



# The Computerworld Honors Program

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## Final Copy of Case Study

**YEAR:**  
*2012*

**STATUS:**  
*Laureate*

**Organization name:**  
NSW Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre

**Organization URL:**  
[http://clic.det.nsw.edu.au/content/remote\\_learning.htm](http://clic.det.nsw.edu.au/content/remote_learning.htm)

**Project Name:**  
Outreach Learning for the 21st Century

**What social/humanitarian issue was the project designed to address? What specific metrics did you use to measure the project's success?**

Improve literacy levels and standardised reading outcomes for students in remote and very remote communities in NSW. The need for a distance education strategy that can transform literacy outcomes for students in remote and very remote areas of Australia is evidenced by Australia's National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing. The 2009 NAPLAN data shows that 93% of Year 9 students in metropolitan areas were at or above the minimum standard for reading compared to only 48.4% of Year 9 students in very remote locations achieving scores at or above the minimum standard for reading. The 2010 NAPLAN testing showing that 92% of Year 9 students in metropolitan areas at or above the minimum standard for reading compared to only 45% of Year 9 students in very remote areas ([http://www.nap.edu.au/Test\\_Results/National\\_reports/index](http://www.nap.edu.au/Test_Results/National_reports/index)). The Royal Far West School is located on the beachfront in Manly (Sydney) and provides educational services to the children attending the Royal Far West, a health service supporting children from rural New South Wales. Each year the school supports around 1,500 students, aged 3 to 18 years, from New South Wales while the students are in residence attending the health service. One of the key challenges faced by the Royal Far West School is maintaining educational support for students when they return to their home school. Around 70% of the students assessed at the Royal Far West School are more than two years behind their age in reading, and more than 40% of this group is more than four years behind. While the students have access to literacy support programs in their rural or home schools, for many students there is an urgent need for additional immediate, intensive, individual and ongoing intervention.

**Please describe the technologies used and how those technologies were deployed in an innovative way. Also, please include any technical or other challenges that were overcome for the successful implementation of the project.**

The MULTILIT Reading Tutor package is a printed kit that provides programs of reading instruction for low-progress readers involving intensive, systematic and explicit instruction. The MULTILIT program is normally delivered face to face by a reading tutor to a single student. The NSW Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre converted the MULTILIT graphic files into a Flash interactive that could be rendered inside an Adobe Connect pod and accessed online. The Flash interactive was constructed to accurately mirror the normal tutor to student delivery mode. Additional Flash resources were created to ensure that the students could follow their progress from the Adobe Connect screen and be engaged in the learning tasks. An Adobe Connect server was set up on a Department of Education and Training data center with a public IP address. This ensured that students could connect to the service from homes as well as via the department's wide-area network that links all department schools. An Adobe Connect room was designed for use by low-literacy students and, after user testing, was replicated to create 12 identical rooms that would support concurrent use by individual students across the state. A splash page (<http://www.cli.nsw.edu.au/cli/rfw/>) was created to make it easier for students to find their tutor and provide access to a user guide and wall chart. The tutor logs into the server using a department IDM account and has access to a teacher interface that flexibly allows the tutor to move directly to the current lesson's MULTILIT material. Students join their lesson as a guest and do not need to authenticate, a design feature in recognition of the students' low literacy and language skills. The student and tutor are both able to see and hear each other using Adobe Connect.

**Please list the specific humanitarian benefits the project has yielded so far.**

The Royal Far West School uses community volunteers in Sydney's Manly peninsula to deliver reading support to students in regional schools three times per week. Students don't leave their classroom and don't require a teacher's aide or parent volunteer to be with them. This is a simple and effective showcase of how technology, and broadband communication, can transform educational opportunities for students in remote locations. During 2011, 25 Manly community volunteers delivered literacy support three times per week to over 46 students in classrooms across regional NSW schools. Constant communication between Royal Far West School and the student's home school ensures the program is monitored at all times. Recording booklets are monitored at Royal Far West School and feedback is provided regularly. Progress charts and reports are sent to home schools for teachers and parents concerned. Anecdotal feedback from teachers, principals and learning support teachers is that they notice that students are showing improvement in reading, confidence and self-esteem, social communication, positive behaviour, attendance, working independently more often, and actively taking part in more classroom activities. Students return to the Royal Far West School for follow-up clinical support, and standardised testing has demonstrated significant improvement in their literacy scores. For many students, this is the first time they have demonstrated long-term improvement in their reading performance. Parents also report that their children are happier and generally more enthusiastic about school and learning.

**Please provide the best example of how the project has benefited a specific individual, enterprise or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work.**

The Royal Far West School is now able to deliver a vital one-on-one literacy intervention service to its students when they return to their regional schools, maximizing the Royal Far West School's

capacity and reach in a very cost-effective way. The service also provides teachers in regional and remote schools with the opportunity to access best practice models and intervention support that previously was limited to schools within metropolitan areas. The video accessible at the project website provides outstanding evidence of the benefits of the project. There are currently 25 community volunteers trained and actively participating in the program to deliver literacy intervention support to students in remote regional schools. A volunteer tutor is shown at Appendix 1. A further 70 community volunteers have expressed interest in being trained and supporting the program's expanded support.