

## Vice-Chancellor's Blog – Macquarie University

Written by Steven Schwartz on June 23rd, 2008

### How Macquarie's MULTILIT transforms young lives

Most people who choose a career in education do so “to make a difference”. They work in schools, colleges and universities across all kinds of areas – science, maths, languages, history and the like – and they dedicate themselves to improving the lives of the students they come into contact with.

I recently read a wonderful story in one of Australia's regional newspapers, Queensland's Gladstone Observer, about how the lives of 16 children have been changed through a special program designed to improve their reading, writing and spelling skills.

“I can read fluently ... I can keep up with others ... I have more self control and I can concentrate better ... My organisational skills have improved and I do my homework”.

These are some of the quotes by youngsters who graduated from Gladstone's Exodus Tutorial Centre after studying in a program developed at Macquarie University and supported in Gladstone by local businessman Chris Tanner.

The article tells how the students, aged between 10 and 13, “stood before a packed audience and each delivered a speech on their journey, read a passage from their favourite book and thanked all those who had helped with their newfound confidence”.

Isn't that great? It makes me especially proud because the program that helped them so much is MULTILIT, developed by Professor Kevin Wheldall from Macquarie University's Special Education Centre (MUSEC).

MULTILIT (Making Up Lost Time In Literacy) is a wonderful innovation, centred on the simple but powerful idea that learning to read is one of the most important skills a child can learn - the key to all future academic success. For those children who find learning to read difficult, MULTILIT provides effective help based on scientific principles and research.

Since 2001 the Exodus Tutorial Centre in Gladstone, using MULTILIT strategies, has enabled many local children to look forward to a brighter future through their success in literacy and self esteem.

The Gladstone story is just one of MULTILIT's successes. One that has made national news concerns the incredible literacy progress made by children in Coen, Cape York.

You can read more about how the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership is working with Macquarie to improve literacy outcomes, and also improving the quality of teachers in remote schools, among other projects, [here](#).

The Gladstone Observer story includes a quote from a teacher that I think goes to the heart of education: “These children have realised their capabilities. Their smiles are wider and they have a new confidence in themselves.”