of grammar, style, textual coherence, content and so forth on the readability of books (Bailin & Grafstein, 2001; Beals, 1989; Fry, 2002; Brabham & Villaume, 2002; Weaver, 2000). While these variables may contribute to the readability of a book for some children, it is not realistic to consider the background knowledge or interests of every student in the class, state or country when levelling books.

During the 1980s, a more comprehensive view of readability became popular (Allen, 1985; Beals, 1989; Brabham & Villaume, 2002). New factors were suggested for consideration (Allen, 1985). This more subjective, rather than formulaic, view of readability led to the development of book levelling procedures (Brabham & Villaume, 2002).

Book levelling procedures. In the past decade, the focus has shifted away from formulae to book levelling procedures. These procedures differ from their predecessors, readability formulae, in their consideration of more subjective text features when determining readability (Brabham & Villaume, 2002; Fry, 2002). While readability formulae generally consider syntactic and semantic difficulty, book levelling procedures consider factors such as content and themes, format of the page and use of illustrations (Brabham & Villaume, 2002; Fry, 2002; Jamison Rog & Burton, 2001/2002; Weaver, 2000).

A number of authors pay credit to Marie Clay (1991) for the part her Reading Recovery System played in the initial stages of book levelling procedures (Fry, 2002; Jamison Rog & Burton, 2001/2002; Weaver, 2000). Extensive training is required to implement this book levelling procedure, as resources are not readily available to the public (Weaver, 2000). Text support factors considered when determining the readability of books

include amount of natural language, understanding about print, picture support and the number of high frequency words (Weaver, 2000). As Reading Recovery is a first-grade intervention program, books are only levelled for Grade 1 to Grade 2.9 (Fry, 2002) limiting its usefulness.

Fountas and Pinnell (1999) published their book levelling procedure, for grade K-3 books, in 1999. It is similar to the Reading Recovery levels in its consideration of predominantly subjective text features of amount of print, text format, language patterns and vocabulary type (Weaver, 2000). As with the Reading Recovery System, an extensive list of levelled books is available. Unlike the Reading Recovery System, teachers may level their own books using the published procedure.

Jamison Rog and Burton (2001/2002) analysed and synthesised the levelling procedures of Clay (1991), Fountas and Pinnell (1999), Hiebert (1999a, 1999b) and Peterson (1991) in the development of their book levelling system. One criticism of these procedures was that the criteria or text characteristics of each level were sometimes vague (Jamison Rog & Burton, 2001/2002).

One appeal of book levelling procedures is the provision of finer gradations at the primary levels (Fry, 2002). This allows for a more gradual text progression, which is crucial for low-progress readers. Labelling books with grades or ages that progress one-year at a time limits their usefulness for teachers. Most book levelling procedures cater to the wide range of reading ability in each grade by assigning grade or age levels in years and months (Hatcher, 2000).

The numerous and varied factors considered in such procedures are subjective and as such are less likely to be replicated accurately. Using the same book levelling procedures, teachers have assigned different ratings to the same books (Hoffman, et al., 2001). Related to the large number of subjective text and reader characteristics to be considered is the issue of

time. The number of features to be considered makes the application of most procedures very time consuming.

When assessing the readability of a book, levelling procedures take more factors into account than most formulae. The inclusion of these factors has wide appeal to teachers (Brabham & Villaume, 2002; Fry, 2002). However, there is scant published research proving that these factors actually predict the difficulty of text. In fact, many book levelling procedures have been criticised due to the lack of published empirical data to support their validity and reliability (Fry, 2002; Weaver, 2000). Consequently some authors have attempted to solve the riddle of "Which method?" by combining a readability formula with a book levelling procedure.

Hybrid approaches to determining readability. Both the Weaver book levelling procedure (Weaver, 2000) and Gunning's Primary Readability Index (Gunning, 1998) combine these subjective text features with the objective reliability of readability formulae. While these hybrid approaches take more text factors into consideration than most individual book levelling procedures and readability formulae, they are also lacking in sufficient supporting evidence. There is certainly no evidence to say that the more factors considered the more reliable the formulae or procedure will be in predicting text difficulty.

Limitations of the existing research. It should be emphasised that the abundant information on how to employ readability formulas and book levelling procedures far outweighs the empirical research supporting their validity and reliability when applied to primary level books (Hatcher, 2000). A major problem with most research in this area is that the difficulty of text is rarely assessed using students' actual reading as the criterion index of passage difficulty. Fuchs, Fuchs and Deno (1984) provided a rare exception in this field of research.

More research is needed, examining the reliability and validity of readability formulae and book levelling procedures using student performance as the primary indicator of the readability of the text. It does not matter how easy a formula is to apply or how thorough a levelling procedure seems if it has not been truly tested.

Origins of the MULTILIT Book Levels

Teachers and researchers at Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC) have developed their own book levelling system, now known as the MULTILIT (Making up Lost Time in Literacy) Book Levels. The MULTILIT program is an intensive literacy program directed by Professor Kevin Wheldall from MUSEC (Wheldall & Beaman, 2000). Low-progress readers attending the various MULTILIT programs needed to be placed on text at their instructional level so as to optimise reading progress. In the case of older low-progress readers, books were needed that were both readable and age appropriate.

Common reading schemes and a sample of the books that have been levelled so far are summarised on the MULTILIT Book Levels Chart (see Appendix A). All books and schemes included have been levelled on the basis of expert judgement and reader performance. The procedures used to estimate the difficulty of books and to place students at the appropriate MULTILIT book level are outlined below following an overview of the MULTILIT Book Levels.

The MULTILIT Book Levels

The 10 MULTILIT Book Levels represent a progression from simple to more challenging text. Books have been levelled using a combination of expert judgement and analysis of reader performance. The primary function of the MULTILIT Book Levels is to make the process of matching students to appropriate level text more efficient and reliable. With the

exceptions of Levels 1 and 10, each MULTILIT Level includes books that span a readability range of one semester of instruction. There is a need for finer grading within Level 1, the subject of continuing research, whereas at Level 10 the assumption is that strict book levelling is no longer necessary.

Knowing the approximate grade-level of books a student can read confidently also allows teachers to identify struggling students in need of extra reading instruction. If a student in the second semester of Year 3 is only able to access books levelled at the first semester of Year 2 (represented by Grade: Semester- 2:1 on the chart), then it is reasonable to assume that this student is struggling and is in need of additional reading tuition.

The Levelling Procedures Used

The book levelling procedure used differs slightly depending on the type of book. Vocabulary controlled books, mainly found in basal reading schemes, are simpler to level than real readers. The procedure recommended for each book type is outlined below.

Basal reading schemes. The Australian Reading Rigby basal reading scheme was one of the first to be used at MUSEC. It was produced and published during a time when carefully graded and vocabulary controlled books were widely used. Although now out of print, Rigby levels were included as they formed an integral part of the book levelling procedure originally used at MUSEC. The placement of each Rigby Level on the chart was based on the ages assigned in the Waddington Reading Module (Waddington, 1986).

The Waddington Reading Module is a comprehensive and extremely useful guide including over seventy reading schemes, spanning the readability levels of Kindergarten to Year 6. The Endeavour, Oxford, Young Australia, Trend and Heinemann reading schemes were assigned to The MULTILIT Books Levels based on the difficulty level (represented by a reading age) assigned by The Waddington Reading Module.

Once basal reading schemes were discarded by many publishers in favour of 'real books', staff at MUSEC were forced to level new books themselves. Since the Waddington Reading Module was published in 1986, more recent reading schemes have been levelled, such as the New Reading 360 series published by Ginn. The older basal reading schemes assigned levels via the Waddington Reading Module are used as representative text samples in the levelling process for real readers. The more recent basal reading schemes were also levelled using the method outlined below.

Real readers. The term 'Real Readers' refers to recreational readers that are not part of a graded reading scheme. Generally these books are not vocabulary controlled and are more suited to students with a reading age of at least nine years. See Appendix B for a sample of some of the real readers found at each MULTILIT level.

This levelling of real readers is carried out using a two step process. Firstly, each book is compared informally with books from the Reading Rigby scheme or another graded scheme to assign an approximate MULTILIT Level. Factors such as the number of phonically regular (i.e. decodable) words, familiar (i.e. high frequency) words, sentence length and content are considered.

Next, a sample of students (at least three) with a reading age known to be similar to the one assigned to the book, are tested on the new book. If the book is found to be at their instructional level (90-95% accuracy) then that is the level at which the book is placed. If the book is too hard (less than 90% accuracy) or too easy (96-100% accuracy) for the student, then students with a higher or lower reading ages are tested until a consistently reliable match is found. The method described is recommended for use when levelling new books that are not included in the MULTILIT Book Levels Chart (Appendix B).

Methods for Matching Students to MULTILIT Book Levels

One valid criticism of some book levelling procedures and readability formulae is that schools need to purchase, and students need to take, a reading comprehension or cloze passage test to match students to text. Three methods for matching students to the correct MULTILIT book level will be described with consideration of their strengths and weaknesses.

Initial placement method 1: Standardized reading assessments. Many low-progress readers undergo a standardized reading assessment, the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability-3rd edition (1999) for example, when beginning a remedial reading program or when the existence of a reading difficulty is being established. Most standardized assessments give a reading age. This age is generally an indicator of the level of text they can read independently. Average chronological ages for each of the MULTILIT Book Levels are provided so that students who have a known reading age, via a recently completed standardized reading assessment, can be placed on the appropriate MULTILIT Book Level.

For the purpose of guided reading activities, text slightly harder than their independent level is recommended. If a child has an independent reading age of, say, 9 years 6 months (MULTILIT Level 6), then his/her instructional reading level would be one to two levels above that (MULTILIT Level 7-8).

Initial placement method 2: Informal reading inventories. Informal Reading Inventories (IRIs) are considered to be useful tools in ascertaining the instructional reading level of students (Kotula, 2003). IRIs are informal diagnostic reading tests, usually carried out in the classroom by the teacher (Paris & Carpenter, 2003). Commercial IRIs can be used to identify a student's instructional and independent reading levels (Margolis & McCabe, 2003). They usually include assessments of oral reading fluency, accuracy and comprehension. Paris and Carpenter (2003) argue that the validity and reliability of IRI data are acceptable (p.579).

Several authors recommend the use of IRIs to establish the independent, instructional and frustration reading levels of low-progress readers (Kotula, 2003; Margolis & McCabe, 2003).

Once a student is assessed using an IRI, they should be placed for instruction at the MULTILIT Level that corresponds in difficulty to the passage on which they scored 90-95% accuracy (Jamison Rog & Burton, 2001/2002; Lanning & LaMere , 2000; Paris, 2002). The student's independent reading level, for activities such as silent reading, would be the level at which they scored 96-100% (Jamison Rog & Burton, 2001/2002; Paris, 2002). Levels on which they scored below 90% would be at frustration level. This text would only be recommended for activities during which the teacher or parent reads to the students. An IRI specifically designed to assign students to MULTILIT Book Levels using benchmark passages is being considered for development as a placement test.

Initial placement method 3: Wheldall Assessment of Reading Passages (WARP). The Wheldall Assessment of Reading Passages (WARP) (Wheldall & Madelaine, 2000) is a relatively new measure of reading progress, comprising a series of parallel 200 word passages (Madelaine & Wheldall, 1998). Students read for one minute and the number of words read correctly per minute is recorded as the index of performance. The WARP is an easy to administer assessment which has demonstrated a strong relationship with both the New South Wales Basic Skills Test (Madelaine & Wheldall, 2002b) and the Neale Analysis of Reading (Madelaine & Wheldall, 1998). Research to date has primarily focused on the use of the WARP to track the reading progress of low-progress readers.

In addition to establishing the WARP's validity and reliability as a measure of reading progress, Madelaine and Wheldall (2002b) were also able to generate approximate norms for reading fluency for students halfway through each year. The fluency ranges for each MULTILIT Level were extrapolated from this research, which listed the mean number of words read correctly per minute by grade (Madelaine & Wheldall, 2002b).

Once the student's reading fluency (labelled as WARP fluency on the MULTILIT Book Levels Chart) is established, the student may be placed on the appropriate independent and/or instructional book level. For example, students who are beginning the second semester of Year 4 are likely to read an average of 121 words correctly per minute (wpm) (Madelaine & Wheldall, 2002a). If a student read around 121wpm on a WARP passage, it is reasonable to assume that they could be placed at the MULTILIT Level that corresponds to a Year 4 reading age for independent reading purposes. The instructional level would be one to two levels above this independent reading level. The fluency ranges given on The MULTILIT Book Levels Chart allows for the placement of students on the correct level from a simple to administer one-minute test.

All three reading assessment tools have their own merits for assigning reading ages to children. The use of IRIs, the WARP and standardized tests to match students to the MULTILIT Levels would benefit from further empirical confirmation and comparison. The process of matching students to books within the appropriate MULTILIT Book level are summarised in Appendix C.

Once students are placed on the appropriate MULTILIT Level, ongoing monitoring to ensure that the reader to text match is maintained is essential.

Methods for Ongoing Placement on the MULTILIT Book Levels

Data-based teachers ensure that their students are mastering skills taught and are progressing by regularly assessing their progress. This regular assessment is even more crucial when teaching low-progress readers. In the case of many regular classroom teachers and special educators, weekly or monthly testing of reading level or progress is not the norm. In order to monitor the efficacy of their teaching, teachers need a fast and reliable way of regularly placing students on the correct book level for optimal learning. Of the four

procedures described for matching students to books, the WARP is arguably the most convenient measurement tool for regular testing.

In addition to being the quickest to administer, the WARP comprises ten weekly progress passages as well as the series of three basal passages for initial assessment (Wheldall & Madelaine, in press). By weekly monitoring of reading progress using the WARP, teachers will have a good idea of when to move students to the next MULTILIT level.

A more direct method, however, is simply to spot check a student's current reading accuracy level on his/her current MULTILIT level by asking the child to read a 100-word selection from their current book. If the student makes fewer than five errors, then they should be considered for placement on the next MULTILIT book level. It is recommended that students are promoted to the next level once they have scored 96% or higher on two consecutive one hundred word spot checks. The criterion that students must pass on two different books or parts of the same book reduces the risk, say, of an easier passage within the book being the cause of their improved result. It is important to bear in mind that many books, particularly "real readers", have inconsistent levels of difficulty throughout the text. A child may read one page with an accuracy of 93% (instructional level) but read another page from the same book with an accuracy of 97% (independent level).

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research and Development

The MULTILIT Book Levels were developed on the basis of the available empirical evidence. While each book was placed within a book level using reader performance as a guide, testing on a larger sample would provide additional confidence in the reliability of book placement. This is an ongoing process. Further research and development is also

warranted to develop an informal reading inventory with passages that correlate in terms of difficulty level to the MULTILIT Book Levels.

The MULTILIT Book Levels are designed to match students to text at a suitable level of difficulty to optimise learning. While it clearly saves teacher time, the teacher still has a critical role to play when matching students to text. Teachers should use the MULTILIT levels as a guide or starting point when matching individual students to appropriate book levels. Once the appropriate MULTILIT book level has been estimated, teacher judgment is particularly important to choose books that are content and age appropriate. To increase motivation, a student's interests and background should also be considered when selecting books from within their level.

Conclusion

The MULTILIT Book Levels were developed in response to research suggesting that reading progress is optimised when students are matched to text at the right level of difficulty for them, rather than to their chronological age. The carefully levelled books and schemes included in the MULTILIT Book Levels provide a reliable selection of books for low-progress readers. The placement procedures outlined allow educators and parents to select books that are neither too hard, nor too easy but at an appropriate instructional level.

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Appendix A

MULTILIT Book Levels

MULTILIT LEVEL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grade:Semester	1	2:1	2:2	3:1	3:2	4:1	4:2	5:1	5:2	6+
Year.Months	6-7	7.1-7.6	7.7-8	8.1-8.6	8.7-9	9.1-9.6	9.7-10	10.1-10.6	10.7-11	11.1+
Months	73-84	85-90	91-96	97-102	103-108	109-114	115-120	121-126	127-132	133+
WARP Fluency words/minute	<33-51	52-71	72-83	84-91	92-102	103-116	117-124	125-128	129-133	>133
Rigby (Waddingtons)	1 & 2	3	3	4	4	5	6	7	8	9-10
Ginn	2	3	4-5	6	6-7	8	8-9	10	11	12
Endeavour	B-1	2-3	45	6	7	8	8-9	10	10-15	16
Oxford	-	-	-	1	2	3	4	5	5-6	6
Sparklers				Green	Purple					
Trend	A-B	B-C	C-T5	T6-T7	T8-T9	TS4	T10	TS5	TS6	TS6
Heinemann	-	-	Starter	Starter	Beginner	Elementary	Intermediate	Intermediate	-	-
Young Australia (New edition)	1-3	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-12	12-13	12-14	15-17
Real Readers	-	-	-	-	-	6	7	8	9	10

Appendix B   Real Books Included in the MULTILIT Book Levels

MULTILIT Level	Title	Author
6	The Gizmo (series) The Cabbage Patch War (series) The Paw Thing (Singenpoo series) Hurry up, Alice! Flat Stanley What Happened to Inky? (Laser Beams series)	Paul Jennings Paul Jennings Paul Jennings Christobel Mattingley Jeff Brown Fia Clendinnen
7	Just Tricking The Magic Finger The Witches Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes Unseen (UN series) How to Eat Fried Worms The 27th Annual African Hippopotamus Race	Andy Griffiths Roald Dahl Roald Dahl Elenor Coerr Paul Jennings Thomas Rockwell Morris Lurie
8	Toad Heaven Misery Guts Looking for Trouble Wicked (series) Deadly (series) The Enemies The BFG Matilda	Morris Gleitzman Morris Gleitzman John Marsden Paul Jennings & Morris Gleitzman Paul Jennings & Morris Gleitzman Robin Klein Roald Dahl Roald Dahl
9	The Silver Chair Callie's Castle Pigs Might Fly James and the Giant Peach Creatures (series) Paradise Palace Deltora Quest (series) The Second-Hand Tongue Speedy Star Wars Episode 1 The Phantom Menace Halfway Across the Galaxy and Turn Left Number the Stars Rowan and the Keeper of the Crystal	C. S. Lewis Ruth Park Emily Rodda Roald Dahl Louise Cooper Wendy Orr Emily Rodda Garry Hurle Colin Thiele Patricia C. Wrede Robin Klein Lois Lowry Emily Rodda
10	Harry Potter (Book 1-4) Hating Alison Ashley Taronga The Cay Round the Twist Boy The Silver Sword The Baker Street Mysteries (series) Thunderwith Playing Beatie Bow	J.K. Rowling Robin Klein Victor Kelleher Theodore Taylor Paul Jennings Roald Dahl Ian Serrailler Jake & Luke Thoene Libby Hathorn Ruth Park

Appendix C   Initial Placement on the MULTILIT Book Levels

Estimate the student's reading age by carrying out:

| An informal reading inventory (IRI) | A standardised reading assessment | The Wheldall Assessment of Reading Passages (WARP) |

Find the MULTILIT Book Level that corresponds to the reading age or grade level of the passage on which the student scored 96-100% accuracy. Match the student to books at this level for independent reading activities.
eg. Grade 4 Semester 2= Level 7

Find the MULTILIT Book Level (on the Book Levels Chart) that corresponds to the reading age assigned to the student by the standardized assessment.
eg. 9 years 4 months= Level 6

Find the MULTILIT Book Level (on the Book Levels Chart) that corresponds to the WARP fluency score (words per minute).
eg. 95 words per minute = Level 5

Find the MULTILIT Book Level that corresponds to the reading age or grade level of the passage on which the student scored 90-95% accuracy. Match the student to books at this level for instructional reading activities.
eg. Grade 4 Semester 2= Level 7

Match the student to books at this level for independent reading activities.
eg. Level 6

Match the student to books at this level for independent reading activities.
eg. Level 5

Match the student to books one to two levels above this level for instructional activities.
eg. Level 7-8

Match the student to books one to two levels above this level for instructional activities.
eg. Level 6-7