



# moments

## MultiLit opens Brisbane Centre

As interest in the Science of Reading has grown in Queensland over the last few years, there has also been increasing interest from schools in adopting MultiLit programs, resources and professional development as a means of implementing effective, evidence-based instruction.

To better support Queensland schools, students and families, the MultiLit Brisbane Centre and Fortitude Valley Literacy Centre opened in October.

“The new Brisbane Centre allows us to enhance the support and engagement with Queensland schools and learners, as well as ensuring our programs and services meet the needs of all Queensland schools and students,” said Iain Rothwell, Managing Director, MultiLit.

“Expanding our physical presence reflects the value schools and educators in Queensland place on research-led programs, underpinned by a rapidly growing student demographic. The Queensland team will contribute to program development, research and trialling, allowing the Brisbane Centre to be

a major source of future MultiLit innovation for schools across Australia.”

To celebrate the opening of the new centre, located on Gregory Terrace in Fortitude Valley, MultiLit welcomed 70 guests for an official launch. Iain and MultiLit Director of Strategy Dr Jennifer Buckingham spoke at the vibrant event, with MultiLit General Manager, Queensland, Monica Wright, acting as MC.

Representatives from SPELD Queensland, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, Independent Schools Queensland, Anglican Schools Commission of Queensland, Australian Catholic University, and the University of Queensland were in attendance, and we look forward to building relationships with these organisations across Queensland from this new base.

“Queensland teachers, literacy leaders and school principals want to know how to support a shift toward effective, evidence-based reading instruction,” says Monica. “This is where MultiLit can help.”



(from top, left to right) Monica Wright, Dr Robyn Wheldall, David Oliver from SPELD Qld, Iain Rothwell; Dr Jennifer Buckingham; Monica Wright welcoming attendees



## MRU Press releases essential handbook on effective instruction

MultiLit’s academic imprint, MRU Press, has made a splash with its first major release: a comprehensive handbook on *Effective Instruction in Reading and Spelling*.

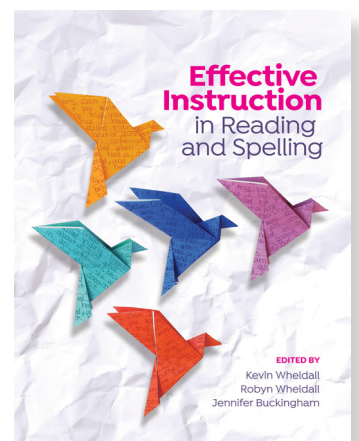
Edited by Emeritus Professor Kevin Wheldall AM, Dr Robyn Wheldall and Dr Jennifer Buckingham, *Effective Instruction in Reading and Spelling* will give teachers the tools to implement powerful instructional strategies for all children.

“The stakes are incredibly high,” says Robyn. “Every child entering a classroom in this country, wherever it is, whatever their circumstances, should be able to receive evidence-based instruction in reading.”

Through the contributions of globally renowned literacy experts, readers will be introduced to the science of reading,

effective methods for instruction, intervention and assessment, and the Five Big Ideas – and learn how to use these concepts in the classroom. Educators will also appreciate the addition of QR codes at the end of each chapter, linking to further online resources.

“The problem has always been that teaching children to read is complex,” says Jennifer. “There is great variation in the ease with which



# Lifting oral language skills in schools

New from MultiLit, LanguageLift is a small group oral language intervention program for students in Foundation to Year 2. It is designed to improve important skills needed for successful reading comprehension, including vocabulary, grammar and narrative skills.

Recent large-scale studies demonstrate the importance of these core skills for developing reading comprehension and writing abilities.

Released in January, LanguageLift provides teachers with 120 structured, scripted lessons built around 15 purpose-written storybooks, published by MultiLit’s own Putto Press. It integrates the findings of high-quality research from speech pathology and education.

“LanguageLift trials across five schools showed children making significantly larger than expected gains in their oral vocabulary, grammar, and story retell and comprehension skills, as well as significant positive changes in their social, behavioural and emotional skills,” says Anna Taylor, Speech and Language Specialist, MultiLit and project lead on LanguageLift.

“These are exciting results,” says Dr Anna Desjardins, Senior Product Developer and Research Fellow with the



Anna Taylor teaching a LanguageLift group

MultiLit Research Unit. “They show that LanguageLift can provide children with oral language difficulties with the small-group support and rich, scaffolded oral language environment they need to foster language growth.

“We hope, in turn, that this will have more far-reaching effects, contributing to improvements in their reading comprehension (and writing), and generally setting them on a path to a more fulfilling and happy life.”



Colette Read and husband Phil, accepting the SPA award

## MultiLit wins inaugural SPA Decodable Book Series award

In 2022, Speech Pathology Australia added a new category for Decodable Book Series to its annual Book of the Year Awards, recognising the importance of making these texts available to beginning readers as part of an explicit teaching approach.

MultiLit was thrilled to be named as the winner of the inaugural award in this category, for the Wattle Series of InitialLit Readers.

The SPA Book of the Year Awards aim to promote quality Australian books that help

children get the best, most literate start in life. Colette Read, project lead on the Wattle Series development, attended a ceremony in October at the State Library of Victoria to accept the award on MultiLit’s behalf.

The Wattle Series is used to support students in InitialLit and MiniLit Sage, and can be a great complement to other early reading programs. Parents and carers can also enjoy the award-winning series at home with their children – find it online at [bookshop.multilit.com](http://bookshop.multilit.com).

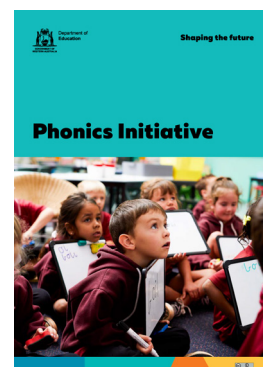
## InitialLit endorsed by WA Government

From 2023, public primary schools in Western Australia will complete an annual phonics assessment for Year 1 students, to help teachers to identify students who need additional support to develop the essential phonics skills they need to be successful at school.

The implementation of the phonics assessment has been supported by funding of \$2.5 million over five years from the Western Australian Government to assist schools to adopt evidence-based programs and assessments.

MultiLit’s whole-class initial instruction program for Foundation to Year 2, InitialLit, has been selected as a Tier 1 program endorsed by the government for the teaching of phonics across WA.

Our Schools Partnership team has hosted a series of webinars to assist WA schools to understand how InitialLit can provide a systematic and comprehensive approach to the teaching of literacy across the early years. For more information, email [school.partnership@multilit.com](mailto:school.partnership@multilit.com).



# Online tutoring at MultiLit's Literacy Centres delivers excellent results

The COVID-19 pandemic meant that, for much of 2020 and 2021, MultiLit's Literacy Centre tutors shifted from delivering lessons in a mostly face-to-face context to delivering lessons in a mostly online context.

The increase in the number of students receiving online tutoring is a trend that's continuing even now, because of the convenience that online tutoring offers parents.

The trend has also presented an excellent opportunity for the MultiLit Research Unit to examine something that we haven't examined before: how much do students receiving solely online tutoring improve in their literacy skills over the course of two school terms' worth of instruction? To answer this, we looked at the assessment results from 28 students who received the Reading Tutor Program (RTP) via online tutoring in 2020 and 2021.

All of the students included in these analyses were new to receiving the program when they were first assessed, and they were tutored for two days per week in the majority of cases (24 out of 28). Each lesson was approximately 50 minutes in duration, and the students in the

group ranged in age from Year 2 to Year 8. As well as attending the RTP lessons with tutors, students practised their reading at home with parents and caregivers, who were instructed in the strategies of Reinforced Reading.

Results from analyses conducted with these 28 students showed that they made excellent progress. On average, they made 'age equivalent' gains of between 10 and 16 months on all literacy measures, which is far greater than the five or six months that actually elapsed between pre- and post-test time points. This acceleration in development, roughly equivalent to twice the rate of average month-to-month learning, was especially good to see because these students were struggling readers. As such, they started receiving tutoring because their literacy skills were – prior to being enrolled – developing at a slower rate than their classroom peers.

In summary, the results provide evidence in support of RTP's efficacy, as delivered via solely online tutoring. This is based on the finding that students receiving such instruction through MultiLit's Literacy Centres learned at a rate that was several times faster than the rate at which they were previously learning.

Average progress made by Literacy Centre students receiving RTP online

▲ 13

months in word reading

▲ 12

months in spelling

▲ 16

months in decoding (i.e., nonword reading)

▲ 11

months in passage reading accuracy

▲ 10

months in passage reading comprehension

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young children acquire the skill of reading.”

She says the textbook is an ideal resource for initial teacher education (ITE) degrees and other higher education courses for primary school teachers.

“Lecturers and course coordinators can use this book as an invaluable text for providing pre-service teachers with knowledge of evidence-based, explicit and systematic instruction in reading and spelling.

“Practising teachers who are looking for an up-to-date resource to elevate their literacy teaching will also benefit from this book, as will anyone who is supporting children to develop essential literacy skills.”

Drawing on years of research and experience, *Effective Instruction in Reading and Spelling* is the flagship volume of MRU Press, complementing its existing collection of scholarly books.

MultiLit Chairman and MRU Director Kevin Wheldall is positive about what's to come.

“I have every confidence that we will continue to publish important volumes that advance the cause of promoting scientific approaches to learning. It is my deep desire that MRU Press will become a hallmark of trustworthy, practical and accessible information for educators everywhere.”

Visit [bookshop.multilit.com](http://bookshop.multilit.com) to purchase *Effective Instruction in Reading and Spelling* and other books from MRU Press.

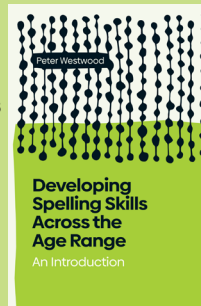
## Spelling through the ages

Long-time author and educator Peter Westwood has released his latest book, *Developing Spelling Skills Across the Age Range: An Introduction*, with MRU Press.

Born a self-confessed “very poor speller”, Peter has gone on to author 19 books designed to help students with learning difficulties and disabilities, and on teaching literacy and numeracy skills.

This latest book explains the skills required to be an accurate speller, and how teachers can impart these skills to children in preschool right through to adulthood.

“The book is intended for pre-service and serving teachers, teaching assistants, educational psychologists, speech therapists/pathologists – and anyone who is interested in raising standards in spelling,” Peter says. “I hope that readers of the book recognise that the ability to spell correctly is still very important in this digital age, and that explicit and systematic teaching is the key to improving standards.”





## Early Literacy Skills Program now available

The MultiLit Literacy Centres have introduced a new program to help our youngest learners gain the key skills they need to ensure a great start to their literacy journey. This one-to-one, in-centre and online offering is for students aged five years old and in the Foundation year of schooling. It is based on MultiLit’s InitialLit–Foundation program, and focuses on two main components: phonics, and vocabulary, oral language and listening comprehension. Students in the program complete a 50-minute lesson, two to five times a week for a 10-week term program. Holiday programs are also available.

For more information, contact MultiLit Literacy Centres on **1300 559 919**.

## Extending InitialLit

To cater for the needs of more capable students in our whole-class initial literacy instruction program, InitialLit, we have released InitialLit Extension – a suite of resources for Foundation to Year 2 to assist teachers in providing differentiated learning activities.

The InitialLit Extension resources are used in place of the original Sounds and Words Books and RAD Reading Books, providing more challenging material for the small group sessions.

Also released with the resources is InitialLit Extension PD by eLearning, a self-paced course to provide further guidance in how teachers can extend students easily mastering the core content in InitialLit.

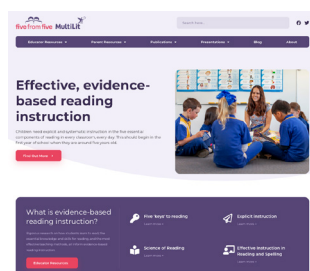
Other resources recently added to the InitialLit suite of products include InitialLit–1 Handwriting Workbooks in Queensland, South Australian and Victorian fonts, brand-new InitialLit–2 Handwriting Workbooks in all state fonts, and InitialLit–Foundation and InitialLit–1 Student Assessment Record Forms.

## New resources available on Five from Five

[www.fivefromfive.com.au](http://www.fivefromfive.com.au) is the essential destination for parents and educators seeking information on evidence-based reading instruction.

The website has just undergone a major refresh, with updated resources, content now covering all five of the keys to reading, recent presentations, and listings of upcoming events in the free Professional

Learning Seminar Series, which now covers new seminars on oral language and vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension.



## Closing the Gap Initiative expands to 42 schools in second year

Following a successful phase one with 21 schools, MultiLit’s Closing the Gap School Partnership Initiative has this year expanded to encompass 42 schools across five states and territories.

Funded under the Commonwealth Government’s Closing the Gap National Agreement, the four-year initiative provides majority Indigenous schools with access to MultiLit programs including InitialLit, MiniLit Sage, MacqLit and LanguageLift and the accompanying training. The aim of the initiative is to lift students’ reading to a minimum level that is within the average range for their age and year cohort.

MultiLit Literacy Centres are also providing one-to-one tutoring via Zoom to 35 students from our Closing the Gap schools. This enables us to meet the needs of specific students for either more intensive literacy intervention, or for capable students who are achieving at a higher level than their peers, individualised extension work.

Supporting schools is a key part of the initiative, and project manager Dr John Young has criss-crossed the country over the last 12 months to visit schools and speak with educators in locations as far-flung as Geraldton in WA, the APY Lands of SA, and regional centres in NSW.

On one of these visits, the principal shared the impact of the initiative on one of their students: “Sarah [name changed] is a Year 3 girl who was adamant she couldn’t read. If you asked her to read, she would say, ‘No, I can’t read!’ Now, she is at a point where she is begging to take a book home: ‘I want to show Mum I can read!’ The positive behaviour we did in our training really made a difference with her behaviour. She went from having very low attendance to being close to 100%. For the first time in her school life, she has a friendship group because she comes to school often enough to make and keep friends. She used to refuse to do any writing – now she writes three or four sentences without any support.”

We look forward to partnering with our Closing the Gap schools over the coming years to ensure many more students experience the transformative benefits of improved literacy.

### Chairman of MultiLit Pty Ltd

Emeritus Professor Kevin Wheldall AM

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