

## MULTILIT Schoolwise program records best results ever

A program of MULTILIT instruction known as 'Schoolwise' has been provided by MULTILIT for the Exodus Foundation, the Ashfield-based charity, since 1996. A fresh cohort of older low-progress readers (Years 5 and 6) is admitted into the program for two terms (mornings only) each half year. The gains in reading skills recorded as a result of the program have been consistently excellent for the past 12 years.

The results of the 35 students completing the course in the first half year of 2008, however, have astonished even the project directors, Professor Kevin Wheldall and Dr Robyn Beaman.

"We had become almost a little complacent about the consistency of the impressive gains over the years," said Dr Beaman. "But we were astounded by the outstanding gains from this latest group of Schoolwise students."

All students are assessed on a battery of tests of reading and related skills at the beginning and then again, two terms (about five months) later, at the end of the program. Older low-progress readers like these would typically make only about two months' progress in two terms in their regular classes; many have stopped making any progress at all.

When they came to us, the students in the latest intake

were, on average, three and a half years behind what might typically be expected for their age in reading. After two terms of part-time instruction, the average reading and spelling performance for this group of students had increased, on average, by: 22 months in reading accuracy and 18 months in reading comprehension; 16 months in single word recognition and 34 months (almost three years) in non-word reading (decoding); 19 months in spelling; and they could now read nearly 50% more words correctly per minute.

These excellent results mean that these students are going to be able to make far more sense of what they are asked to read in school, and thus be more capable of benefiting from their regular schooling.



Rev. Bill Crews speaking at the graduation

## MULTILIT Director wins top LD award

Learning Difficulties Australia (LDA) has awarded Professor Kevin Wheldall, Chairman and Director of MULTILIT, the Mona Tobias Award for 2008. The Mona Tobias Award is an annual award presented by LDA "in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the field of learning difficulties in Australia. This contribution may be in the area of leadership, research, practice or teacher and community education."

The citation for the award reads as follows:

"In making this Award, the Judging Committee noted your significant contribution to the field of learning difficulties through your research and publications, particularly in the areas

of classroom behaviour management and helping low progress readers. They noted particularly the success of your MULTILIT program, developed to assist low progress readers, and the significant impact that this has had in improving the performance of students with reading difficulties, particularly those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. They also noted that you have recently received a substantial grant from the federal government to implement this program in a major project in Queensland, designed to improve the reading and related skills of aboriginal students in indigenous communities in Cape York. Your significant contribution in informing public

debate, particularly on issues relating to evidence-based practice and effective teaching of reading, and your contribution to academic publications through your editorship of both the *Australian Journal of Learning Disabilities* (now the *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*) and the international journal *Educational Psychology* was also acknowledged. Your membership of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and of the International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities was seen as evidence of the recognition of your significant contribution to the field of education, particularly in the field of learning difficulties, by these prestigious organisations."

# MULTILIT in India

The MULTILIT team has been delighted to work with the inspiring Parikrma Humanity Foundation, assisting them in providing the MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program to disadvantaged students in India. Below is a report from Jill Hellemans, Special Educator for the foundation, about this project.

The Parikrma Humanity Foundation in Bangalore, India is excited to trial the MULTILIT program in their centres for learning. We are a non-government organisation providing 970 street, slum and orphaned children with quality education, health care, nutrition and family care. We pride ourselves on giving our students the highest quality education available in India so that they can compete on equal terms. We are very excited to now incorporate the MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program as part of our curriculum; it will be available to students who are struggling to read. We believe that by empowering these students they too can achieve their goals and become self-sufficient, contributing members of society. We strongly believe that developing strong literacy skills is one of the key factors in our children reaching their potential.

The MULTILIT program has shown fantastic results in Australia and we are hoping that we too can achieve these results for our children, even though they are from a different cultural background. The MULTILIT team has supported us with training and resources, and this has given us the opportunity to trial the MULTILIT program across all of our centres for learning.

The concept of the MULTILIT program was introduced to the teaching staff of Parikrma on 2 June 2008. The response from the teachers was overwhelming – they all wanted to know more and be involved as tutors themselves. We then organised a team of local and international volunteers to become Parikrma's Literacy Tutors. These volunteers were trained in a one day workshop and were supported throughout their first week of tutoring by Parikrma's Special Educator, who was trained at the Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC) and attended the MULTILIT accreditation course.

After the MULTILIT training, the

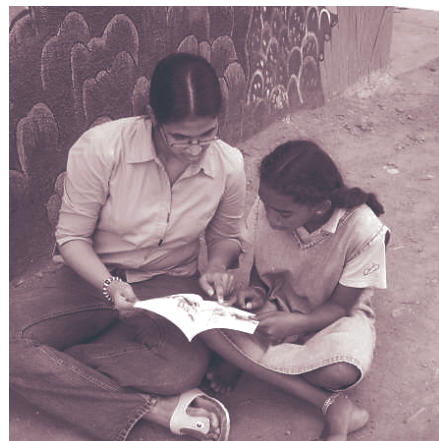
volunteers were off to a fantastic start. The children have really enjoyed their sessions, and are very quick to run out of their class and find their MULTILIT tutor for sessions. The tutors have had to become a little creative in finding places to do their sessions. When you walk into the schools, you'll see MULTILIT sessions on the rooftop, in the food hall, in the computer room and in the classroom hallways. This has not fazed our tutors or our students, as the students get very excited when they pass their MULTILIT levels and are thrilled with the tutors' constant praise and enthusiasm.

Many students at Parikrma need to participate in the MULTILIT program, but due to lack of resources and volunteers, only 120 children have been able to participate at this time. We hope the partnership between MULTILIT and Parikrma can strengthen for many years to come. We are truly grateful for the time, energy and support we have received from MULTILIT.

The appreciation is shared by our children who have given us fantastic feedback such as:

"I am a very good reader, because I passed my level, right?"

*The children have really enjoyed their sessions, and are very quick to run out of their class and find their MULTILIT tutor for sessions.*



"So MULTILIT is from Australia and we do the program in Parikrma, so people in Australia want my reading to be better?"

"I love my MULTILIT tutor, she always says nice things and I love reading my books."

"I want my MULTILIT sessions even on the weekends!"

So from our enthusiastic learners we once again would like to thank the team at MULTILIT!

If you would like to learn more about this program or offer financial assistance, please contact Jill Hellemans at [jill\\_hellemans@hotmail.com](mailto:jill_hellemans@hotmail.com) or visit [www.parikrmafoundation.org](http://www.parikrmafoundation.org).

## Abbott undertakes MULTILIT training

The Honorable Tony Abbott, Federal Member for Warringah and Shadow Minister for Families, Community Services, Indigenous Affairs and the Voluntary Sector joined a MULTILIT Workshop in Sydney in June. Sparked by his interest in our project in Cape York, Mr Abbott felt it would be beneficial to see first hand what MULTILIT was about. Along with teachers and speech pathologists, he learned how to deliver the MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program to students



Pictured from left: Kyle Pitt (MULTILIT Training Manager), Tony Abbott, Sandra Johnson (MULTILIT Project Manager)

struggling with literacy. He is hoping to put some of his newfound skills into practice when he spends some time in a remote community in Cape York in August. We wish him every success as he gets to grips with Word Attack, Sight Words and Reinforced Reading!

## Licensed practitioners get to work

The first group of MULTILIT accredited and licensed private tutors and speech pathologists are now working with low-progress readers in their organisation or business. So far we have accredited and licensed practitioners in Sydney and Melbourne, with growing interest in other parts of the country. Over the past decade, MULTILIT has established a reputation for providing programs based on scientific research and is well-respected in the world of literacy. We are excited that we now have a system in place which enables us to work in partnership with those who share our passion for helping struggling readers, by providing an effective program for use in their lessons.

Jo Whithear, working in Canberra as a licensee, says: "I decided to become a licensed MULTILIT practitioner because the program is evidence-based. It is easy to implement and the user can quickly identify strengths and deficits in any learner. The positive, encouraging philosophy and opportunities for success makes this an enjoyable learning experience for the students. Highly recommended!"

If you would like to find out more about how to become a licensed MULTILIT practitioner, contact Alison McMurtrie on 02 9886 6606 or download an Expression of Interest Form from the web and fax to MULTILIT.

## New agents join MULTILIT team

MULTILIT is delighted to introduce our first two agents who are working with us to ensure that more low-progress readers have access to an effective program of instruction. Our MULTILIT representatives are Deb Grover in New Zealand (pictured) and Rhonda Roe in Western Australia.

Both Deb and Rhonda have an enormous amount of education and literacy experience in their respective regions. They are introducing MULTILIT to a wider audience by visiting schools, talking to teachers and attending conferences. They are very happy to be contacted by anyone interested in learning more about the MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program or current clients who have queries about the program or need to place an order.



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## Training Calendar

<b>NSW</b> 15 August 29 October	Sydney (CBD) Sydney (North Ryde)
<b>QLD</b> 29 August	Brisbane
<b>VIC</b> 8 August	Melbourne
<b>WA</b> 22 October	Perth (CBD)
<b>SA</b> 21 Nov	Adelaide
<b>Accreditation for licensees and teachers</b> 29-31 October – Sydney (North Ryde)	
<b>2009 provisional dates – consult website for additional workshops in 2009</b>	
<b>NSW</b> 19 February 22 April	Parramatta (Sydney) North Ryde (Sydney)
<b>QLD</b> 3 April	Brisbane (CBD)
<b>VIC</b> 6 March	Melbourne (CBD)

## Reduced price for MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program materials

MULTILIT is aware that many product users are finding it hard to balance their budgets in these difficult economic times. In response to feedback received, we have reorganised our supply of materials and are now able to offer a reduced price for single copies of MULTILIT Recording Booklets and further discounts when booklets are bought in packs of five or ten. We hope that this will help schools and other users to reach more children with reading difficulties.

Single Word Attack Skills booklet:	\$15 (was \$20)
Pack of 5 booklets:	\$60 (\$12 per book – saving of \$15)
Pack of 10 booklets:	\$110 (\$11 per book – saving of \$40)
Single Sight Words booklet:	\$10 (was \$12)
Pack of 5 booklets:	\$40 (\$8 per book – saving of \$10)
Pack of 10 booklets:	\$70 (\$7 per book – saving of \$30)

Product Users can download order forms from the MULTILIT website. Also see website for reduced Recording Booklet prices for NZ.

# News from the MULTILIT Training Team

2008 has been an exciting and busy year for the MULTILIT Training Team. It has become increasingly apparent that the availability of high quality training to ensure effective delivery of the MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program is key to its success. To achieve this, MULTILIT has offered many more workshops than in the past and has expanded into other Australian capital cities, regional areas and even New Zealand. Since the launch of the revised Reading Tutor Program late last year, over 400 teachers and paraprofessional staff have attended the revamped one-day workshop. The workshop enables participants to gain an overview of MULTILIT and look closely at each of the three strands of the program

through practical demonstration and exercises. By the end of the day, each teacher has the tools to set up the program in their school with confidence.

The three-day accreditation course developed and introduced this year has got off to a good start. Licensees are required to do the course but it is also open to teachers in schools who would like to gain a greater understanding of the program and includes some training on Positive Teaching, additional intervention strategies and monitoring and data collection. Four accreditation courses have been held this year. MULTILIT is looking forward to training a growing body of accredited practitioners and licensees who are then able to offer

low progress readers the instruction they need but very often can't access.

MULTILIT has conducted several on-site consultancies this year. If a school or cluster of schools would like training in the MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program, it is often more cost-effective to train a group this way. A consultancy also allows the training to be flexible and tailor-made to the school.

If you would like to find out more about our training activities, please contact our training manager, Kyle Pitt, or you can visit our website for up-to-date training information.

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MULTILIT has once again exhibited at the Education Expo in Sydney where teachers and parents had a chance to find out more about our programs (pictured above). MULTILIT greatly values the opportunity to meet fellow educators at conferences and seminars. We will be at the AASE Conference in Fremantle (WA) this year and the RTLB Conference in Auckland, New Zealand.

## MULTILIT comings and goings in 2008

- Val Woods, formerly Marketing and Communications Manager, left the company in February.
- Irina Zakoshanski joined the company as Executive Manager in March.
- Liz Langstaff, formerly Projects Manager, left MULTILIT in April, and was replaced by Sandra Johnson in the same month.
- Rose Ye became our Finance Manager in April.
- Wayne Rosen, formerly consultant Chief Operating Officer of MULTILIT, left the company in May.
- Iain Rothwell left the Board of Directors of MULTILIT in July and was replaced by Alan Ellis.