

MULTILIT[®] Moments

The Newsletter of MULTILIT[®]

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SEAL OF APPROVAL FOR MULTILIT[®]

"The knowledge and practical instructional techniques developed in MULTILIT[®] by the researchers at Macquarie University should inform and enhance initial and remedial literacy instruction throughout Australia and form the core of remedial reading programs in primary and high schools."

This is the ringing endorsement for MULTILIT[®] by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training.

In the report of the Inquiry into the Education of Boys 'Boys: Getting It Right', released in October 2002, MULTILIT[®] is singled out for special mention over three pages of the Report. Not surprisingly this has led to a flurry of media interest.

In its emphasis on the importance of teaching phonic word attack skills to all struggling readers, not just boys, the report draws heavily

for support on Wheldall and Beaman's research report 'An Evaluation of MULTILIT'.

Noting this official 'seal of approval' for MULTILIT[®], Professor Wheldall commented:

"MULTILIT[®] is the product of a lengthy period of careful research and development by a team of committed and talented researchers and special educators. It is all based on what research has shown to be most effective, scientifically validated best practice. In other words, this is not just our opinion, we have the data to back it up."

The full report of the Inquiry into the Education of Boys, 'Boys: Getting it Right', conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training, is available at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/eofb/index.htm>

Kevin Wheldall

New computer assisted practice on MULTILIT[®]

Sight Words

MULTILIT[®] Sight Words is one of the major components of the MULTILIT[®] Reading Tutor Program. It teaches automatic word recognition of 300 high frequency words, including words that are difficult or cannot be decoded. The purpose of teaching MULTILIT[®] Sight Words is to promote immediate access to these common words when reading, resulting in more fluent reading whereby the child is able to concentrate on more difficult words through decoding. Over the last few months, the MULTILIT[®] team has been liaising with a software programmer in America to develop a MULTILIT[®] Sight Words game for computers. The game has been trialled in the MULTILIT[®] Intensive classroom, with the students testing its performance and giving feedback for some changes.

The MULTILIT[®] Sight Words game aims to provide extra practice and exposure to words in the

student's current sight word list, in addition to the time spent teaching in class. Research has shown that repeated exposures to a word will assist the reader in developing automatic word recognition. As the saying goes - practice makes perfect!

We are still in the development stage of this project, with lots of revisions being made before we officially release the game for sale. We expect the game to be released early in 2003 with special rates for current MULTILIT[®] clients. Importantly, the game will be made to run on both PC and Mac computers so that all schools and homes will be able to use the product. If you would like to be kept informed about the release of this product, please email Fiona Ryan at fiona.ryan@multilit.com or leave your name and details with our Administration and Marketing Office.

Fiona Ryan

Special Interest Articles:

- Seal of approval for MULTILIT[®]
- Latest program results

Individual Highlights:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Sight Words | 1 |
| New program news | 2 |
| Fat, phonics and fads | 3 |
| Professional Development | 3 |
| Word Attack | |
| Extension | 4 |



QUICK FACT

"In one term these students made gains of nearly 12 months on the test of word recognition, nearly eight months in spelling and could read about 25% more words correctly per minute."

STARTLING RESULTS FROM THE MULTILIT® CLINIC

We have recently completed an analysis of the performance of students attending our popular MULTILIT® Clinic Monitoring Program since 1996. Parents (or caregivers) are trained to deliver an individualised program to meet the child's specific literacy needs based on elements from the MULTILIT® Reading Tutor Program usually, but not always, including MULTILIT® Sight Words, MULTILIT® Word Attack Skills and MULTILIT® Reinforced Reading using Pause, Prompt and Praise. Additional programs such as SRA's Spelling Mastery are also sometimes included. The parent and child meet with a trained MULTILIT® clinician for a half hour tutoring and monitoring session once per week, the parent tutoring the child for about half an hour per day on the other four week days.

Some students attend for just one term while others stay with us for two or more terms. A full assessment is carried out initially employing the Neale Analysis (accuracy and comprehension), the Burt Word Recognition Test, the Wheldall Assessment of Reading Passages (WARP) and the South Australian Spelling Test. After one term of instruction we repeat three of the measures with the exception of the Neale Analysis while after two terms we re-administer all five measures. The results we present below are for those students on whom we have complete sets of results before and after and whose parents agreed to let us use the data for research purposes.

The results for the group of children attending for one term are based on a sample of over 150

students who were aged about 11 years on average and who were about 33 months (nearly three years) behind their classmates in both reading accuracy and reading comprehension. In one term these students made gains of nearly 12 months on the test of word recognition, nearly eight months in spelling and could read about 25% more words correctly per minute. A smaller group, of about 70 of these students, who were tested after spending two terms in the program showed average gains of 16 months in word recognition, 11 months in spelling and could read over 40% more words correctly per minute. They also made average gains of 15 months for reading accuracy and 11 months for reading comprehension.

Another group of about 30 students who were not quite so far behind in reading (about 20 months) enrolled in our MULTILIT® Independent Program. In this program the students do not attend weekly but their parents can call on the MULTILIT® clinicians for help and advice as needed, as they deliver the program to their children. These too made great gains in one term, averaging about 15 months in word recognition, 10 months in spelling and could read about 30% more words correctly per minute.

As you can imagine, we at MULTILIT® are very proud of these results and offer our sincere congratulations to students and parents for their magnificent efforts!

Kevin Wheldall

NEW PROGRAM NEWS

In Term 3 of this year the MULTILIT® Clinic added a new educational program, the MULTILIT® Individual Tutoring Program, to its list of services. The introduction of this program provides an option of individual tutoring sessions for clients who are unable to commit to doing the program at home or for whom removal from the school environment is not an option.

The MULTILIT® Individual Tutoring Program provides students with an hour of intensive, one to one tuition twice weekly with a specialist MULTILIT® tutor. The program is most suitable for students who are in year three and above and who are delayed in their reading by one to two years. Students who have additional difficulties may also benefit from the intensive nature of this program and would be considered after consultation with one of our MULTILIT® Clinicians.

Students in the MULTILIT® Individual Tutoring Program receive an accelerated version of the MULTILIT® Reading Tutor Program, and, if required skills such as spelling, oral reading fluency and comprehension are also included. As is the case in our other programs parents are trained and then provided with ongoing support in implementing the powerful reading program Pause, Prompt and Praise at home. Parents are required to listen to their child read for 20 minutes a day, four times a week at home to support the skills being taught in the sessions with the MULTILIT® tutor.

To date 6 students have participated in the new program. It is early days but the results are promising, with students making very similar gains to students in our other programs. We will endeavour to keep you up to date on the success and development of this new individual program. For more details please contact the MULTILIT® Administration and Marketing Office on (02) 9850 9695.

Simonne Pogorzelski

MULTILIT[®] Musings: Of fat, phonics and fads

In the fifties, when I was growing up in the UK, I used to see 'Energen' starch reduced rolls on sale at the Co-op grocery shop. They were for slimmers. In those days people who are trying to lose weight ('slimming') were urged to cut down on bread and potatoes which were thought to make you fat. That was way before we all learned that low-fat high carbohydrate diets were the answer; the gospel preached by the healthy eating gurus, both private and public, over the last twenty five years or so. As a result, fat consumption has dropped dramatically over this period while the intake of pasta, rice and potatoes has risen. Strangely enough, over this time period, instead of our population getting slimmer and leaner, we have witnessed an explosion of obesity and an epidemic of diabetes.

When I went to primary school in the 1950s, most kids learned to read reasonably well, mainly being taught by means of reading schemes of levelled books and approaches which encouraged beginning readers to sound out the words; in other words by using phonics. That was way before we all learned that the whole language approach to teaching reading and learning by osmosis was the answer; the gospel preached by the educational establishment over the last twenty five years or so. As a result, most teachers stopped using phonics and reading schemes began to be abandoned by their publishers while bathing kids in quality 'real books' and learning to read by osmosis flourished. Strangely enough, instead of our population of primary aged children becoming better

readers, there began to grow an increasing concern over reading standards and public disquiet about the proportion of school students who were struggling to learn to read at all.

So what we see advocated in terms of dietary health and education seems to be subject to fad and fashion. I do not know any better than anyone else whether the current thinking will turn out to be correct or not; we shall see. But current scientific thinking seems to be firmly of the view that both fat and phonics have been given a bad press and that the fads of low fat diets and whole language may be to blame for some of our current problems. What I am sure of is that the last thing we want is to see the pendulum swing too far the other way. By all means let us see the return of fat to the diet and phonics to teaching but let us not forget that carbohydrates and the reading of real books have a place in our lives too. The key question is one of balance and that's the hardest question of all.

In MULTILIT[®], we see a central role for phonics, alongside the learning of key sight words and reading real books every day to a supportive other. And what about more fat and less carbohydrate? Well I've lost five kilos so far.....

Kevin Wheldall

Professional Development Workshop

The MULTILIT[®] Reading Tutor Program has been designed to assist older low-progress readers who are struggling to learn to read. In order to develop the necessary skills for fluent reading, these students require individualised instruction in three essential components: phonic word attack skills, sight words and reinforced reading of natural language texts. The MULTILIT[®] program includes the teaching of phonic word attack skills and sight words, which are practised and generalised through the powerful reinforced reading program, Pause, Prompt and Praise.

The MULTILIT[®] Reading Tutor Program Professional Development Workshop is an invaluable session, which trains regular classroom and specialist teachers in implementing this powerful intervention. Participants can expect to be trained to a level that will equip them with the knowledge and skills to implement the MULTILIT[®] Reading Tutor Program in their school environment.

Participants are provided with information regarding the theoretical background of MULTILIT[®] and, after viewing practical demonstrations of the components of the

MULTILIT[®] Reading Tutor Program, actively engage in skill practice. This practice makes the essential components of this very effective reading intervention explicit and clear. The workshop also demonstrates how to train others, such as teachers, parents, peer tutors and volunteers. Ideas for implementing the program in a school setting are also provided.

MULTILIT[®] has now held four Professional Development Workshops, commencing in Term 2, 2002. All four sessions have been most successful, providing teachers and professionals in the reading field with in depth instruction in the implementation of the MULTILIT[®] Reading Tutor Program. The feedback for the sessions already held has been extremely positive with all participants reporting that they found the sessions to be informative and interactive.

The next MULTILIT[®] Reading Tutor Program Professional Development Day is on 7th March 2003. Places are limited, so to ensure that you don't miss out contact the MULTILIT[®] Administration and Marketing office on (02) 9850 9695.

Simmone Pogorzelski

Making Up Lost Time In Literacy



Making Up Lost Time In Literacy

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MULTILIT® is a registered trademark of Macquarie Research Limited held on behalf of Professor Kevin Wheldall and his MULTILIT® ('Making Up Lost Time In Literacy') research and development team based at Macquarie University Special Education Centre, Sydney.

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News Snippets

Our new MULTILIT® web site is now at www.multilit.com. Check it out and write in to us with your feedback!

The 2003 dates for the MULTILIT® Reading Tutor Program Professional Development Workshops are: 7th March, 23rd May, 22nd August and 14th November.

Congratulations to Thomas Evans, a MULTILIT® Individual Tutoring program client who was photographed by the Northern District Times for a story about MULTILIT®.

Staff News

I wish to inform all our valuable clients that by the time you read this I will have left MULTILIT® to pursue my own youth opportunity business venture. It has been a rewarding experience to welcome you and your child/ren to MULTILIT®, and an experience that I have thoroughly enjoyed. For many of you, I have been the 'voice on the phone' and the person responsible for the enrolment of your children in our programs. It has been a pleasure dealing with your families, teachers and referred friends.

During my time here I have seen MULTILIT® go from strength to strength in Professor Wheldall and his team's quest to be a best practice model in the service delivery of educational research. It has been an honour to witness the transformation of many low-progress readers into smiling, successful students. In 2003 MULTILIT® will welcome a new staff member to the role of Administration & Marketing Coordinator. I wish them, the MULTILIT® team, and all of you - the very best for a successful year.

Ainsley Gilkes

Word Attack Extension in the works

A version of the MULTILIT® Extension Word Attack Skills Program is currently being trialled in the MUSEC and MULTILIT® classrooms. This program is a follow on program from the widely used MULTILIT® Word Attack Skills Program originally published in 1998.

The MULTILIT® Extension Word Attack Skills Program caters for students with reading difficulties, who have achieved the basic decoding skills but need to be taught further, specific and more complex decoding strategies. The program covers an additional range of letter blends, letter/sound combinations and an essential selection of prefixes and suffixes.

The program's aim is to equip students with an extended, solid knowledge of decoding strategies, which will help them access unfamiliar words confidently and automatically. These strategies provide an important tool for students with reading difficulties to become successful, independent readers.

Margrit Frischknecht and Glenys O'Riley

Making Up Lost Time In Literacy

We wish our departing clients all the very best for their continued reading success and would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new clients.

Would your school like a copy of our MULTILIT® Publications and Services Catalogue? Contact the Administration and Marketing Office on (02) 9850 9695 or email clinic@multilit.com. Of course, you can also view our products and services online at www.multilit.com.