Ebooks and audiobooks to support
older low-progress readers

We have had many requests for ideas on how best to continue intervention for older struggling readers during this time of school closure. Those using the Reading Tutor Program, MacqLit or Word Attack Skills Extension programs will be looking for ways to keep students reading. We have recently released our updated response to COVID-19, which can be found here.

Reinforced Reading

As you would all be aware, Reinforced Reading is an integral part of our intervention programs and is something that can be easily implemented at home. This part of the program gives students opportunities to practise and apply the skills they are learning to a range of texts. Daily exposure to print is critical if we want students to catch up. Reading out loud means that errors can be spotted and corrected straightaway.

Click here for the training DVD Reinforced Reading to refresh your understanding of the procedures used.

To get the most out of time spent on Reinforced Reading, the person supporting the struggling reader needs to have better reading skills than the person being supported so that errors can be corrected as they occur. This may be an older sibling or any other member of the household. Note that an abridged version of the Reinforced Reading DVD which parents/carers would find useful will soon be uploaded to the COVID-19 resources section of the website (on the homepage).

Reading material

Finding suitable reading material to use during Reinforced Reading that will engage these older students with reading difficulties can be challenging.

The choice of text needs to be guided by their interests, reading ability and the level of support available.

Students can engage with text in different formats:
- print materials (printed books, magazines, newspapers, etc)
- digital text (ebooks and other digital material)

A mix of the two formats would be ideal, but if the student does not have printed material at home, then digital text would be the answer if there is access to the internet.

Note: If a student is at the very beginning stages of reading (working at Level 1 in RTP or Part A of MacqLit) decodable books will need to be on offer.

The role of ebooks

These are books that are in digital form and read on a screen. They provide a very practical way to access a variety of texts, particularly when students do not have many printed books in the home.

The advantage of ebooks is that they allow the reader and their teacher to engage with the same text together, but in different locations. The student can read aloud to an adult over the phone or across digital platforms as they follow the same text, the adult supporting the student with appropriate prompts and questions to check for understanding.

The role of audiobooks

An audiobook is a fantastic resource to allow students access to books that they are not yet able to read themselves. By listening to the story, students will still be exposed to new vocabulary and more complex story structures. If students can follow along with text provided on the screen or in hard copy that would be even more valuable. However, just listening to the book will provide many benefits: exposure to new vocabulary, access to good literature, building of world knowledge and so on.

Where to find ebooks and audio books

There are many ebook and audiobook offerings online, as well as apps. Many of these are free or at a very reasonable cost (see below for some suggestions). So that parents are not overwhelmed by choice, we would recommend that you narrow the options down to just a few at a time. Consider your students' reading ability, internet access, home support circumstances, likely access to printed books and, very importantly, their areas of interest when providing guidance.

Check out your school's **digital online catalogue**, as this will have many ebooks and audiobooks that the students can borrow for free. This may include access to OverDrive, which is a **free** service offered to school libraries that lets you borrow digital content (such as ebooks and audiobooks) any time, anywhere. It can be accessed via the Sora app or online.

Local libraries also have a plethora of ebooks and audiobooks that can be borrowed by older readers for free. While libraries are closed as of the time of writing, students that already have a library card can still access the eResources in the library system. Local libraries also provide free access to OverDrive. The BorrowBox app also makes it easy to access these digital books for free. **State libraries** also have a range of free ebooks and audiobooks. In some instances online registration is possible.

The NSW Education Department, Queensland Education Department, South Australian Education Department and the ACT Education Department websites offer free access to some digital texts.

Here are additional websites that offer free ebooks and/or audiobooks:

SYNC	Librivox	Read Print	MindWebs	Storynory	Lit2Go
Oxford Owl	BookBub	ManyBooks	Goodreads	Riveted	BookRix
Loyal Books	Scribl	Open Culture	Digital Book		Audible Stories
	The Tech Edvocate	Open Library	Free Classic Audiobooks		
	Listening Library	Project Gutenberg	National Library of Australia		
International Children's Digital Library		MagicBlox	StoryWeaver		All You Can Books

We hope this helps with your support of your students at this time.

If there are additional suggestions, feel free to contact us at multilit@multilit.com so we can share more widely.