



Background

Hilton College is one of the top Boys' Schools in South Africa ([Grades 8 – 12](#)). It is known for its academic achievements, sporting traditions and its cultural pursuits. The school is adequately structured to ensure that each boy is nurtured in all aspects of his school career. Reading is one such imperative: to support the academic and develop the leadership prowess of each boy and to provide a fruitful creative past-time. Mandy Durnford is the Librarian at the College. She shares with us how the reading programme has been fitted for the above-mentioned purposes into the school's very tight timetable and the management thereof.

The beginnings

Mandy could not have been happier when she was introduced to OverDrive with its original reading app, which then evolved to the OverDrive Award Winning Reading App SORA.

Newly enrolled [Grade 8](#) students are provided with laptops [onto](#) which they download the free SORA app in order to have easy access to [hassle](#)-free and much needed reading material.

Mandy has a strong belief that "Readers are Readers" whether reading a physical copy or a digital copy.

Maximising the value of using SORA

To give impetus to reading in general.

- Mandy ensures that there is time to read should the boys choose to read.
- A 25 minute weekly reading slot has been allocated to each [Grade](#) to expand the reading habit. Mandy advocated the creation of small reading groups of boys in

the different [Grades](#) – 8, 9 and 10 - with a teacher, including the Principal, to guide and monitor reading on some different aspect or programme.

- Mandy has instituted a ‘Shared Reading of a Book with a Parent’ programme which calls for excitement and celebration when a parent and son complete the book of their choosing. This programme fosters a great connection between the two.
- The boys in [Grade](#) 8 email parents to share what they have been reading. This enriches comprehension skills as well as interpretative skills.
- There are prizes for reading achievements. There are tuckshop weekly draws for finishing a book on a stipulated theme or category, such as reading ‘a book written before I was born’. A student must be signed off by a teacher to participate in the draw. Twelve predetermined categories are set up for [Grades](#) 8 and 9. Vouchers and other items of interest are awarded to the lucky draw winners.
- Teachers use SORA to project the text of a set book on the whiteboard during lessons.
- The Audiobooks are very popular for learners with learning barriers.
- Both the French and Afrikaans Departments recognise the importance in reading as a fundamental pillar of learning. Mandy creates carts on OverDrive from which the departments can make their choices. It is cost effective for the French and Afrikaans Departments to purchase books from OverDrive. Mandy also works closely with the English Department.

To conclude!

“I have discovered that you are a reader, or not a reader. It does not matter what media that book comes in” Mandy points out. The assumption was that OverDrive would enable her to reach non-readers by using a different technology. She persevered in her efforts to promote reading and the use of SORA is now gaining momentum. “SORA is a Reading App that makes access to e-books incredibly easy”, she says. “The offering of a collection of South African based content attracts more readers. For example, there is Rugby oriented content that appeals to Hilton College boys” – Mandy Durnford.