

Epping couple unite to lift literacy rates Making up for lost time

SUSANNA FREYMARK
education editor

HERE'S the good news. Most children learn to read without any help at all.

It is only 25 per cent of the 'low-progress' readers that need help and intensive instruction according to research psychologist Kevin Wheldall.

With his wife Doctor Robyn Beaman, Professor Wheldall founded the Multilit reading program at Macquarie University.

The program was recently selected by the education department to target low-progress readers.

Prof Wheldall and Dr Beaman want every child to read fluently and hope one day their program isn't needed at all.

"We want to make ourselves redundant," Prof Wheldall said.

Multilit is based on five big ideas for reading – sounds, letters, fluency, words and understanding. This forms the basis of the reading instruction.

"We start from what the children know," Dr Beaman said of the program.

"We tell the student what they are getting right and we shape their skills to be successful readers."

The Epping couple met at Macquarie University's Special



Prof Kevin Wheldall and Dr Robyn Beaman with their Multilit package.

Picture: BRENT MCGILVARY -PP448081

Education Unit in 1990. Their united passion for reading has propelled their ideas into mainstream education but their approach isn't without controversy.

"The battle continues to rage about learning to read," Prof Wheldall said. "Phonics is not the answer, it is just one of the five, big ideas and it is often not taught well in schools."

Dr Beaman advised parents to

check if their child's school was offering the program before contacting their reading centre in North Ryde.

Prof Wheldall recently received an Order of Australia for his work in children's literacy.

To find out more go to multilit.com or call 1300 559 919 for a Multilit reading assessment.



FIVE BIG IDEAS FOR READING

Multilit stands for Making Up Lost Time in Literacy and was created at Macquarie University

1. Sounds
2. Letters
3. Fluency
4. Words
5. Understanding

Innovator wins awards

HUNTLEYS Point resident Gerard Stevens, the founder and managing director of the Webstercare dose administration aids Websterpaks, has been swamped with awards.

Mr Stevens was elevated recently to the status of Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia in recognition of his work as an innovator.

This came after Governor-General Quentin Bryce presented Mr Stevens with the society's lifetime achievement award.

He then travelled to Taipei, where he was presented with the 2010 Federation of Asian Pharmaceutical Association's Ishidate Award for community pharmacy. The award acknowledges pharmacists in Asia who have made excellent contributions to hospitals, research and the community.

Sign up to help

TEENAGE volunteers are needed during the July school holidays to help kindergarten and primary school children learn new skills from a "You Learn New Skills Yourself" program.

The sessions will be held in the first week of the school holidays, from Monday, July 4, to Friday, July 8, from 8am to 4pm in the North Ryde Anglican Church hall opposite the Coxs Rd Mall.

For information visit northryde.anglican.org.au or phone 9878 3974.

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