

playing sport and  
Reading

I like reading books at school



External Evaluation of the Selected National Partnership  
on Literacy and Numeracy NSW Programs

## Evaluation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for NSW Department of Education and Communities  
January 2012



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Urbis Social Policy team has received ISO 20252 Certification for the provision of social policy research and evaluation, social planning, community consultation, market research and communications research.

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## Glossary

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
AECGs	Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups
BST	Basic Skills Test
CEO	Catholic Education Office (Parramatta diocese)
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DASA	Data Analysis Skills Assessment
EMSAD	Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate
ESL	English as a Second Language
ILPs	Individual Learning Plans
KLA	Key Learning Area
LBOTE	Language Background Other Than English
MLMT	Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NEALE	Neale Analysis of Reading Ability
NING	NING online forum
NMS	National Minimum Standard
NPLN	National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy
NSW DEC	NSW Department of Education and Communities
TEs	Teaching Educators
TORCH	Test of Reading Comprehension
TOWRE	Test of Word Reading Efficiency



# Executive Summary

## 1. THIS PROJECT

In November 2010, Urbis was contracted by the then NSW Department of Education and Training (now Department of Education and Communities (NSW DEC)) to conduct an evaluation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching (MLMT), one of several initiatives being funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy (NPLN).

Specifically, the Terms of Reference for the evaluation of MLMT involve:

- An assessment of the effectiveness of MLMT
- An assessment of the extent to which MLMT achieves its goals in an efficient manner and, where applicable, addresses the mandatory reform elements of the National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy which are:
  - effective and evidence-based teaching of literacy
  - strong school leadership and whole school engagement with literacy
  - monitoring student and school literacy performance to identify where support is needed
- An assessment of the extent to which MLMT has improved the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students
- An investigation of the most effective ways for schools to be supported to participate in the evaluation and for the reforms to be incorporated into school practice.

## 2. MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING (MLMT)

MLMT is designed to build teacher capacity to improve the reading comprehension skills of students. It can better be described as a new approach to, or a new focus on, reading comprehension, rather than as a new 'program' in the formal sense.

MLMT is centred on an inquiry cycle which allows for a personalised approach for each learning community. This inquiry cycle involves identifying:

- What are the students' needs?
- What are the teachers' needs?
- How can we change teaching practices to better respond to student needs?

MLMT was developed by the Catholic Education Office (Parramatta diocese) (CEO). Under the NPLN, it has been implemented in eight schools in the Parramatta diocese in Stages 2 and 3, although some schools are using elements of MLMT in Stage 1. Implementation commenced in Term 4, 2009 and funding for MLMT was acquitted by December 2011.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology comprised the following components:

- knowledge review – a review of documentation relating to MLMT
- scoping of data sets to identify data analysis that would be achievable

- development of a Project Plan, setting out the finalised methodology, risk management strategy and timeframes
- visits to eight schools implementing MLMT to interview the School Executive, School Leadership Team, teachers, parents and students
- an online survey of staff in the eight schools implementing MLMT under the NPLN - responses were received from 76 staff across seven schools
- stakeholder interviews, including with the CEO, Teaching Educators (TEs) and Professor Robin Ewing, the CEO's 'critical friend' from the University of Sydney
- analysis of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and NPLN assessment data.

The methodology for this evaluation was developed in close consultation with NSW DEC, in particular the Student Engagement and Program Evaluation Bureau. The final project plan containing the methodology was submitted to NSW DEC in November 2010, and approved by the NPLN NSW Programs Program Evaluation Reference Group, which oversaw this evaluation.

#### 4. IMPLEMENTATION OF MLMT

Although implementation of MLMT varied across the schools, depending on the needs of the school community, common elements included:

- professional learning for teachers
- use of data to inform teaching
- explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies
- more effective use of strategies to teach reading comprehension
- purchase of new and more engaging texts
- Individualised Learning Plans (ILPs) for students experiencing difficulty with reading and Aboriginal students.

Professional learning for teachers under MLMT was targeted, comprehensive and ongoing. The bulk of professional learning was provided *in situ* by school leadership teams and TEs (CEO staff that visited MLMT schools 1-2 days each week), and included teacher observation, which was followed by a process of feedback and reflection.

#### 5. KEY FINDINGS

##### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF MLMT

The qualitative and quantitative research demonstrates that MLMT has had a positive impact on schools, and delivered benefits to teachers, students and the school as a whole. There was a common view among school staff that because MLMT was not a program *per se* and was not prescriptive, schools were able to adapt MLMT to meet the reading comprehension needs of the school community.

Critical to the success of MLMT was the way it was implemented in schools. School staff expressed considerable satisfaction with the school leadership teams, that led the way in identifying the needs of teachers and students, and developing targeted strategies to effectively respond to these needs. Overall, schools were also satisfied with the support provided by the CEO and TEs. There was some dissatisfaction in schools with the communication about MLMT in the roll-out phase, which led to some early implementation challenges. However, these issues were resolved over time and did not impact significantly on the overall effectiveness of MLMT.



The specific benefits MLMT delivered to teachers, students and the school as a whole are explained in more detail below.

## OUTCOMES FOR TEACHERS

The majority of teachers surveyed and interviewed were of the view that MLMT had a positive impact on their literacy teaching practice, and made them better teachers. Specifically, teachers said MLMT had a positive impact on their knowledge, attitudes and skills, as well as on their classroom teaching practice.

Teachers said the professional learning gave them a better understanding of comprehension strategies, and how to effectively teach reading comprehension in the classroom. It also gave them greater confidence, and the belief that they did have the capacity to improve the reading comprehension of their students. This knowledge and confidence translated into significant changes in classroom teaching practice. As a result of MLMT, teachers were now:

- analysing data to identify the reading comprehension needs of students, and developing strategies to respond to these needs in the classroom setting
- explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies
- questioning students in a way that required them to demonstrate a deep understanding of texts
- using existing evidence-based strategies for teaching reading more effectively (eg Readers' Circle, Readers' Theatre, Reciprocal Teaching)
- strategically selecting texts that were likely to engage and interest students
- participating in teacher observation, and a continual cycle of feedback and reflection
- monitoring selected students through ILPs.

## OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

This evaluation analysed the effectiveness of MLMT for students by looking at three data sources: NAPLAN and NPLN assessment data supplied by NSW DEC, an online survey of school staff, and qualitative data collected during our school visits. All of this data provides an indication that the reading comprehension skills of students in MLMT schools has improved, as has students' confidence in and enthusiasm for reading.

In both data sets (NAPLAN and NPLN assessments), gains in mean reading scores were observed for all student cohorts at MLMT schools. However, the extent of these gains varied compared to those observed for all NPLN literacy-focus schools, and for all State schools (for NAPLAN data only). Despite these variations, the mean reading scores for MLMT students both before and after the NPLN period were higher than those for NPLN literacy-focus schools as a whole.

It should be noted that the limitations relating to NAPLAN and NPLN assessment data outlined in Section 5.1 of this document must be taken into account when considering these results.

The online survey data and qualitative data collected during the school visits also indicates that the reading comprehension of students in MLMT schools has improved. School staff reported MLMT had given students:

- greater enthusiasm for and confidence in reading
- a better understanding of reading comprehension strategies and how to use these strategies to read for meaning
- a better understanding of what is expected of them when they read (ie an understanding that they need to comprehend and not just read words on a page)
- greater willingness to discuss what they have read, and express an opinion on texts

- more diverse texts to choose from.

## OUTCOMES FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

This evaluation required an assessment of the extent to which MLMT has improved the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students. However, only around six students in all MLMT schools identified as Aboriginal. Given this is such a small sample, it is not possible for us to draw any conclusions from this evaluation on the impact of MLMT on the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students. The qualitative and quantitative data we do have suggests that MLMT is as effective for Aboriginal students as for non-Aboriginal students.

While MLMT schools have a low percentage of Aboriginal students, they have a very high percentage of students with English as a Second Language (ESL) or a Language Background other than English (LBOTE), including one school with 80-85% ESL/LBOTE students. School staff generally said MLMT was as effective for ESL/LBOTE students as it was for non-ESL/LBOTE students. MLMT did, however, make teachers more *mindful* about potential gaps in the knowledge and vocabulary of ESL/LBOTE students which might impact on their reading comprehension.

## IMPACT ON SCHOOLS

The majority of teachers agreed that since the introduction of MLMT there was more clarity about their school's goals and expectations relating to reading outcomes. They also agreed that MLMT had resulted in greater transparency and consistency in the way literacy was taught in the school.

Although the NPLN was focused on Years 3-6, MLMT schools were implementing components of MLMT in Stage 1. A common theme was that schools now had a whole-of-school approach to, and focus on, reading comprehension. Teachers were using the same language, the same data to assess the needs of students, and the same assessment tools, all of which contributed to a collaborative whole-of-school approach to reading comprehension.

MLMT was said to have made the school environment more collegiate and supportive. There was a real sense in MLMT schools that a strong focus on reading comprehension, and the supports that came with that, had motivated teachers to work to a common goal and achieve real outcomes in the reading comprehension levels of students.

## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

As noted above, critical to the success of MLMT was the fact that it was not prescriptive, and was flexible enough to enable schools to adapt it to meet the needs of the school community. Other key success factors included:

- a strong Leadership Team and a knowledgeable and supportive TE
- funding to allow for professional learning and the purchase of new and varied texts and electronic resources
- a strong 'whole-of-school' focus on reading comprehension
- willingness by teachers to adopt a new approach to teaching reading comprehension and to be more purposeful and reflective in their teaching
- training *in situ* that was targeted and relevant to the school environment
- collegiality and support among school staff which facilitated classroom observation and feedback, and the sharing of ideas
- using data to ensure classroom teaching strategies met the needs of all students in the classroom
- making reading fun for children by being *mindful* about the texts and activities likely to engage them.

## 6. STRENGTHENING THE IMPACT OF MLMT

Although schools were generally very satisfied with MLMT as a reading comprehension tool, the main suggestions for strengthening MLMT related to:

- *Focus on Years 3-6:* many schools said MLMT was very effective for students in Years 3-6, and would be more effective if it was formally expanded to include Kindergarten–Year 6.
- *Networking opportunities for MLMT teachers:* several schools said MLMT could be improved by having a formal channel for MLMT lead teachers to communicate. Such a channel exists for principals but does not exist for lead teachers, who are generally responsible for the day-to-day management of MLMT in schools.

### SUSTAINABILITY

Overall, schools are optimistic about the sustainability of MLMT after the cessation of NPLN funding. During school visits, school staff regularly said MLMT had brought about a cultural shift and a different way of thinking about reading comprehension which would not disappear when the funding ceased.

However, sustaining MLMT at its current level without funding will be a challenge for schools. For example, it will be much more difficult for schools to employ casual staff to release teachers for teacher observation, and for schools to purchase new and engaging texts for students. A strong commitment by the leadership team to reading comprehension, and professional learning for new and continuing staff, will be critical for the sustainability of MLMT in schools.



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 POLICY CONTEXT

In November 2010, Urbis was contracted by the then NSW Department of Education and Training (now Department of Education and Communities (NSW DEC)) to conduct an evaluation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching (MLMT), an approach designed to improve reading comprehension skills. MLMT is one of several initiatives being funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy (NPLN) agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on 28 November 2008.

The NPLN was the centrepiece of the *National Action Plan for Literacy and Numeracy* (Action Plan), a 2008-09 Federal budget initiative, and was allocated \$540 million in funding. Operating for four years from 2009, the NPLN is designed to facilitate and reward literacy and numeracy models or approaches that clearly demonstrate evidence for accelerating improvement in student results. The NPLN focuses on strong school leadership and whole-of-school engagement with literacy and numeracy, and the monitoring of student and school literacy and numeracy performance to identify where support is needed. The goal is that effective practice will be disseminated to support system-wide improvements in educational attainment.

A total of 147 schools in NSW are participating in a range of programs funded under the NPLN. Some of these programs have been developed internally by NSW DEC, others by the Catholic Education Commission, and others by external developers. The programs target literacy or numeracy at either the individual student level and/or a whole-of-class level.

Over the first two years of the NPLN, \$41 million was allocated to NSW as 'facilitation payments', with the final two years recognised as 'reward payments'. Reward payments were triggered by the attainment of specific performance targets, including four mandated NAPLAN measures and three local measures specific to NSW – the National Partnership Literacy Numeracy (NPLN) assessment for students, the Data Analysis Skills Assessment (DASA) for teachers, and an analytical framework to support school improvement in literacy and numeracy which articulates 25 statements of best practice in literacy and numeracy.

Eight programs funded under the NPLN have been selected for evaluation. Four of these programs are being evaluated by NSW DEC. The remaining four programs are being evaluated by Urbis, including MLMT.

## 1.2 MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING

MLMT is designed to build teacher capacity to improve the reading comprehension skills of students. MLMT should not be thought of as a program in the formal sense. It can better be described as a new approach to, or a new focus on, reading comprehension.

MLMT is centred on an inquiry cycle which allows for a personalised approach for each learning community. This inquiry cycle involves identifying:

- What are the students' needs?
- What are the teachers' needs?
- How can we change teaching practices to better respond to student needs?

With support from the Catholic Education Office (Parramatta Diocese) (CEO), Teaching Educators (TEs) and the School Leadership Team, teachers implement a variety of comprehension strategies in the classroom to respond to identified student needs. This is then followed by a continual cycle of evaluation and feedback.

MLMT uses many of the existing evidence-based strategies for teaching reading (eg Readers' Circle, Readers' Theatre, Reciprocal Teaching), but is about building the capacity of teachers to be more *mindful*

about what they are teaching, how they are teaching, and whether they are responding to individual student needs.

Under the NPLN, MLMT has been implemented in eight schools in the Parramatta diocese in Stages 2 and 3, although some schools are using elements of MLMT in Stage 1. A ninth school in the Parramatta Diocese also implemented MLMT separate from the NPLN. This ninth school has not been included in this evaluation. Implementation of MLMT commenced in Term 4, 2009. Funding for MLMT was acquitted by December 2011.

MLMT is largely delivered at the classroom level, although there is an individual intervention for students experiencing difficulty in reading and for Aboriginal students in the form of Individualised Learning Plans (ILPs). MLMT should not be seen as having two distinct, mutually exclusive, elements (ie a classroom approach and an individual approach). ILP students are generally not singled out for a separate, targeted intervention, rather the extra support they require is documented and provided in the classroom setting.

### 1.3 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

This evaluation is to assess the efficacy and value of MLMT in relation to the priority areas of reform mandated by the NPLN. In particular, the Terms of Reference for the evaluation of MLMT involve:

- An assessment of the effectiveness of MLMT
- An assessment of the extent to which MLMT achieves its goals in an efficient manner and, where applicable, addresses the mandatory reform elements of the NPLN which are:
  - effective and evidence-based teaching of literacy
  - strong school leadership and whole school engagement with literacy
  - monitoring student and school literacy performance to identify where support is needed
- An assessment of the extent to which MLMT has improved the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students
- An investigation of the most effective ways for schools to be supported to participate in the evaluation and for the reforms to be incorporated into school practice.

This evaluation was overseen by the NPLN NSW Programs Program Evaluation Reference Group, and managed by the Student Engagement and Program Evaluation Bureau, both within NSW DEC.

For the purposes of this evaluation, we have interpreted 'literacy' as meaning 'reading'. MLMT was designed to build reading comprehension skills, which is one aspect of literacy. It was not intended to build skills in other areas of literacy (eg writing). However, where MLMT has impacted on other areas of students' literacy, these impacts have been noted.

### 1.4 METHODOLOGY

#### 1.4.1 OVERVIEW

This evaluation had a robust methodology that comprised qualitative and quantitative components. The qualitative components included visits to all MLMT schools for consultations with the School Executive, School Leadership Team, teachers, parents and students. It also included consultations with the CEO, Teaching Educators (TEs), and Professor Robin Ewing from the University of Sydney, who was engaged by the CEO as a 'critical friend'. The quantitative components comprised an online survey for staff in schools implementing MLMT, and an analysis of NAPLAN and NPLN assessment data provided by NSW DEC.

The methodology for this evaluation was developed in close consultation with NSW DEC. The final project plan containing the methodology was submitted to NSW DEC in November 2010, and was approved by the NPLN NSW Programs Program Evaluation Reference Group.

All research instruments, including interview guides and the online survey, were designed following a review of MLMT documentation and key literature on evaluation of literacy programs, as well as consultation with the CEO and some MLMT schools.

Urbis consulted extensively with the Student Engagement and Program Evaluation Bureau within NSW DEC on all aspects of this evaluation, including our approach to qualitative consultations, the development of research instruments, and data analysis. The Bureau approved all research instruments for this evaluation including the interview guides (see Appendix A) and the online survey (see Appendix B).

## 1.4.2 QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

### MEETINGS WITH MS TRUDIE HILL FROM THE CEO, PARRAMATTA DIOCESE

Urbis met with Ms Trudie Hill from the CEO at the start of this evaluation and again at the conclusion of the school visits. Ms Hill was responsible for developing and implementing MLMT within the CEO. At our first meeting, Ms Hill provided the Urbis team with the evidence-base for MLMT, contextual information on the eight schools participating in MLMT, and details about how MLMT was being implemented. At our second meeting, Ms Hill provided an update on implementation and advice on the outcomes of MLMT, and responded to questions that had arisen during our school visits.

### SCHOOL VISITS

Urbis visited all eight schools in the Parramatta Diocese involved in the implementation of MLMT under the NPLN including:

- Sacred Heart, Mount Druitt South
- St John's, Riverstone
- St Francis of Assisi, Glendenning
- St Nicholas of Myra, Penrith
- Trinity, Kemps Creek
- St Aiden's, Rooty Hill
- Holy Trinity, Granville
- St Patrick's, Blacktown.

Each school was visited for a full day, and evaluators met with key stakeholder groups, including the School Executive, School Leadership Team, staff, parents and students. Some of the school visits coincided with visits by TEs, and where this happened evaluators took the opportunity to meet with them also.

Most meetings took the form of focus groups or small group discussions. The School Leadership Teams and staff were very generous with their time, often staying back after school hours to speak with the Urbis team. Given they were at the forefront of implementing MLMT, their input was critical to this evaluation. Urbis would like to express its gratitude for their contribution and willingness to participate in this evaluation.

### FOCUS GROUP WITH TEACHING EDUCATORS

At the conclusion of the school visits, Urbis held a focus group with TEs. It became apparent during the school visits that TEs played a key role in implementing MLMT in schools, and were essentially the link between schools and the CEO. This focus group provided a useful opportunity to discuss the outcomes of

MLMT, and the value of MLMT as a tool to improve reading comprehension, and to identify the enablers and barriers to the effective implementation of MLMT.

#### MEETING WITH PROFESSOR ROBYN EWING, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Professor Robyn Ewing was engaged by the CEO to act as a ‘critical friend’ in the implementation of MLMT and to conduct an evaluation of MLMT (separate to the evaluation commissioned by NSW DEC). Professor Ewing was identified as a key stakeholder and Urbis met with her for a one-on-one interview on 25 July 2011.

### 1.4.3 QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

#### ONLINE SURVEY FOR SCHOOL STAFF

All staff participating in the implementation of MLMT were invited to complete an online survey. The survey was designed to capture the views and experiences of school staff. It was targeted at classroom teachers as well as executive staff (eg Principals, Assistant Principals) and staff who provide assistance with teaching literacy (eg Reading Recovery assistants, literacy coordinators, and teaching librarians).

A total of 76 school staff completed the survey. Respondents were from seven of the eight schools implementing MLMT under the NPLN. The results of the online survey are provided at Appendix C.

#### ANALYSIS OF NAPLAN AND NPLN ASSESSMENT DATA

Urbis had a number of meetings and discussions with NSW DEC and the Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate (EMSAD) to scope the relevant data sets for MLMT.

Under the NPLN, a number of national and local data sets are being collected to measure the performance of the National Partnership against the priority areas for reform which, as outlined in the Terms of Reference in Section 1.3, are:

- effective and evidence-based teaching of literacy and numeracy
- strong school leadership and whole-of-school engagement with literacy and numeracy
- monitoring student and school literacy and numeracy performance to identify where support is needed.

(COAG 2008, *National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy*)

In NSW, these data sets include the following:

TABLE 1 – DATA SETS FOR PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT OF NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON LITERACY AND NUMERACY OUTCOMES

TYPE	DATA SET	DESCRIPTION
National	NAPLAN results	National standardised assessment in literacy and numeracy
Local	National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy (NPLN) Assessments	Baseline assessment in literacy and numeracy for NPLN schools based on an abbreviated Basic Skills Test (BST)
	Data Analysis Skills Assessment (DASA)	Teacher and School Executive skill in interpretation of data
	Analytical Framework for Effective Leadership and School Improvement in Literacy and Numeracy	Assessment of school against 25 statements of best practice in literacy and numeracy
	School Plans and Annual Reports	School strategic and improvement planning and reporting. Note that this is a requirement rather than a specific reward measure.

(NSW DET 2010, *National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy: Data Collection and Analysis Plan*)



The evaluation of the NPLN-funded literacy and numeracy programs specifically addresses the extent to which each program contributes to priority reform element (a), that is, *effective and evidence-based teaching of literacy and numeracy*. The evaluation therefore draws on the specific data sets that are relevant to this reform element, and that are directly influenced by the delivery of the literacy and numeracy interventions.

As agreed with NSW DEC, the relevant data sets for the program evaluation are:

- NAPLAN results
- NPLN assessment results.

The other data sets included in Table 1 (DASA, Analytical Framework and School Plans/Reports) have not been used to assess the efficacy and value of the specific literacy and numeracy interventions.

The timeline for NAPLAN and NPLN assessment data included in the evaluation, and the student cohorts tracked in each data set are outlined below.

TABLE 2 – DATA COLLECTION TIMING AND COHORTS

DATA SET	COLLECTION TIMING	COHORTS	
NAPLAN	Tests undertaken by Year 3 and Year 5 students in May each year (all NSW)	1	Year 3 2008, Year 5 2010
		2	Year 3 2009, Year 5 2011
NPLN Assessments	Tests undertaken in April 2009, August 2010 and August 2011 (NPLN schools only)	1	Year 2 2009, Year 3 2010, Year 4 2011
		2	Year 3 2009, Year 4 2010, Year 5 2011
		3	Year 4 2009, Year 5 2010, Year 6 2011

For each cohort and year, EMSAD provided the following aggregate data sets:

TABLE 3 – DATA SPECIFICATIONS

DATA SET	DATA	PROGRAM COMPARISON GROUPS	STUDENT COMPARISON GROUPS
NAPLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sample size (N)</li> <li>▪ Mean scale score (reading/numeracy) and standard deviation</li> <li>▪ Performance bands: % below national minimum standard; % at national minimum standard; % above national minimum standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program schools (aggregated data for all NPLN schools implementing a given literacy or numeracy program)</li> <li>▪ All NPLN schools (literacy/numeracy)</li> <li>▪ All NSW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All students</li> <li>▪ Boys</li> <li>▪ Girls</li> <li>▪ Aboriginal</li> <li>▪ Non-Aboriginal</li> <li>▪ Non-LBOTE</li> <li>▪ LBOTE</li> </ul>
NPLN Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mean scale score (literacy/numeracy) and standard deviation</li> <li>▪ Performance bands: % band 1 (lowest); % above band 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program schools (aggregated data for all NPLN schools implementing a given literacy or numeracy program)</li> <li>▪ All NPLN schools (literacy/numeracy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All students</li> <li>▪ Boys</li> <li>▪ Girls</li> <li>▪ Aboriginal</li> <li>▪ Non-Aboriginal</li> <li>▪ Non-LBOTE</li> <li>▪ LBOTE</li> </ul>

## 1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

### 1.5.1 ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

One of the Terms of Reference for this evaluation was to examine the impact MLMT has had on educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. However, only around 6 students in the eight schools implementing MLMT identified as being Aboriginal. Given this is such a small sample, it is not possible for us to draw any conclusions from this evaluation about the impact of MLMT on the educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. Nevertheless, the engagement of Aboriginal students in MLMT, including through Individualised Learning Plans mandated under the NPLN, has been outlined in Section 5.4 of this document. It should be noted that Urbis advised all relevant Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (AECGs) about the evaluation.

While the schools we visited had a low percentage of Aboriginal students, they had a very high percentage of students with English as a Second Language (ESL) or a Language Background other than English (LBOTE), including one school with 80-85% ESL/LBOTE students. Although not a specific Term of Reference, given the demographics of the schools visited, we considered the impact on the educational outcomes for ESL/LBOTE students when assessing the effectiveness of MLMT.

### 1.5.2 NPLN AND NAPLAN DATA

Caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of data collected from NAPLAN and NPLN assessments. EMSAD has advised that there are a number of limitations which impact the validity of findings from the analysis including: the variation in the focus of tests each year; the different timeline of pre- and post-intervention measures for NAPLAN cohorts; considerable student mobility in schools; small sample sizes for some comparison groups; the impact of other literacy and numeracy initiatives operating in NPLN schools; the use of these same programs in other NSW schools (not funded under the NPLN); and the lack of a comparable control group against which to benchmark results for NPLN schools. Further detail on the considerations for interpreting this data has been provided in Section 5 (student outcomes).

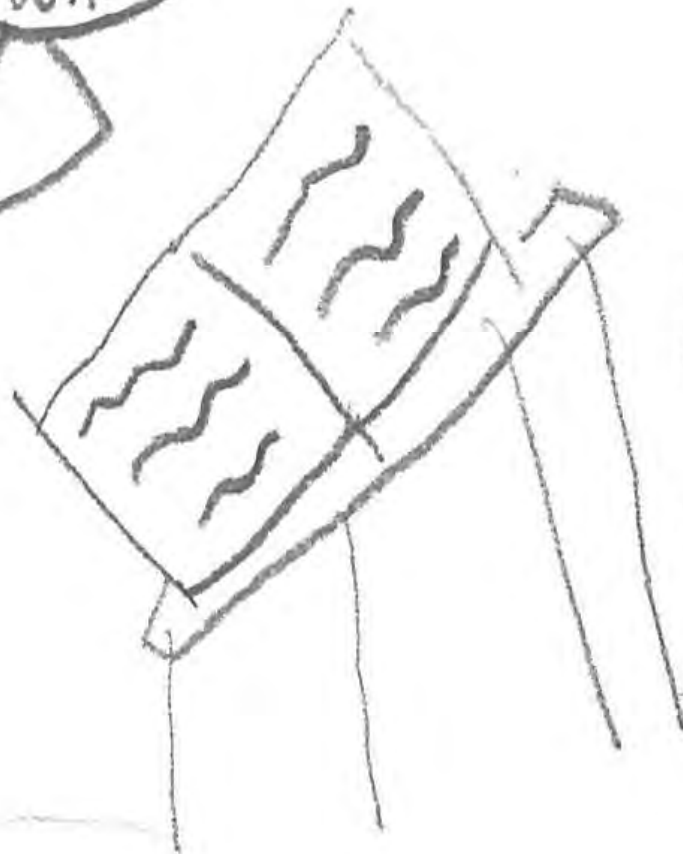
### 1.5.3 ATTRIBUTION

It is important to understand the context in which MLMT was used, particularly that MLMT was one amongst many programs and strategies targeting literacy that have been implemented in NSW schools over the past few years. In the context of intense broad activity in the area of literacy, it is difficult to establish attribution for any individual program or initiative.

## 1.6 STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the evidence base for MLMT
- Section 3 addresses the implementation of MLMT
- Section 4 examines outcomes for teachers
- Section 5 examines outcomes for students
- Section 6 examines outcomes at the school level
- Section 7 examines areas for strengthening the impact of MLMT, as well as the sustainability of MLMT
- Section 8 provides a summary and conclusions.

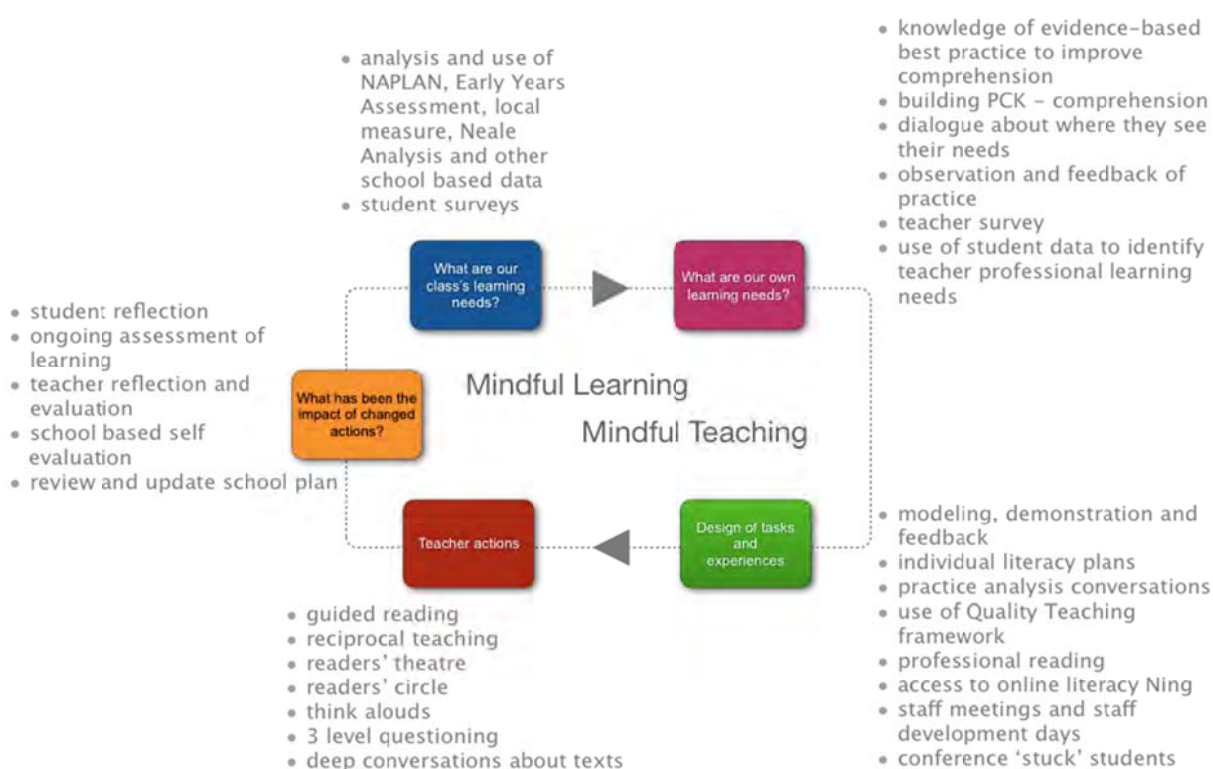


## 2 Evidence-base for MLMT

### 2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE-BASE FOR MLMT

MLMT is defined by the CEO as an educator-led inquiry into the teaching of reading. The structure of MLMT draws on the inquiry cycle process developed by Professor Helen Timperley, an educationalist from the University of Auckland with expertise in policy, leadership and professional learning. This inquiry cycle process is provided at Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 – INQUIRY CYCLE PROCESS



The inquiry cycle is designed to provide for a personalised approach for each learning community. Applied to MLMT, this inquiry cycle involves:

- identifying students' learning needs
- Identifying teachers' learning needs
- designing a range of learning tasks and experiences to respond to these identified needs
- using professional learning to implement improved teaching strategies in the classroom
- evaluating the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

With support from the CEO, including through the provision of TEs, and from the School Leadership Team, teachers implement a variety of strategies in the classroom that are tailored to students' needs. They focus on meta-cognitive strategies that support students to generate their own learning and improve their reading comprehension skills, which can then be applied to other contexts. Implementation of such strategies by teachers is followed by a continual cycle of evaluation and feedback.

The key components of MLMT are data analysis to identify student needs, professional learning for teachers focused on effective pedagogy that promotes reading comprehension, and continual evaluation and reflection.

As noted in Section 1.2, many of the strategies being implemented by teachers in the classroom as part of MLMT (eg Readers' Circle, Readers' Theatre, Reciprocal Teaching) are existing evidence-based strategies for teaching reading, but MLMT is about building capacity of teachers so they can be more *mindful* about *what* they are teaching, *how* they are teaching it, and whether they are *responding* to individual student needs.

Another key element of MLMT is ensuring students have access to a variety of engaging texts, and the MLMT intervention contains the elements identified by Allington<sup>1</sup> as essential to building reading comprehension skills. These include:

- substantially expanding the volume of daily reading
- ensuring access to appropriate texts all day long
- providing needed expert, explicit, personalised instruction
- crafting a coherent and balanced array of reading lessons and activities.

## 2.2 CEO (PARRAMATTA DIOCESE) THEORY OF ACTION

MLMT is being implemented under the umbrella of a Theory of Action developed by the CEO (Parramatta diocese). According to the CEO, the Theory of Action is based on current best practice research on how schools and systems can work effectively to maximise student learning outcomes. The Theory of Action seeks to make explicit the connection between what schools do, and the outcomes they hope to achieve.

According to the CEO, the essence of its Theory of Action is in the relationships that link the five elements of student learning, teaching, teacher learning, school leadership and system leadership. While there are many things that influence student learning, the CEO is particularly focused on the influence of teaching. This focus has enabled the development of shared goals around teacher and student learning across the system, and this focus is evident in MLMT, which seeks to build teacher capacity to respond to students' learning needs.

Since 2009, the CEO has also focused on using data to improve learning and providing feedback, both of which were identified in John Hattie's synthesis *Visible Learning*<sup>2</sup> as high yield strategies to contribute to student learning. The CEO notes that the use of data and feedback provides an evidence-based lens through which to implement and evaluate the Theory of Action throughout the system. As explained above, both the use of data and feedback are key components of MLMT.



<sup>1</sup> Allington, R.L (2006). Critical factors in designing an effective reading intervention for struggling readers. In Cummins, C (Ed) *Understanding and implementing Reading First Initiatives: The changing role of administrators*. Newark: International Reading Association.

<sup>2</sup> Hattie, J.(2009). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta Analyses relating to Achievement*. London: Routledge.

## 2.3 STAKEHOLDER VIEWS ON THE EVIDENCE-BASE FOR MLMT

School Leadership Teams and some teachers specifically referred to Allington's work and Helen Timperley's inquiry cycle, and provided examples of how they had used this cycle to identify reading comprehension needs, and ways to respond to these needs. There was a view among these staff that the inquiry cycle provided a logical framework which enabled schools to focus on the various steps to improving reading comprehension.

Other teachers spoke positively about *the 'new way of doing things' or 'the new approach'* to reading comprehension in their school. When explaining this 'new approach', staff mentioned the various steps in Helen Timperley's inquiry cycle and the elements identified by Allington, but were not using the formal terminology when describing what MLMT was. Indeed, in a couple of schools, several teachers said they did not know until recently that this 'new approach' was even called MLMT.

The fact that teachers were not using formal terminology (eg referring to Helen Timperley's inquiry cycle or Allington's work) should not be interpreted as meaning teachers did not understand the evidence-base for MLMT. The majority of teachers clearly did have an understanding of the evidence-base. In the online survey 59% of respondents reported having a *solid understanding of the Timperley Inquiry Cycle*, and 61.8% of respondents reported that *Helen Timperley's Inquiry Cycle provided a sound basis for the implementation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in my school*. Furthermore, a total of 85.5% of respondents agreed that MLMT had *increased your knowledge about the latest evidence on best practice in relation to teaching reading in the classroom*, and 85.5% of respondents said MLMT had *increased your ability to translate theory into practice*.

Many teachers commented on the fact that MLMT was a significant departure from other reading comprehension programs that are more prescriptive and based on a 'one size fits all' approach. Schools did not see MLMT as program *per se* but as an approach or a way of doing things. MLMT allowed schools to meet teachers and students where they were at, and to respond to their specific needs. Many stakeholders said MLMT is, as the name suggests, about being more *mindful* of the way teachers are teaching and the way students are learning. As one member of a School Leadership Team said:

*Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching is a significant departure from other initiatives. It's more than a program. It's an attitude and an awareness of being mindful. The Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching mindset has made us question what we were doing in the past.*

## 3 Implementation of MLMT

### KEY FINDINGS

- Overall, schools were very satisfied with the implementation of MLMT in their schools, noting that because MLMT was not prescriptive, they were able to adapt MLMT to meet the needs of teachers and students in their school community.
- A Leadership Team was established in each school to oversee the implementation of MLMT, with assistance from the CEO and TEs. School staff were very supportive of the Leadership Teams within their schools. Overall, schools were also satisfied with the support provided by the CEO and TEs. There was some dissatisfaction in schools with the communication about MLMT in the roll-out phase, which led to some early implementation challenges. However, these issues were resolved over time.
- Although implementation of MLMT varied across schools, common elements included: professional learning for teachers; use of data to inform teaching; explicit teaching of reading comprehension; use of improved strategies to teach reading comprehension; and the purchase of new and engaging texts.
- Professional learning for teachers was targeted, comprehensive and ongoing. Staff said teacher observation and feedback was a particularly valuable professional learning tool, despite initial resistance by some teachers to being observed and critiqued.
- The CEO played an active role in developing a strong and supportive network among MLMT principals. It was suggested that a similar network would have been useful for MLMT Lead Teachers as they often had responsibility for the day-to-day management of MLMT in schools.
- ILPs made teachers more aware of the needs of students who were struggling, and their needs were generally addressed in the classroom setting.

### 3.1 ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE IN MLMT

Schools were identified as eligible to participate in the NPLN using a range of criteria including:

- the 2008 NAPLAN data: schools where the percentage of all students in Years 3 and 5 at or below minimum standard was above the State percentage in reading and numeracy
- the school's suitability and readiness to participate in this NPLN, as advised by regional and diocesan offices
- the school's student background characteristics including:
  - enrolment size
  - student language background
  - student enrolment data, for instance, a large proportion of refugee students.

Although schools were overwhelmingly positive about MLMT, they were critical about the selection process, and more specifically the way they were advised they would participate in the NPLN.

Several principals said MLMT principals were called to a meeting with the CEO and told that because of their 2008 NAPLAN results, they would be participating in the NPLN and implementing a reading comprehension initiative. A number of principals said they found the meeting 'humiliating' and 'disrespectful'. They said they felt the situation was presented as an 'emergency' and significant pressure was put on them to improve reading comprehension and NAPLAN results. As one commented:

*We went on board because we knew it was huge. We were scared and felt denigrated and humiliated. We walked out feeling like failures, bamboozled.*

Some of the newer principals in MLMT schools said they felt less threatened and intimidated by the NPLN, because they did not feel responsible for their schools' 2008 NAPLAN results.

Some principals said they were surprised their school was selected for participation in the NPLN, noting other variables that may have contributed to their 2008 NAPLAN results did not appear to have been considered by the CEO. Other principals said they were surprised they had been selected for a reading comprehension initiative, given their NAPLAN results in other areas, such as numeracy and writing, were poorer than their results in reading. Indeed, a couple of schools reported that in order to implement MLMT, they had to cease focusing on numeracy or writing, which were their bigger weaknesses.

In addition to concerns about the way schools were selected for and advised of their participation in the NPLN, several schools commented that there was considerable confusion in the early days, particularly regarding the requirements to participate in the NPLN. Principals said there was a lot of paperwork they were asked to prepare at very short notice and with very little guidance. The CEO, meanwhile, had to produce documents within very short timeframes to meet the NPLN funding timetable.

There is acceptance within the CEO that things perhaps could have been done differently in the early days of the NPLN. There is a view that the CEO could have been less directive and more consultative, for example by meeting with school principals to hypothesize on why NAPLAN results were poor, and what schools could do to respond.

Despite the criticism outlined above, schools said this was short-lived and that schools came 'on board' fairly quickly when they realised NPLN and MLMT were a unique opportunity to deliver real benefits to their teachers and students. There is now a general view among school staff, including those that initially wanted to focus on numeracy or writing, that they were fortunate to have been included in the NPLN and MLMT.

*It was daunting at first to say we were a National Partnership school, but now we are not the underdogs. People want to come and see what we are doing. We think it's the best program to be on.*

*In the long run, the focus on reading comprehension has been beneficial. Improvements in comprehension have an impact on literacy. Yes there was a price to pay re numeracy but the growth in literacy probably would outweigh this. What we have lost [in numeracy] we have probably gained more [in literacy].*

### 3.2 OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION

Each of the eight schools implementing MLMT were responsible for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating MLMT. The purpose of this approach was to ensure that MLMT was tailored to meet the specific needs of teachers and students in the school community.

The implementation of MLMT was guided by an Implementation Plan which was developed by each school with the assistance of the CEO. These plans were designed to provide high-level guidance, and give schools the flexibility to adopt strategies to meet the changing needs of teachers and students.

A Leadership Team was established within each school to oversee the implementation of MLMT. The composition of the Leadership Team varied, but usually comprised a selection of the Principal and/or Assistant Principal, the MLMT Lead Teacher, and other Stage 2 and Stage 3 teachers. While the NPLN was intended to cover Years 3-6, several MLMT schools said they were also implementing aspects of MLMT in Kindergarten-Year 2. There was a view that implementing aspects of MLMT in Stage 1 would contribute to a greater whole-of-school focus on reading comprehension.

Although implementation of MLMT varied across the Diocese, there were some elements that were common across schools. These elements are listed below and are explained in greater detail in the next section.

- professional learning for teachers
- use of data to inform teaching



- explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies
- more effective use of strategies to teach reading comprehension
- purchase of new and more engaging texts
- ILPs.

As part of MLMT, Reading Recovery was also introduced for Year 1 students.

NPLN funding was generally spent on:

- release time for teachers to undertake professional learning and teacher observation
- purchase of new texts and electronic resources
- external training activities.

### 3.3 IMPLEMENTATION IN THE SCHOOL

#### 3.3.1 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR TEACHERS

As outlined above, a key element of MLMT was building the capacity of teachers through professional learning to respond to the reading comprehension needs of students. The majority of MLMT professional learning was provided in-school by School Leadership Teams and TEs. Training *in situ* was seen as a key strength of MLMT, as it enabled learning to be centred on the needs of the school community.

The form and structure of training varied between schools, but generally comprised of:

- teacher observation (including observation by peers and TEs) followed by a continuing cycle of reflection, feedback and evaluation
- staff development days
- training sessions during weekly staff meetings
- mandatory professional readings
- informal discussions among staff.

Overall, staff spoke highly about professional learning through teacher observation. Schools reported that some teachers were initially resistant to the idea of having someone in their classroom observing the way they taught. They felt threatened by the de-privatisation of the classroom, and that they were being judged. However, most teachers overcame this resistance and found teacher observation to be a very useful professional learning tool. Some Leadership Teams said they had taken conscious steps to facilitate this shift in attitude, by initially having friends of teachers observing them rather than other teachers they did not know very well.

A couple of schools developed an audit tool which was used by those observing teachers to record feedback in a structured and methodical way. This audit tool then formed the basis for a feedback session on the teacher's performance. Another school went a step further and videotaped some lessons. Reviewing and critiquing these videos then became an integral part of the school's professional learning. Several schools noted that in monitoring teacher performance, they relied on the Quality Teaching Framework, and found it useful that this Framework complemented MLMT.

Schools dedicated staff development days and time during weekly staff meetings to provide further MLMT-related professional learning. The regularity of the professional learning highlighted to staff that reading comprehension was very much the focus, and that school staff needed to work together to effectively implement MLMT and improve reading comprehension outcomes.

It was clear from discussions with teachers that most recognised and welcomed reading comprehension as a strategic focus for the school. In fact, many teachers commented that informal staff room conversation had moved away from 'general chit-chat' to focused discussions on what reading comprehension activities teachers were trying in the classroom, and how successful these were. At one school, teachers said Stage 2 and Stage 3 teachers now met with each other at the start of the school year to discuss the individual reading needs of each student, something that had not been done in a structured and comprehensive way before.

The quotes below illustrate some of the views expressed by teachers about MLMT professional learning:

*There has been a huge push in reading comprehension in all in-services and staff meetings. We have been given a range of tips. We are trying to teach kids to be thinkers and be mindful of our individual teaching.*

*The classroom visits are really helpful. We are all learning together. No-one feels uncomfortable about this now. We take the best from everyone.*

*MLMT has provided teachers with opportunities to speak and collaborate. There is constant conversation now.*

Although the content of the internal training provided to school staff varied depending on the specific needs of the teachers at the school, training generally covered:

- comprehension strategies (eg inferring, predicting, summarising, visualising)
- ways of using existing evidence-based strategies to teach reading comprehension more effectively (eg Readers' Theatre, Readers' Circle, Guided Reading, Reciprocal Teaching)
- methods of analysing various data sets (eg NAPLAN data, classroom assessments, Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (NEALE analysis), observational surveys)
- different texts available to teachers and the different ways they could be used (eg fiction, non-fiction, poetry, recipe books).

Some training was school-specific. For example, in the school which was videoing classroom teaching, training was provided on the use of flip cameras.

*Training has engaged staff. They don't just talk at us but they give us the tools we need.*

In addition to internal training, a limited amount of external training was also provided. For instance, MLMT schools were invited to attend a one-day symposium hosted by the CEO and attended by Professor Robyn Ewing from the University of Sydney. Although some school staff found it a worthwhile learning opportunity, others were critical of the fact that the entire day was spent on one technique for teaching reading (Reader's Theatre).

*We had always done Readers' Theatre, but that day taught us to think about it in a totally different way.*

*The CEO provided a training day on Readers' Theatre. We thought it wasn't a good idea to dump everyone together to all do Readers' Theatre because schools have different needs. A lot of money was spent on that day but it didn't teach us anything new.*

Some schools also used funds allocated to them through the NPLN to pay for staff to attend a training day run by educationalist David Hornsby who provided examples of practical strategies to teach reading in the classroom. Some schools also ran in-service days with other MLMT schools and other non-MLMT schools in the region to network and share best practice in teaching reading comprehension.

### 3.3.2 USE OF DATA TO INFORM TEACHING

As noted above, a key element of MLMT was to train teachers in how to analyse various datasets to identify students' needs, and to then structure classroom learning to respond to these needs. The

datasets used by schools differed slightly but schools were generally making use of NAPLAN data, NEALE analysis data, classroom assessments, running records, Test of Reading Comprehension (TORCH) data and anecdotal evidence. Some schools were also using the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE) assessment tool. Several schools commented that they had been using data to inform teaching practice in the past. However, as a result of MLMT, they were now using data more comprehensively and consistently across the school. As one teacher commented:

*Tracking was one thing we thought we did well, but we didn't. In the past, our use of data was hit and miss.*

During school visits, the Urbis team saw several examples of how schools had identified gaps in students' reading comprehension from the data, and had implemented strategies to respond to these gaps.

#### SNAPSHOT: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: INFERENCE

In one MLMT school, staff analysed data and found that students at the school struggled with using inference. The school then realised that the teachers themselves did not have a sound understanding of inference, and responded by providing teachers with relevant training. Following this training, teachers filmed themselves teaching a lesson in which a student was given a passage of text to read and then asked questions designed to demonstrate understanding of inference. These videos were shared with all staff, and it became apparent that there was still room for teachers to improve their questioning techniques. Consequently, professional learning for the remainder of the term focused on the teaching of inference.

Another school ascertained from NAPLAN data that its students struggled with visualising; the school responded by implementing activities designed to improve visualising skills. A further school ascertained from NAPLAN data that its students struggled with non-fiction texts; the school responded by focusing on reciprocal teaching. Teachers said being aware of the data made them more conscious of the way they grouped students for reading activities. Reading groups now better reflected the ability and needs of students:

*We are focused on data now – what do we know, what do we need to know, who do we go to for help. We implement strategies and evaluate. We have focused on reciprocal teaching because from NAPLAN we knew that students' understanding of this was low.*

*We look at the needs and then teach strategies to meet the needs. Last term we had a big focus on summarising and predicting, next term we will focus on reciprocal teaching.*

*We split kids across the grade for reading groups based on TORCH and NEALE results. Prior to MLMT, we were not using these tests when deciding reading groups.*

#### 3.3.3 BETTER USE OF STRATEGIES TO TEACH READING COMPREHENSION

MLMT schools are not necessarily using a suite of new strategies to better teach reading comprehension. This was never the intention of MLMT. MLMT was designed to encourage schools and teachers to reflect on their teaching and the needs of students, and to use existing strategies to teach reading comprehension in a more targeted and effective way. As one teacher said:

*It's more about how we are doing things now. We are doing it better not differently.*

Although schools implemented MLMT differently to suit the needs of their own learning community, the key teaching strategies being used and improved as a result of MLMT include the following:

- *The explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies:* when teaching reading comprehension, MLMT schools are explicitly explaining the various comprehension strategies to students (eg summarising, inferring, predicting). In keeping with this idea of explicit teaching, schools are using common language to describe reading comprehension activities, such as Readers' Circle, Guided Reading, Shared Reading, and Readers' Theatre.

- *Deeper level of questioning around texts:* all MLMT schools said there was now a deeper level of questioning and interaction around the texts. Students were being asked questions about texts that required them to give an opinion and to justify that option. As an example, one teacher said students were no longer asked ‘who is the main character?’, rather they were asked ‘why is he/she the main character?’ Several MLMT schools had introduced the ‘three levels of questioning’ technique which involved asking students questions that were ‘on the line’ (on the page), ‘between the line’ (requiring inference) and ‘beyond the line’ (requiring a link with a personal experience). Some schools used three levels of questioning but used different terminology such as ‘here’, ‘hidden’ and ‘head’ to describe the levels of questioning.
- *More strategic choice of reading texts:* school staff said they were now much more strategic about which texts they used with students. Teachers selected texts that suited the comprehension strategy they were teaching. However, they also picked texts that they knew would interest students and make them want to engage with, and develop a love for, reading.
- *Dedicating a specific period of time to literacy block:* some MLMT schools spoke about how they had a dedicated time each day for literacy block and, unlike past practice, it was mandatory for the bulk of this time to be spent on reading and writing, and for teachers to ensure that nothing else crept into this time. At one MLMT school, every member of staff including the principal, support teachers and the librarian (but with the exception of the head office and canteen staff) was involved in teaching literacy during literacy block. Schools commented that a dedicated literacy block ensured reading comprehension remained the key focus of each classroom and the school as a whole.
- *Better understanding of the purpose of reading comprehension activities and the use of such activities:* several teachers said professional learning provided through MLMT taught them to think about existing reading activities differently and implement them in a more effective way. Many teachers said before they commence a lesson they now ask themselves: *what is the purpose of this lesson? what outcome am I hoping to achieve?* and *what is the best strategy to achieve this outcome?* Some teachers said Readers’ Theatre (where students act out a story) is no longer ‘just seen as fun’, but an effective way of ‘learning, understanding and comprehending’. Teachers said they now monitored the expression and intonation of students’ voices during Readers’ Theatre to measure the level of reading comprehension.

### 3.3.4 PURCHASE OF NEW TEXTS

MLMT schools used some of the NPLN funding to purchase new resources, particularly reading texts. In keeping with Allington’s theory, schools sought to increase both the volume and quality of texts available to students. Some schools noted that their students were from low socio-economic backgrounds and did not always have access to books at home. Thus, providing these students with access to quality and engaging texts at school was critical to encouraging them to develop a love of reading.

The specific resources purchased differed depending on existing resources at the school and the specific comprehension strategies the school was focusing on, but the texts purchased included a mix of: magazines (including football magazines), novels, home reader sets, non-fiction books, ‘big books’ and ‘sky-writers’ (posters with enlarged text). Schools also purchased a range of electronic resources, including iPods, iPads, lap tops, voice recorders and interactive whiteboards. These electronic resources were used in different ways. For example, some schools had students listen to stories on iPods while they read the text. Other schools bought lap tops so students could research and read different texts online, or critique books they had read. Other schools purchased voice recorders so students could listen to themselves reading.

*We were able to buy lots of new texts – we looked at what the school was lacking and filled in the gaps. We got magazines, novels, fiction books. We bulked up on picture books to help with inferring. We have also introduced IT – laptops and iPads – we use literacy games on these, and students listen to stories on iPods.*

*The funding allowed us to buy more resources – we bought good quality novels, for example on the one-child policy and the tsunami, magazines and big and small books. These texts are so much more engaging. We also bought iPods, iPads, and lap tops which students use to access dictionaries and conduct research.*

*We have been able to purchase more factual texts – we didn't have a lot of these before and can use them in HSIE [Human Society and its Environment]. We purchased visual and written texts and are also using electronic text iPod touches. Kids can podcast stories and access online texts.*

One school said it was not doing Shared Reading in Years 3-6 before the NPLN because the school did not have 'big books', but as a result of NPLN funding, it was able to buy 'big books' and 'sky writers' which gave students something to focus on and teachers a useful reading comprehension tool. In the past, teachers just read passages to students which was not as effective because there was nothing visual for students to focus on.

There was a general view among school staff that the new resources played a key role in making students want to read and engage with the text. Discussions with students supported this view. Many students spoke enthusiastically about the reading texts schools had recently purchased.

### 3.3.5 INDIVIDUALISED LEARNING PLANS

A key message from the CEO and MLMT schools was that MLMT is designed to identify the individual needs of students and to respond to these needs in a classroom setting. Notwithstanding this, one component of MLMT is an individual intervention in the form of ILPs.

In theory, students identified for an ILP were those who fell below the NAPLAN benchmarks and Aboriginal students. However, in practice schools prepared ILPs for additional students. For example, one school said the NAPLAN data showed some students were performing at or above the NAPLAN benchmark for reading, but teachers knew these students were struggling with their reading, in some cases more than students below the NAPLAN benchmark for reading. These students were therefore given an ILP.

Another school said it had developed an ILP for all Year 3 students, but said it was able to do this because it was a small school. While larger schools saw the benefits of documenting the needs of all students, they said it was not feasible to do an ILP for all students. Some schools commented that it was mandatory for them to develop ILPs for Aboriginal students under the NPLN, but the reality was most Aboriginal students were performing at or above the NAPLAN benchmark for reading.

While ILPs differed across schools, they generally outlined short and long term goals for improving the reading comprehension of ILP students. Strategies to improve reading comprehension were generally implemented in the classroom and did not involve taking ILP students out of the classroom for one-on-one interventions (although a few ILP students were also participating in MULTILIT, a one-on-one intervention). Some ILP students, for example, received extra assistance from support teachers in the classroom during literacy block. Others were strategically placed in reading groups that suited their ability and needs.

Several school staff said the real value of ILPs was that they made teachers more aware of the needs of students experiencing difficulty in reading:

*ILPs ensure teachers are aware of the specialised needs of students, and ensure the teacher gets the right help to respond to these needs.*

*It took me a while to work out what the purpose of ILPs are, but they enable me to be more mindful of at risk kids. It enables teachers to be more aware of students that may otherwise slip through the crack).*

*[With ILPs] we are not running a separate program, but we are focusing more on struggling kids.*

While Leadership Teams and teachers were generally aware of the existence and purpose of ILPs, some staff were not entirely sure what ILPs were, and confused them with Individual Education Plans which are for students who receive separate funding for cognitive or learning disorders. Some School Leadership Teams said there was 'lots of double-up' which may have contributed to the confusion because students with an Individual Education Plan also often had an ILP. Some schools said they developed ILPs by building on the literacy component contained in the Individual Education Plans.

Schools said parents were generally not aware of ILPs and were not involved in the development of these plans, but were informed about them during parent-teacher interviews. Some schools said they included information about MLMT and ILPs in school newsletters. Our discussions with parents confirmed that they did not know about ILPs, however some were aware of Individual Education Plans.

### 3.4 SOURCES OF IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

#### 3.4.1 SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE CEO (PARRAMATTA DIOCESE)

The CEO provided various forms of support to schools to assist in the implementation of MLMT. The main supports are outlined in this section and include:

- providing TEs to schools
- helping to establish a school principals' network
- creating an online web forum for schools (the NING)
- organising a professional development day with the assistance of 'critical friend' Professor Robyn Ewing.

Despite some initial problems, schools were generally satisfied with the support provided by the CEO. In the online survey, 93% of School Executives and MLMT Lead Teachers reported that the support provided by the CEO was adequate (13% reported *very adequate*; and 80% reported *adequate*). Only 7% reported that the support was *inadequate*. Meanwhile, 82% of teachers agreed with the statement *Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching was well planned and implemented by the Parramatta Catholic Education Office*.

#### PROVISION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

One of the most fundamental elements of MLMT was the provision of TEs to schools. TEs were CEO staff described by the CEO as 'good educators', although not necessarily experts in literacy. At the start of MLMT, schools usually had two TEs visit one day a week, but this was later reduced to one TE one day a week.

The primary role of TEs was to provide training and support to schools implementing MLMT *in situ*. The idea was that TEs would build the capacity of school staff, particularly the School Leadership Team, so that MLMT could continue after the cessation of NPLN funding and the subsequent phasing out of the TE role. The particular tasks undertaken by TEs differed depending on the needs of the school, but generally included a mix of the following:

- imparting knowledge on best practice evidence-based teaching of reading comprehension (eg through professional readings)
- teacher observation and feedback
- assisting with the development of school plans, including by the analysis of data and development of strategies to respond to the needs of students
- modelling of different reading comprehension strategies
- conducting professional learning sessions within regular staff meetings.

Several schools said that a good TE was seen as a 'go to person' for ideas and advice, and someone who ensured that schools maintained a focus on reading comprehension.

In the online survey, the majority of respondents reported high levels of satisfaction (*very satisfied or satisfied*) with the internal professional support provided by the TEs. As shown in Table 4, around four-fifths of the respondents were satisfied with the *content of the professional learning* (83%) and the *quality of the professional learning* (80%). Around three-quarters of respondents were satisfied with the *relevance/usefulness of accompanying resources* (76%).

TABLE 4 –SATISFACTION WITH THE INTERNAL PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE TEACHING EDUCATORS

	TOTAL SATISFACTION	EXECUTIVE	TEACHERS (K-6)
The <i>content</i> of the professional learning	82.9	84.6	81.4
The <i>quality</i> of the professional learning	80.3	76.9	81.7
The <i>relevance/usefulness</i> of accompanying resources	76.3	84.6	72.4

The majority of survey respondents also identified TEs as a critical factor in improving their teaching of literacy, with 70% reporting *in-school support from the Teaching Educators* and 59% reporting *observing Teaching Educators modelling lessons or strategies* as critical factors. However, a number of other factors were rated by survey respondents as more critical to improving their teaching of literacy.

Schools reported mixed experiences with TEs over the course of the implementation of MLMT. There was a widely-held view that TEs in the early stages of the implementation of MLMT were not always suitable nor helpful. They were not viewed as having a collaborative approach, and reportedly directed schools on what they should and should not be doing. Some schools reported this confrontational approach was made worse by the fact that some TEs were not literacy experts and were suggesting approaches that schools did not necessarily agree with. A number of schools commented that sending two TEs to a school on the same day reinforced an ‘us v them’ mentality, which they felt was not conducive to developing a collaborative approach to implementing MLMT.

*In the beginning we had two TEs that were very damaging. They were told to fix the school up, they didn't honour us as professionals. [In response] schools had to do a lot to make teachers feel good about themselves. Some TEs had no experience in primary schools so we felt we carried them...they came with assumptions and attitudes. These TEs wanted to make a name for themselves. They were looking for mistakes.*

*Initially it was very stressful. It was difficult to have two TEs at the school – a lot of people found this very intimidating because you had the two TEs backing each other up. Teachers felt they had lost their voices. I don't think it was a personality thing, but the fact that there were two of them and neither of them had a background in literacy.*

This tension was also felt by TEs who commented that, in the initial stages, some schools were not very cooperative and would only give them restricted access to classrooms for teacher observation. TEs said, from their perspective, at the beginning of MLMT it was important for them to go into schools in pairs.

Despite these initial tensions, there appeared to be a significant shift in schools' attitudes towards TEs over the course of the implementation of MLMT. School staff generally attributed this to a number of factors including that:

- After some time, schools were provided one TE not two TEs, which diffused the ‘us v them’ mentality and ensured the TE and school staff worked together as one school community.
- Less skilled or problematic TEs were replaced with TEs who were able to generate rapport and trust with school staff, and had some experience in literacy.
- School staff began to see the benefits of MLMT and the results it was producing; they began to feel less threatened by having a TE observing their teaching and more open to receiving advice and feedback from TEs.

By the later stages of the implementation of MLMT, schools were generally positive about the TEs working in their schools. Staff praised TEs who were able to come into the school and build on what teachers were doing in a respectful way. They also praised the practical advice provided by TEs which led to better teaching of reading comprehension in the classroom. Indeed, by the time of the school visits, teachers were expressing a desire for more support from the TEs, such was their perceived value. The following positive comments were made:

*The TE was fantastic. She knew the cohort, knew what I should be doing in the classroom. She did whole grade sessions, provided lots of info, emailed and provided hard copies of various strategies. We would meet and reflect on process. We did goal setting and I found this helpful.*

*The TE has been fantastic at all levels. She has provided lots of support to staff and teachers, lots of professional dialogue. We can share ideas and get next steps. More access would be great but on the day that she is here, she is always very professional and will follow-up. She has just been giving, giving and giving.*

*The TE provides realistic examples of what will work in the classroom. The TE has been a great resource.*

*The TE doesn't necessarily have a background in literacy. At the start, this was difficult to come to terms with, people didn't understand why. But the training the TE has had has been amazing, she clears the fog and then translates her learning.*

## ESTABLISHING A PRINCIPALS' NETWORK

Schools were very positive about the CEO's efforts to bring MLMT principals together for professional learning and support. MLMT principals met with the CEO one or two times each term. The CEO also arranged for all MLMT principals to attend the two-week ELIM course, which is a leadership course open to 20 principals from Catholic schools in New South Wales and Queensland each year. While not MLMT-specific, the fact that all eight MLMT principals were invited to participate gave them an invaluable opportunity to network and share advice on implementing MLMT. These networking opportunities created by the CEO fostered collegiality among MLMT principals which translated into an informal network of support and advice. Survey respondents who were members of the MLMT Leadership Team in their schools reported that *networking with other Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching schools in the Parramatta diocese* had been *very adequate* or *adequate*. No respondents reported that this networking had been *inadequate*.

During consultations, several principals said there were 'constant emails' of advice and support as well as informal meetings between MLMT principals. There was a view that this strong and supportive network would continue after the cessation of NPLN funding:

*It's a real network of good ideas.....a collegial network between principals.*

Although support for the principals' network was overwhelmingly positive, a couple of principals commented that MLMT Lead Teachers within schools were responsible for the day-to-day implementation of MLMT in schools, and as such it would have been useful for them to have a similar network for advice and support. A number of principals and TEs were disappointed that the CEO took the view that the network should be for principals only.

## CREATING AN ONLINE FORUM – THE 'NING'

The CEO established an online forum (referred to as the NING) as a professional learning tool and source of information for MLMT schools (and for other schools in the diocese not necessarily implementing MLMT but wanting to know more about it). School staff were able to use the NING to post comments or videos of teaching strategies that had worked well, to seek advice and to share useful readings and new ideas.

In the online survey, respondents were asked to list the critical factors in improving their teaching of literacy. Over two-thirds (68%) indicated that *access to the NING* was a critical factor (however, access to the NING was less frequently cited than some other factors).

During school visits, school staff generally agreed that the NING was a useful resource:

*The NING has been good for some reference material. It's good to have a place to learn, share and upload things during staff meetings.*

*The NING is a great source of information and enables us to have conversations with people outside the school context.*



However, use of the NING among schools was highly variable. Some schools actively encouraged staff to access and contribute to the NING and made time during professional learning sessions for staff to do this. However, in other schools there was less encouragement for staff to make use of the NING. Several staff said they had not personally contributed to the NING, but had used it to download useful information (eg Readers' Theatre scripts). The main reasons given by school staff for not using the NING included:

- lack of time
- significant experience within the school meant that it was easier to 'just ask someone you know'
- the literacy coordinator within the school reviewed the NING and then translated the information for staff so that it was appropriate for the school context
- not wanting to post something that made them look 'stupid' in front of other colleagues. As one person commented:

*People are hesitant with social networking devices because they don't know the rules. Bosses see everything. People are reluctant to show they don't know something or have their ideas challenged in public. Until we deal with this, the NING won't be the most effective mechanism.*

One school suggested the NING may become a more useful tool for sustaining MLMT in schools after the cessation of NPLN funding and withdrawal of TEs. This school said it would soon start videoing lessons and posting them on the NING so that schools could use them for training purposes.

### 3.4.2 SUPPORT PROVIDED WITHIN SCHOOLS

Almost all of the MLMT training was provided *in situ* by School Leadership Teams and TEs. School staff were very positive about the support they received from their Leadership Teams and their teacher colleagues in both the qualitative and quantitative research.

In the online survey, respondents were asked to list the critical factors in improving their teaching of literacy. A total of 93% of teachers listed *in-school support from other teachers* as a critical factor.

Additionally, 93% of teachers agreed with the statement *There is strong leadership support for Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in my school.*

As noted in Section 3.3, during the consultations, teachers spoke about how there had been a shift in professional dialogue and teacher-thinking. Teachers no longer felt threatened by other teachers coming into their classroom to observe and critique their teaching practices. In fact, many teachers now welcomed this. There was a feeling that schools had a common goal (ie to improve reading comprehension) and staff were working together in a collaborative and coordinated way to achieve this:

*MLMT brought us [school staff] together....we have always been open to learning together. Through MLMT we have had more opportunities to go into each other's classrooms and teachers are accepting of this.*



Early blind reading

## 4 Outcomes for teachers

### KEY FINDINGS

- The majority of teachers agreed that MLMT had had a positive impact on their literacy teaching practice and had made them better teachers. In the online survey, just over half (55%) of the respondents indicated MLMT had had a *significant positive impact* on the way they teach literacy, and 44% identified that MLMT had had *some positive impact*.
- The majority of teachers reported that MLMT had had a positive impact on their *knowledge, attitudes and/or skills*. MLMT deepened teachers' understanding of comprehension strategies and effective teaching of reading comprehension; increased teacher willingness to participate in shared reflection and discussion of their teaching practices; and increased their belief in their ability to improve literacy outcomes for students. A recurring theme throughout school visits was that MLMT had given teachers greater confidence, greater purpose, and made them more enthusiastic about teaching reading comprehension.
- The majority of teachers who taught literacy in the classroom on a regular basis also reported that MLMT had had a positive impact on their *classroom teaching practice*. In particular, MLMT enhanced teachers' ability to reflect on and critique their teaching of reading; improved their ability to question students in a way that demonstrated deep understanding of texts; and improved their ability to teach reading comprehension. Many teachers also reported that MLMT increased their skills in using existing evidence-based techniques such as Guided Reading, Reader's Circle and Reciprocal Teaching.
- Most teachers agreed they had made significant changes to the way they teach reading since the introduction of MLMT, and were now more *mindful* of what they were teaching and whether it met the needs of students.
- Key factors that contributed to positive teacher outcomes included: a strong Leadership Team and a collegiate school environment; targeted and ongoing professional learning; an enthusiastic and skilled TE; and school staff who were open to changing their teaching practices.

### 4.1 RESPONSE OF TEACHERS TO MLMT

Consultations during school visits indicated that, overall, teachers responded well to MLMT. They were open to professional learning, to trying different teaching strategies, and to being observed and critiqued by their colleagues. Some schools commented that MLMT required a change in philosophy, and the way teachers thought about reading comprehension. For some teachers, making this shift was initially daunting but over time teachers saw that it was delivering outcomes for both teachers and students, and they increasingly embraced MLMT. In the online survey 85.5% of teachers agreed with the statement *Support for Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching at my school has grown over time*.

The response of teachers to MLMT did, however, vary across and within schools. As noted in Section 3.3, some schools said that in the early stages, a few teachers were resistant to implementing MLMT and to having outsiders observing and critiquing their teaching practices. They felt under close scrutiny, and threatened by the fact that they were accountable for improving the reading comprehension outcomes of their students.

There was little consistency across schools about which teachers responded well to MLMT and which teachers did not. Several schools said it was impossible to categorise, saying that it really depended on factors such as the personality of the individual teacher, and their confidence and willingness to change. Other schools, however, commented that teachers close to retirement, inflexible or 'traditional' teachers, or new teachers with fixed ideas about what teaching might be like were more likely to show initial resistance to MLMT. This latter view on new teachers was not shared by all schools, with one school saying young teachers engaged with MLMT immediately, but it was more difficult to engage older teachers.

For the most part, any initial resistance to MLMT by teachers had dissolved by the time of the school visits. As noted earlier, over time the majority of teachers were very supportive of MLMT and the benefits it had delivered to teachers, students and the school as a whole.

*In the early days there was some discomfort. There was a high level of accountability and teachers were being observed....but now they [teachers] talk about it as being some of the best learning they have ever done.*

*Teachers have appreciated MLMT. Initially there was fear and trepidation but now having walked the journey they feel proud they have upskilled.*

*Last year, teachers said the best thing that happened in 2010 was professional development for MLMT.*

## 4.2 OUTCOMES FOR TEACHERS

In the online survey, teachers were asked about the impact MLMT had had on the way they teach literacy in the classroom. As shown in Table 5, overall, teachers reported that MLMT had had a *positive impact* on the way they teach literacy in the classroom. Just over half (55%) of the respondents indicated MLMT had had a *significant positive impact*, and 44% identified *some positive impact* on the way the teach literacy.

TABLE 5 – OVERALL IMPACT OF MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING ON LITERACY TEACHING PRACTICE BY ROLE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS) \*

STATEMENT	TOTAL	EXECUTIVE	TEACHER K-2	TEACHER STAGE 2	TEACHER STAGE 3	SPECIALIST/ AIDE/ OTHER SUPPORT
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had a <i>significant positive</i> impact on the way I teach reading in my classroom	54.8	80	37.5	50	57.1	50
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had <i>some positive</i> impact on the way I teach reading in my classroom	43.5	20	56.3	50	42.9	50
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had <i>little if any positive impact</i> on the way I teach reading in my classroom	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had a <i>negative impact</i> on the way I teach reading in my classroom	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hard to say	1.6	-	6.3	-	-	6.3

\* Note this question was answered only by respondents with a regular classroom teaching role

Executive staff were most likely to identify a *significant positive impact* (80%), followed by Stage 3 teachers (57%). No respondents indicated that MLMT had had *little if any*, or a *negative impact* on their literacy teaching practice.

These findings are consistent with the qualitative findings. During school visits, the great majority of school staff indicated that MLMT had made them better teachers. Specifically, MLMT had an impact on the knowledge, attitude and skills of teachers, and their classroom teaching, both of which are described in more detail below.

### 4.2.1 KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND SKILLS

In the online survey, respondents were provided with a series of outcome statements relating to the *impact* of MLMT on their knowledge, attitudes and skills, and were asked to indicate the extent to which

MLMT had had an impact on each. As demonstrated in Table 6, the majority of teachers reported that MLMT had had an impact on their knowledge, attitudes and/or skills. The greatest impacts in related to MLMT having:

- *Deepened understanding of comprehension strategies (92% total impact; 57% to a major extent)*
- *Increased belief in teachers' ability to improve literacy outcomes of all students (91% total impact; 47% to a major extent)*
- *Deepened understanding of effective teaching of reading comprehension (90% total impact; 57% to a major extent)*
- *Increased willingness of teachers to participate in shared reflection and discussion of their teaching of reading (90% total impact; 57% to a major extent).*

TABLE 6 – IMPACT ON TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND SKILLS (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	MAJOR EXTENT	MODERATE EXTENT	MINOR EXTENT	NOT AT ALL
Increased your knowledge about how students learn to read	80.2	35.5	44.7	14.5	2.6
Increased your skills in using diagnostic tools/data to assess students' literacy learning needs	67.2	21.1	46.1	30.3	-
Deepened your understanding of comprehension strategies	92.1	56.6	35.5	5.3	-
Deepened your understanding of effective teaching of reading comprehension	89.5	56.6	32.9	7.9	-
Deepened your understanding of the nature and needs of literacy learners in Years 3-6	82.9	40.8	42.1	14.5	-
Increased your knowledge about the latest evidence on best practice in relation to teaching reading in the classroom	85.5	43.4	42.1	11.8	-
Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve the literacy outcomes of low achieving/ disadvantaged students	84.2	47.4	36.8	10.5	1.3
Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve literacy outcomes of all students	90.8	47.4	43.4	6.6	1.3
Increased your willingness to participate in shared reflection and discussion of your teaching of reading	89.5	48.7	40.8	6.6	1.3
Increased your ability to translate literacy theory into practice	85.5	31.6	53.9	11.8	-

Stage 2 teachers were more likely than other teachers to report higher levels of positive impact on their knowledge, attitudes and skills in teaching literacy in the online survey. For each outcome statement, there was only a small minority of teachers who reported no impact on their knowledge, attitudes and/or skills as a result of implementing MLMT.

Considering the responses according to the teachers' level of experience reveals notable variation in the extent of the reported impact on attitudes, knowledge and skills. Respondents who were at an early stage in their careers were much *less* likely to report a positive impact resulting from their participation in MLMT than those respondents who were more experienced teachers (note the small sample size needs to be borne in mind when considering these results).

The key outcomes for teachers reported through the online surveys were consistent with the outcomes identified by teachers during school visits.

A recurring theme in school visits was the issue of *confidence*. Teachers said they were now much more confident in teaching reading comprehension because they had a better understanding of comprehension strategies, and effective strategies for teaching reading comprehension. They were also more confident in analysing data to identify the needs of students and then implementing strategies to respond to these needs. This increased confidence meant teachers were more open to being observed and critiqued by colleagues, and to asking questions and sharing ideas. This ultimately contributed to a whole-of-school, collaborative approach to reading comprehension.

Several schools commented that MLMT had made staff more enthusiastic about reading comprehension. Staff said they could see that MLMT was delivering results, and the realisation that they did have the capacity to make a real improvement to students' reading comprehension was motivating and satisfying:

*In the past we were trying to teach comprehension but we didn't know how. But this has opened our eyes and now we are all sailing on the same ship.*

*Staff are more enthusiastic. We are excited about teaching. We are part of a team now. It's easy to come to work.*

*Teachers are more confident and more focused on matching teaching to the needs of the children. We have had so many opportunities to share ideas, get reaffirmation about things. We are doing the end product so much better than we were before.*

*Teachers now understand the complexity of comprehension. It's about high-order skills, not just literal thinking.*

#### 4.2.2 IMPACT ON CLASSROOM TEACHING

The online survey asked respondents who taught literacy in the classroom on a regular basis about their literacy teaching practice. Teachers were firstly provided with a series of outcome statements relating to the impact of MLMT on elements of their classroom teaching practice, and were asked to indicate the extent to which MLMT had had an impact on each.

For all outcome statements the majority of teachers reported that MLMT had had an impact on their classroom teaching practice. The areas that had been impacted to a *major* or *moderate extent* for the highest proportion of respondents were:

- *Enhanced ability to reflect on and critique teaching of reading (94%)*
- *Improved ability to question students in a way that demonstrates deep understanding of texts (92%)*
- *Improved ability to teach comprehension effectively in the classroom (92%).*

As demonstrated in Table 7, for each outcomes statement, there was only a small minority of teachers who reported no impact on their classroom teaching practice as a result of implementing MLMT.

TABLE 7 – IMPACT ON CLASSROOM TEACHING PRACTICE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS) \*

IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	MAJOR EXTENT	MODERATE EXTENT	MINOR EXTENT	NOT AT ALL	HARD TO SAY
Increased your confidence in teaching reading	82.3	45.2	37.1	14.5	3.2	-
Improved your ability to teach comprehension effectively in the classroom	91.9	51.6	40.3	6.5	1.6	-
Improved your ability to teach comprehension effectively to individual students	87.1	45.2	41.9	12.9	-	-
Increased your skills in using Guided Reading	79.0	38.7	40.3	19.4	1.6	-
Increased your skills in using Reciprocal Teaching	77.4	46.8	30.6	12.9	4.8	4.8
Enhanced your ability to reflect on and critique your teaching of reading	93.5	38.7	54.8	4.8	-	1.6
Increased your skills in using Readers' Theatre	79.0	43.5	35.5	14.5	6.5	-
Increased your skills in using Readers' Circle	74.2	37.1	37.1	16.1	6.5	3.2
Improved your ability to question students in a way that demonstrates deep understanding of texts	91.9	48.4	43.5	8.1	-	-
Increased your willingness to seek feedback on your teaching of reading from colleagues and Teaching Educators (eg through teacher observation).	75.8	38.7	37.1	12.9	4.8	6.5
Increased your knowledge of how to cater to all literacy learning needs in the classroom	82.3	37.1	45.2	14.5	1.6	1.6

\*Note this question was answered only by respondents with a regular classroom teaching role

Again, Stage 2 teachers were more likely than other teachers to report a greater degree of positive impact on their teaching practices. In particular, higher impacts were reported among Stage 2 teachers in the following areas:

- *Increased confidence in teaching reading*
- *Increased skills in using Guided Reading*
- *Increased skills in using Readers' Circle*
- *Increased knowledge of how to cater to all literacy learning needs in the classroom.*

An analysis of teachers' level of experience showed no major variation in the extent of impact reported. Overall teachers who had greater than three years' experience were more likely to report a higher degree of positive impact on their classroom teaching practice than teachers who were at an early stage of their career.

Again, these reported outcomes on classroom teaching practice are broadly consistent with the outcomes reported by school staff during school visits. However, the evaluators did not collect demographic data on teachers during school visits, so it is not possible to qualitatively corroborate all of the quantitative findings outlined above.

The school visits demonstrated that teachers had made significant changes to way they taught reading comprehension in the classroom. These changes have already been included in the Implementation Section of this report (see Section 3) and include:

- explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies
- engaging students in deeper levels of questioning about texts, including in some schools the use of 'three levels of questioning' which involves asking students' questions that are 'on the line (ie on the page), 'between the line' (ie. requiring inference) and 'beyond the line (requiring a link with a personal experience).
- strategically choosing texts from a range of existing texts and new texts purchased with NPLN funding
- using existing evidence-based strategies for teaching reading more effectively (eg Readers' Theatre, Readers' Circle, Guided Reading, Reciprocal Teaching)
- grouping students for reading activities in a way that ensures their individual needs are met
- developing, monitoring and implementing ILPs for selected students
- being more reflective and purposeful in the teaching of reading comprehension.

The selection of quotes from school staff below demonstrates MLMT's impact on classroom teaching practices:

*I am doing Readers' Circle much differently [now]. I have been teaching for 10 years...in the past Readers' Circle was like a round robin. Now it's more about talking about what they [the students] need and their thoughts and opinions on texts...it's about teachers trying to encourage them to have an opinion.*

*I have completely changed the way I do reading groups. Reading activities now have a purpose other than keeping the children occupied. In the past we focused on what we thought we should be doing, not what the students needed.*

*Teachers are no longer assuming that if students can read that they understand. As teachers now have a greater understanding of the different levels of comprehension, they can target students more specifically.*

*Two years ago I hated reading group, but now I love it. I hated it because I had to come up with new ideas. I wasn't focusing on what they [students] needed, on learning what they need. Now that I am focused, it is so much better.*

*In the past, we were going through the process, but not doing things right. We thought we were teaching things right before, we thought we were teaching comprehension strategies. But we were not necessarily doing it right...we did things but we are now doing it mindfully and taking into consideration what kids actually need and responding to this.*



### 4.3 SUCCESS FACTORS

While there were a number of critical factors that contributed to the success of MLMT overall, survey respondents with a regular classroom teaching role were presented with a set of different components of MLMT and asked to rate how *important* each of the elements had been in improving their teaching of reading.

As Table 8 shows, the factors deemed important in improving teaching of reading by the highest proportion of teachers were (in terms of *total importance*):

- *Regular ongoing opportunities for professional learning (97%)*
- *Ability to reflect on and critique literacy teaching practice (93%)*
- *In-school support from other teachers (93%)*
- *The amount of time given to participate in professional learning workshops and activities (92%).*

TABLE 8 – CRITICAL FACTORS IN IMPROVING LITERACY TEACHING (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

FACTOR	TOTAL IMPORTANCE	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	NO IMPROVEMENT IN MY TEACHING OF READING	NOT APPLICABLE/HARD TO SAY
The external professional learning activities eg, symposium on Reader's Theatre	71.1	21.1	50.0	14.5	2.6	3.9	7.9
Ability to reflect on and critique your literacy teaching practice	93.4	34.2	59.2	2.6	-	-	3.9
Ability to obtain feedback on your literacy teaching practice through teacher observation	86.8	31.6	55.3	2.6	1.3	-	9.2
In-school support from the Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching Leadership Team	85.5	32.9	52.6	6.6	-	1.3	6.6
In-school support from other teachers	93.4	47.4	46.1	3.9	-	-	2.6
In-school support from the Teaching Educators	69.7	30.3	39.5	11.8	2.6	3.9	11.8
Observing colleagues modelling lessons or strategies	88.2	36.8	51.3	2.6	2.6	-	6.6
Observing Teaching Educators modelling lessons or strategies	59.2	17.1	42.1	6.6	7.9	1.3	25
Access to the NING	68.4	9.2	59.2	22.4	2.6	1.3	5.3
Access to useful professional learning resources (eg recommended articles, teaching guides for reading comprehension)	88.2	32.9	55.3	7.9	2.6	-	1.3
The amount of time you were given to participate in professional learning workshops and activities	92.1	35.5	56.6	6.6	-	-	1.3
Regular ongoing opportunities for professional learning	97.4	43.4	53.9	-	-	-	2.6

## 5 Outcomes for students

### KEY FINDINGS

- The NAPLAN and NPLN assessment data indicate gains in mean reading scores for all student cohorts at MLMT schools. However, the extent of these gains varied compared to those observed for all NPLN literacy-focus schools, and for all State schools (for NAPLAN data only).
- Despite the abovementioned variations, the mean reading scores for MLMT students both before and after the NPLN period were higher than those for NPLN literacy-focus schools as a whole.
- In the online survey, 90% of school staff reported that MLMT had been *effective* (53%) or *very effective* (37%) in improving the literacy outcomes for students. School staff reported improvements in students': enthusiasm for and confidence in reading; understanding of what is expected of them when they read; use of effective strategies to assist them understand and read text; ability to read for meaning; and willingness to discuss what they have read. Improvements were also reported in the volume and variety of texts read.
- The outcomes for students reported in the online survey were consistent with the outcomes identified by school staff during school visits.
- Most parents interviewed did not have a good understanding of MLMT, but several provided examples of their children using comprehension strategies at home to demonstrate a deeper understanding of texts (eg drawing a picture after reading a text to explain it). Some parents also said there had been a notable change in their children's enthusiasm for, and confidence in, reading.
- Many of the students interviewed said they liked reading and looked forward to literacy block each day. Some students attributed this to the fact that they understood more now, and had access to interesting new texts. Students were able to articulate the various comprehension strategies they had been learning in class.
- School staff generally said that MLMT was as effective for Aboriginal students as for non-Aboriginal students. However, only about 6 students in all MLMT schools identified as Aboriginal, and so it is not possible to draw any conclusions from this evaluation on the impact of MLMT on the educational outcomes for Aboriginal students.
- School staff also generally said that MLMT was as effective for ESL/LBOTE students as for non-ESL/LBOTE students. MLMT did, however, make teachers more *mindful* about gaps in the knowledge and vocabulary of some ESL/LBOTE students which impacted on their reading comprehension.

### 5.1 NAPLAN AND NPLN ASSESSMENT DATA

#### 5.1.1 DATA SETS AND LIMITATIONS

##### NAPLAN

The NAPLAN tests are conducted in May each year for all students across Australia in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. All students in the same year level are assessed on the same test items in the assessment domains of Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy.

Each year, over one million students nationally sit the NAPLAN tests, providing students, parents, teachers, schools, and school systems with important information about the literacy and numeracy results of students. NAPLAN tests have been conducted since 2008. Data includes reading and numeracy capability broken down to specific areas to determine overall assessment of literacy and numeracy.

EMSAD has noted a number of limitations to using this data for evaluation of the NPLN literacy and numeracy programs, including MLMT:

- The first NAPLAN in 2008 was strongly criticised for its lack of visual literacy, and student engagement may have been much lower than it was for subsequent tests when the quality of the reading tests was improved.

- NAPLAN is a bi-annual test so growth in NAPLAN scores can only be assessed across one out of the two cohorts in any one year, that is, at Year 5 in 2010 and 2011.
- Assessing growth for the first cohort from Year 3 2008 to Year 5 2010 includes data for one year before the intervention commenced, and an end-point only mid-way through the NPLN period; the second cohort, from Year 3 2009 to Year 5 2011 has a different start and end-point with respect to involvement with the NPLN programs and therefore different results would be expected.
- The youngest cohort did not do a NAPLAN test until they were in Year 3 in 2010 and so growth in NAPLAN scores will not be able to be assessed until they are in Year 5 in 2012.
- As NAPLAN and the NPLN tests are on different scales the results of these two assessments cannot be compared.
- Data comparing the proportion of students in a given performance band (relative to the National Minimum Standard - NMS) is of limited value for the evaluation of the programs' impact at this point in time. Given the relatively high proportion of students below the NMS at schools participating in the NPLN, the meaningfulness of a small shift for a specific cohort over the specified testing period is not certain (particularly given other limiting factors such as student mobility over the period and uncertainty of the band measure). Further sequential testing over an extended timeframe will be required to monitor the longer term trend in results; consequently this data has not been analysed for the program evaluations.

### NPLN ASSESSMENTS

The NPLN baseline assessment is developed from the BST - Basic Skills Test and was first administered at the beginning of MLMT (pre-test 2009 - Years 2, 3 and 4), administered again in August 2010 (midway test - Years 3, 4 and 5), and a final test was administered in August 2011 (end - Years 4, 5 and 6).

EMSAD has noted a number of limitations to using this data for evaluation of the literacy and numeracy programs, including MLMT:

- The NPLN tests are adequate for whole cohort assessment but are too brief to use for diagnostic assessment of individual students.
- As the NPLN tests are half the length of the BST they cannot be used to compare with State-wide performance on the former BSTs.
- There was a lot of student mobility in the schools and students were not matched when mean scores and percentages in bands were calculated, so the cohorts will not contain the same students.

### OTHER LIMITATIONS AND COMMENTS

Advice from EMSAD suggests that ESL and LBOTE comparisons are not appropriate for the evaluation (and therefore these variables have been excluded from the analysis). The main reasons for this are that:

- ESL information is not reported in NAPLAN and no jurisdictions provide any ESL information to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Although ESL data in NSW is collected separately, accurate figures have only been collected in all schools in 2011; therefore it is not possible to conduct a year-on-year comparison of results for ESL students.
- ESL levels were not collected in the data for the short local measure NPLN assessments of reading and numeracy. Language background other than English (LBOTE) was recorded but that only indicates that someone in the immediate family speaks a language other than English. That information has serious limitations as it does not reflect the students' proficiency in English language usage, which is often high but could be low.

Comparisons across different groupings of schools (ie MLMT schools, NPLN literacy focus schools, all State schools) should be interpreted with caution due to limitations with attribution and consistency. For NPLN schools implementing a particular literacy intervention, the literacy outcomes will be influenced by how well different schools implement the program, and whether the school has concurrently implemented other programs targeting literacy. Likewise, whilst comparison with the State as a whole (for NAPLAN

data) provides a reference point for interpretation of NPLN program results, the State is not a valid control group due to the broad range of literacy programs used across the State (including in some cases, the same programs as those funded through the NPLN).

Given these limitations, EMSAD has advised that considerable caution should be exercised in the analysis and interpretation of these data sets. Based on this advice, Urbis has included the key data aggregations provided by EMSAD, and provided only a descriptive commentary on the student outcomes observed.

### 5.1.2 NAPLAN RESULTS

NAPLAN mean reading scores are presented for the two different NAPLAN cohorts in the tables below. The standard deviation in reading scores is also included to indicate the magnitude of spread in the scores. The gain score is calculated as the change in the mean reading score over the two year period.

TABLE 9 – NAPLAN COHORT 1 READING SCORES

COMPARISON GROUP	YEAR 3 2008		YEAR 5 2010		GAIN SCORE
	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV	
MLMT schools	382.7	80.0	476.1	77.0	93.4
NPLN literacy focus schools*	372.5	82.7	461.3	79.2	88.8
All State schools	412.1	84.8	496.9	82.9	84.7

\* NPLN schools implementing whole school and individual literacy interventions (includes MLMT, Focus on Reading, MULTILIT, Accelerated Literacy, ILPs, Reading 2 Learn)

TABLE 10 – NAPLAN COHORT 2 READING SCORES

COMPARISON GROUP	YEAR 3 2009		YEAR 5 2011		GAIN SCORE
	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV	
MLMT schools	401.3	84.0	464.5	72.5	63.2
NPLN literacy focus schools	384.0	84.4	459.9	79.3	75.9
All State schools	423.7	91.3	496.1	82.8	72.4

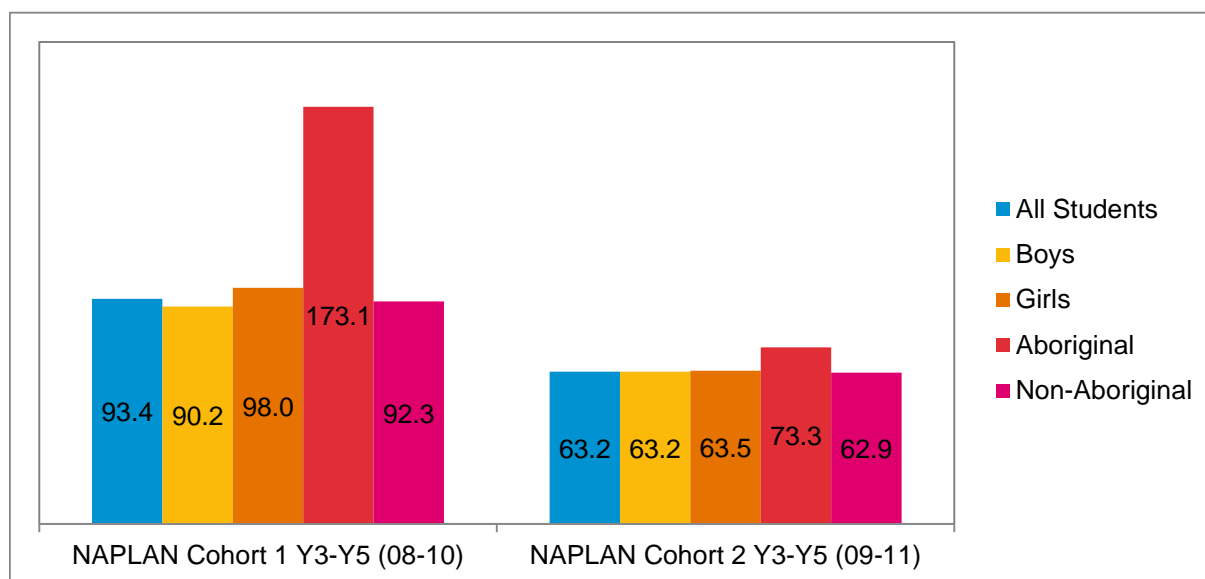
\* NPLN schools implementing whole school and individual literacy interventions (includes MLMT, Focus on Reading, MULTILIT, Accelerated Literacy, ILPs, Reading 2 Learn)

This data shows that NPLN schools participating in MLMT have achieved gains in the NAPLAN mean reading score for both student cohorts; however, the extent of this gain varied between the two cohorts. In the first NAPLAN cohort (students in Year 3 in 2008), the gain score for students at MLMT schools (93.4) was several points higher than that for all NPLN literacy focus schools (88.8) and all State schools (84.7). Conversely, in the second NAPLAN cohort (students in Year 3 in 2009), the gain score for students at MLMT schools (63.2) was somewhat lower than that for all NPLN literacy focus schools (75.9) and all State schools (72.4). Mean and gain scores for the two cohorts cannot be reliably compared due to the different testing years and timeline of data collection with respect to students' participation in the MLMT program.

Despite the variation in gain scores, for both student cohorts the mean reading score at MLMT schools remained higher than the score for all NPLN literacy focus schools. However, for both student cohorts the mean reading score at MLMT schools was still notably lower than the State average.

The NAPLAN reading gain scores for MLMT schools were also compared for key student comparison groups (gender and Aboriginality). This data is presented in Figure 2 below.

FIGURE 2 – MLMT NAPLAN READING GAIN SCORES BY STUDENT COMPARISON GROUPS



The comparison of gain scores shows no notable variance in reading growth according to gender, with female students slightly outperforming male students in both cohorts. The gain scores for Aboriginal students were higher than those for non-Aboriginal students in both cohorts; however, the sample size of Aboriginal students completing the NAPLAN tests in MLMT schools was very small ( $\leq 5$  students) and therefore we are unable to draw any reliable conclusions from this data.

### 5.1.3 NPLN ASSESSMENT RESULTS

NPLN assessment mean reading scores are presented for the three different NPLN cohorts in the tables below. The standard deviation in reading scores is also included to indicate the magnitude of spread in the scores. The gain score is calculated as the change in the mean reading score over the two year testing period.

TABLE 11 – NPLN COHORT 1 READING SCORES

COMPARISON GROUP	YEAR 2 2009		YEAR 3 2010		YEAR 4 2011		GAIN SCORE
	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV	
MLMT schools	41.8	8.1	51.8	7.8	54.7	7.4	11.0
NPLN literacy focus schools*	43.7	7.4	50.5	7.6	53.3	8.0	11.5

\* NPLN schools implementing whole school and individual literacy interventions (includes MLMT, Focus on Reading, MULTILIT, Accelerated Literacy, ILPs, Reading 2 Learn)

TABLE 12 – NPLN COHORT 2 READING SCORES

COMPARISON GROUP	YEAR 3 2009		YEAR 4 2010		YEAR 5 2011		GAIN SCORE
	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV	
MLMT schools	50.4	8.8	54.6	8.6	56.3	8.4	5.9
NPLN literacy focus schools*	47.9	8.2	53.9	8.2	55.6	8.1	7.7

\* NPLN schools implementing whole school and individual literacy interventions (includes MLMT, Focus on Reading, MULTILIT, Accelerated Literacy, ILPs, Reading 2 Learn)

TABLE 13 – NPLN COHORT 3 READING SCORES

COMPARISON GROUP	YEAR 4 2009		YEAR 5 2010		YEAR 6 2011		GAIN SCORE
	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV	
MLMT schools	54.2	7.7	56.6	7.6	60.4	8.2	6.2
NPLN literacy focus schools*	51.6	8.2	55.5	8.2	58.7	8.5	7.0

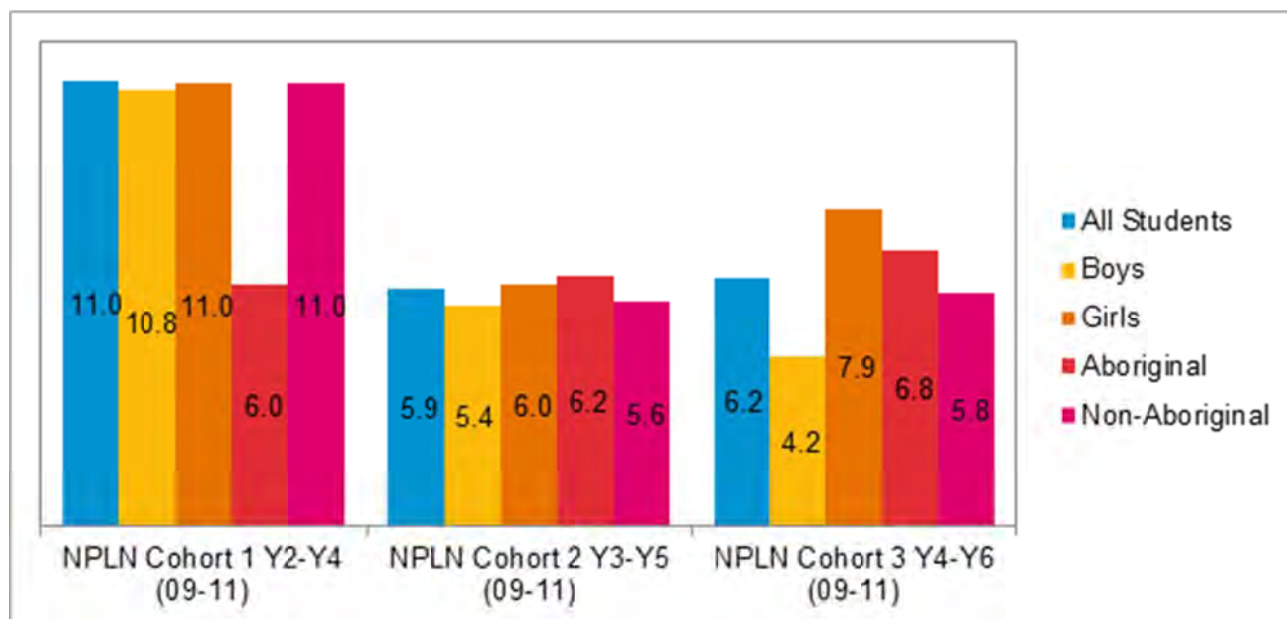
\*NPLN schools implementing whole school and individual literacy interventions (includes MLMT, Focus on Reading, MULTILIT, Accelerated Literacy, ILPs, Reading 2 Learn)

This data shows that MLMT schools have achieved gains in the NPLN assessment mean reading score for all three student cohorts; however, the extent of this gain again varied across the cohorts. The largest magnitude of change over the testing period was observed in the youngest cohort (students in Year 2 in 2009), whilst gains for the two older cohorts were similar.

In all three cohorts, the gain score for students from MLMT schools was slightly lower than that for all NPLN literacy focus schools. However, again for all cohorts the mean reading score for MLMT schools remained higher than that for NPLN literacy focus schools as a whole.

The NPLN assessment reading gain scores for MLMT schools were also compared for key student comparison groups (gender and Aboriginality). This data is presented in Figure 3 below.

FIGURE 3 – MLMT NPLN ASSESSMENT READING GAIN SCORES BY STUDENT COMPARISON GROUPS



The comparison of gain scores shows that for all three cohorts, female students have achieved slightly higher reading growth over the testing period than that achieved by male students. However, given the noted limitations of the data (and therefore the potential scope of measurement error), this difference cannot be described as meaningful.

In the two older cohorts, the gain scores for Aboriginal students were slightly higher than those for non-Aboriginal students, whilst in the youngest cohort the Aboriginal gain score was notably lower. Again, the validity of this result is limited due to the very small sample size of Aboriginal students completing the NPLN assessments at MLMT schools ( $\leq 6$  students); we are therefore unable to draw any reliable conclusions from this data.

## 5.1.4 SUMMARY

Aggregate student data collected from NAPLAN and NPLN assessments was analysed to review the change in student literacy outcomes over the NPLN period for each student cohort. A range of limitations on the reliability and validity of results observed in these data sets have been outlined. These should be considered when drawing conclusions from the results discussed.

In both data sets (NAPLAN and NPLN assessments), gains in mean reading scores were observed for all student cohorts at MLMT schools. However, the extent of these gains varied compared to those observed for all NPLN literacy-focus schools, and for all State schools (for NAPLAN data only). In one NAPLAN cohort (students in Year 3 in 2008), students at MLMT schools achieved higher reading score gains than for students across all NPLN literacy-focus schools and the State as a whole. Conversely, for the other NAPLAN cohort (Year 3 in 2009), and all three NPLN cohorts, the MLMT reading gain scores were slightly lower than those achieved across all NPLN literacy-focus schools.

Despite slightly lower gains for most MLMT cohorts over the NPLN period, the mean reading scores for MLMT students both before and after the NPLN period were higher than those for NPLN literacy-focus schools as a whole.

No demonstrable variation in results was observed in the key student comparison groups (gender and Aboriginality). In some cohorts, gains in mean literacy scores at MLMT schools were slightly higher for female students than for male students. Whilst in some cohorts there was disparity in reading gains for Aboriginal students compared to non-Aboriginal students, the very small sample size of test data for Aboriginal students in MLMT schools means we are unable to draw any reliable conclusions from this data.

## 5.2 QUANTITATIVE DATA ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

The online survey sought respondents' views on the impact of MLMT on students at their school. School staff were asked to rate the *overall effectiveness* of MLMT in improving literacy outcomes for students. As demonstrated in Table 14, the majority of respondents (90%) reported that MLMT had been *effective* (53%) or *very effective* (37%) in improving literacy outcomes for students. A total of 8% of respondents reported that it was *too soon to say* or *hard to say* whether MLMT had been effective in improving literacy outcomes for students. No respondents reported that MLMT had been *not very* or *not at all effective*.

TABLE 14 – OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING IN IMPROVING LITERACY OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS BY ROLE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL	EXECUTIVE	TEACHER K-2	TEACHER STAGE 2	TEACHER STAGE 3	SPECIALIST/AIDE/OTHER SUPPORT
Very effective	36.8	46.2	31.3	16.7	28.6	55.6
Effective	52.6	46.2	62.5	66.7	64.3	33.3
Neither effective nor ineffective	2.6	7.7	-	8.3	-	-
Not very effective	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not at all effective	-	-	-	-	-	-
Too soon to say	5.3	-	6.3	8.3	-	11.1
Hard to say	2.6	-	-	-	7.1	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Total effective*</i>	89.5	92.3	93.8	83.3	92.9	88.9

\* Combined *effective* and *very effective* responses.

Considering the variation in views on the *overall effectiveness* of MLMT according to respondents' level of teaching experience showed those respondents with 20 years or more experience were more likely to report that MLMT had been *very effective* in improving literacy outcomes for students (44%) when compared with other respondents. Respondents at earlier stages of their career (less than two years) were more likely to indicate it was *too early to say* (40%) or *hard to say* (20%) than respondents who had more years teaching experience.

School staff were also asked to indicate the extent of *improvement* observed in a range of areas relating to students' engagement with and capability in literacy since the introduction of MLMT. As demonstrated in Table 15, a total of 90% or more respondents reported a *significant improvement* or *some improvement* in the following areas:

- *Students' enthusiasm for reading (92%)*
- *Students' understanding of what is expected of them when they read (92%)*
- *Students' use of effective strategies to assist them understand and read text (92%)*
- *Students' confidence in reading (91%)*
- *The volume of reading undertaken (91%)*
- *The variety of texts read (91%)*
- *Students' ability to read for meaning (91%)*
- *Students' willingness to discuss what they have read (90%).*

TABLE 15 – OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS LITERACY (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVEMENT	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT	SOME IMPROVEMENT	A LITTLE IMPROVEMENT	NO IMPROVEMENT	HARD TO SAY
Students enthusiasm for reading	92.1	56.6	35.5	2.6	1.3	3.9
The <i>volume</i> of reading undertaken	90.8	51.3	39.5	3.9	1.3	3.9
The <i>complexity</i> of texts read	84.2	35.5	48.7	9.2	1.3	5.3
The <i>variety</i> of texts read	90.8	52.6	38.2	5.3	-	3.9
Students' confidence in reading	90.8	56.6	34.2	3.9	-	5.3
Students' ability to read for meaning	90.8	53.9	36.8	3.9	-	5.3
Students' willingness to discuss what they have read	89.5	61.8	27.6	5.3	-	5.3
Students' understanding of what is expected of them when they read	92.1	57.9	34.2	3.9	-	3.9
Students' use of effective strategies to assist them understand and read text	92.1	57.9	34.2	2.6	1.3	3.9
Students' reading skills	86.8	53.9	32.9	9.2	-	3.9
Students' literacy levels more broadly	85.5	39.5	46.1	6.6	-	7.9
Students' enthusiasm for their other schoolwork (beyond literacy)	84.2	35.5	48.7	6.6	2.6	6.6



## 5.3 QUALITATIVE DATA ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

As with outcomes for teachers, the benefits of MLMT for students identified through the quantitative and qualitative components of this research are broadly consistent. The qualitative findings are described in detail below.

### 5.3.1 UNDERSTANDING OF COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES AND HOW TO USE THESE STRATEGIES TO READ FOR MEANING

School staff said a key outcome of MLMT was that students were now aware of and able to use reading comprehension strategies to help them understand and read text. Indeed, when the evaluators met with students during school visits, many of them were able to articulate the various comprehension strategies (eg. predicting, summarising, visualising), as well as techniques to demonstrate deeper levels of understanding of the text (eg the *here, hidden and head* three levels of questioning).

School staff also said students actually understood what they were reading now. They knew that reading words on a page was not enough, and that they needed to use the strategies they had learnt to understand what the words meant. A recurring theme throughout school visits and indeed this report, was that there was now much more conversation around texts in classrooms. Students could and were expected to comment or express an opinion on a text, and to justify their opinions so that teachers could gauge whether they had developed that deeper level of understanding. Some schools said in the past, reading was done in a round robin manner and, if students could read the words on the page, there was a mistaken assumption that they understood the text.

The comments below from students demonstrate the focus on *understanding* and not just reading words on a page:

*We understand what we are reading. In the past, Year 3, we just read but didn't understand, but now I get a movie in my head and understand.*

*We understand the hidden message now. We talk about the book, discuss why characters are doing things. It leads to deeper understanding.*

*We always do prediction before we start a book and then we discuss it afterwards.*

The majority of parents interviewed were not aware of MLMT. A few had heard the name, read about a focus on reading comprehension in the school newsletter, or had attended an evening organised by the school on how they could help their children with reading, but none of the parents had a solid understanding of what MLMT was. Notwithstanding this, several parents were able to give examples of a shift in their children's reading which demonstrated the reading comprehension strategies they were being taught at school, and a deeper understanding of texts. For example, one parent said whenever her child read part of a book, he summarised what he read and then predicted what he thought would happen next. Some other examples from parents are outlined in the quotes below.

*She used to sound out words. Now she doesn't. Now she draws pictures to demonstrate the story. She has been doing this for a couple of terms now.*

*My eldest has always been a high level reader but in the last two years she has been more keen to try different styles of books. Her comprehension has improved. I can tell by her responses if I discuss the book with her.*

*My eldest son is in Year 6 and when he was doing summaries in Year 5 I had to help him. This year a light switch went on and he can just do it on his own. It's a direct improvement in that I don't have to babysit anymore.*

*With my oldest child, his English has excelled quite a lot. He is interested and excited about reading. He wants to talk about what he is reading. The way he describes books is more advanced. You can tell they understand.*

The great majority of parents said they were happy with how their children's reading was progressing. Some parents said it would be useful for parents to know more about MLMT and the various

comprehension strategies, so they could reinforce at home what their children were being taught in the classroom. There was not, however, a consistent view on this. Other parents said they did not necessarily want to know the details of MLMT and other initiatives being implemented in the school. They were happy to let the school run with MLMT provided it was delivering results and improving the reading comprehension of their children.

### 5.3.2 CONFIDENCE AND ENTHUSIASM FOR READING

Another key outcome of MLMT for students is greater enthusiasm for and confidence in reading. This outcome was mentioned by school staff, parents and students themselves. School staff said that because they were tailoring reading comprehension activities to meet the needs of students, and using texts that were likely to engage students, students were realising that reading could be fun. Several schools said students were now more enthusiastic about borrowing books from the school library. In one school, over 90% of students were participating in the Premier's Reading Challenge, up from 60% the previous year:

*Kids are realising that reading can be fun. If they think reading is fun, they will be more likely to do it.*

*Kids have greater confidence and read with greater expression. They want to read because we have interesting books. They make connections without even needing prompting. It's becoming second nature to them.*

*They are not passive readers anymore. They ask questions and take the discussion further. They are more enthusiastic about reading because we have made it fun.*

At the start of focus groups with students, students were asked to draw a picture of what they liked most about school. In some schools, a large majority drew pictures of books and said literacy block was their favourite part of the school day. When asked why they liked reading, students commonly said it was because they understood more; had a range of new and interesting texts to choose from; and their teachers encouraged them to read more.

*I want to keep reading more because I can relate to the characters.*

*I love reading. It takes you to another place. It's fun and helps me understand different things.*

Parents also said their children were more enthusiastic about reading, and were reading more and a wider variety of texts this year than they were last year. This included reading a range of fiction and non-fiction books, but also everyday things like street signs and cereal boxes. One parent said her child had started looking at the bookclub brochure all the time and constantly asked her to take him to bookstores:

*My son is chewing through books. There is always a book in the car. He reads in the morning. I have trouble getting him to do other things.*

*Whatever they are doing is changing attitudes and making them more excited. The kids talk about strategies at home like 'here', 'hidden' and 'head'.*

*My daughter likes reading. She used to be terrified of reading but now she always wants to read.*

*My son's interest in reading has definitely sparked.*

It must be noted, however, that not all parents said they had seen this enthusiasm for reading in their children. A few parents said their children were not 'natural readers' and still needed to be pushed to read.

### SNAPSHOT: COOKING WITH COMPREHENSION

The 'Cooking with Comprehension' program was a five-week program implemented in one MLMT school in which students read and interpreted recipes and then cooked food. The program was tailored for each year level, and in Year 5 was linked to a Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) topic on healthy eating. The aim of the program was to take reading into a real-life setting and to develop a love of reading in students through an engaging and fun program. The school reported that the program motivated students to read and benefitted all students, including students who were good readers and those who struggled with reading. The school plans to continue with the initiative given its proven success.

### SNAPSHOT: EARLYBIRD READING

One MLMT school introduced an 'earlybird reading' program in which ten Stage 3 students were given lanyards and designated 'literacy monitors'. Literacy monitors met with Stage 1 students struggling with reading three mornings a week and listened to them read. The program was so successful, it was eventually opened up to all Stage 1 students, and Stage 3 students began volunteering to be literacy monitors. The program demonstrated how the focus on reading comprehension had translated to greater enthusiasm for reading across all year levels.

## 5.3.3 IMPROVED READING LEVELS

Some schools reported seeing improvements in reading comprehension levels through assessment tools such as NAPLAN and the NEALE analysis. Other schools, however, said there had not as yet been any significant shift in the data. The CEO arranged for University of Sydney education students to administer the NEALE analysis in MLMT schools but had questions about the validity of the results. The CEO said that having people external to the school administering the NEALE analysis was intimidating for children, and may have resulted in them not performing as well as they could have.

Some teachers who were interviewed said they had seen significant improvements in students' reading comprehension, particularly some struggling students who had gone from being 'strugglers to independent readers'. Several school staff commented that MLMT had resulted in significant behavioural changes in both teachers and students, but said it may take a few years for the results of MLMT to show up in formal testing in any significant way:

*I would like to see a kick in NAPLAN figures this year but am not expecting it. I see this as a 3-5 year project.*

The NAPLAN and NPLN data reported in Section 5.1 (not all of which was available at the time of school visits) demonstrates gains in mean reading scores for all student cohorts at MLMT schools. However, as noted in Section 5.1, the extent of these gains varied compared to those observed for all NPLN literacy-focus schools, and for all State schools (for NAPLAN data only). Despite these variations, the mean reading scores for MLMT students both before and after the NPLN period were higher than those for NPLN literacy-focus schools as a whole.

Although there is a generally accepted view that MLMT aims to identify the needs of all students and respond to those needs, a few staff said schools might need to focus a little more on the higher-performing students and whether they are being pushed enough, suggesting that there may be a tendency in some MLMT schools to focus on struggling students.

## 5.3.4 OTHER BENEFITS

Another key benefit of MLMT that emerged during school visits was the flow-on benefits to other key learning areas. Several schools commented that being a good reader does not just help with reading, but also with all subjects such as maths, science, human society and its environment etc. School staff said students were using the reading comprehension strategies that they had learnt through MLMT to extract meaning across texts in all subject areas. Indeed, in the online survey 88% of teachers agreed with the statement *Most teachers in my school are using the teaching strategies they learnt through Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in their everyday teaching across KLAs.*

## 5.4 OUTCOMES FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

In the online survey, school staff were asked to report their view on the relative effectiveness of MLMT in improving literacy outcomes for Aboriginal students compared to non-Aboriginal students. As shown in Table 16, around one in five respondents (22%) indicated MLMT was as effective for Aboriginal students as for non-Aboriginal students. However, the large majority of respondents indicated either they were *not sure/too hard to say* (41%) or it was *not applicable as there were no Aboriginal students participating in the program at my school* (37%).

TABLE 16 – EFFECTIVENESS OF MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS COMPARED TO NON-ABORIGINAL STUDENTS (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL %
More effective than for non-Aboriginal students	-
As effective as for non-Aboriginal students (ie no difference)	22.4
Less effective than for non-Aboriginal students	-
Not sure/hard to say	40.8
Not applicable as there are no Aboriginal students participating in Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching at my school	36.8

As noted in section 1.4, only around 6 students in all MLMT schools identified as Aboriginal. Given this is such a small sample, it is not possible to draw any conclusions from this evaluation on the impact of MLMT on the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students. During school visits, staff generally said that MLMT was as effective for Aboriginal students as it was for non-Aboriginal students because MLMT looked at the individual needs of students and responded to those needs.

This view was reflected in the following comments:

*Strategies are appropriate for all students regardless of background.*

*I don't think that Aboriginal students learn in ways different to non-Aboriginal students. I think that all students get the same out of taught lessons, as long as the teacher is teaching at the students' instructional level.*

*I don't believe it to be culturally biased at all.*

According to school staff, the only difference for Aboriginal students was that their progress was tracked under an ILP, which was a mandated requirement under the NPLN. Several schools said that if this was not a mandatory requirement, many of their Aboriginal students would not be on ILPs because they were generally not the students who struggled.

## 5.5 OUTCOMES FOR ESL/LBOTE STUDENTS

In the online survey, school staff were also asked to report their view on the relative effectiveness of MLMT in improving literacy outcomes for ESL/LBOTE students compared to non-ESL/LBOTE students. The reason this specific question was asked was because the eight MLMT schools have high proportions of ESL/LBOTE students.

As shown in Table 17, the large majority of respondents indicated MLMT was *as effective* for ESL/LBOTE students as for non-ESL/LBOTE students (67%). A small minority reported MLMT was *more effective* for ESL/LBOTE students (11%), and 20% of respondents reported *not sure/hard to say*.

TABLE 17 – EFFECTIVENESS OF MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING FOR ESL/LBOTE STUDENTS COMPARED TO NON-ESL/LBOTE STUDENTS (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL %
More effective than for non- ESL/LBOTE students	10.5
As effective as for non- ESL/LBOTE students (ie no difference)	67.1
Less effective than for non- ESL/LBOTE students	2.6
Not sure/hard to say	19.7
Not applicable as there are no ESL/LBOTE students participating in Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching at my school	-

During school visits, school staff pointed out that there was significant diversity in the ESL/LBOTE student cohort. Some ESL/LBOTE students were among the brightest in the class, while others were struggling students. Consistent with the results of the online survey, most school staff said MLMT was as effective for ESL/LBOTE as it was for non-ESL/LBOTE students because it catered to the needs of the individual student.

Teachers did, however, say that MLMT made them more *mindful* of ESL/LBOTE students and potential gaps in their knowledge which may impact on their reading comprehension. As an example, one teacher said some ESL/LBOTE students in the class did not know what a pavlova was, so when reading a book that included the word pavlova the teacher had to stop and make sure everyone in the class knew what this was. Another teacher said ESL/LBOTE students did not necessarily gain more from MLMT, but because teachers were more mindful of their needs it 'brought them up to speed' with other non-ESL/LBOTE students.

Some schools said children who had recently arrived in Australia and had limited English were ILP students, and their individual needs were being met through, for example, Reading Recovery and extra time with teachers' aides. In demonstrating the shift in teacher thinking, one school said in the past teachers may have recommended that a struggling ESL/LBOTE student be put into a lower grade, whereas now, as a result of MLMT, the teacher was more likely to ask '*what does my student need and how I can address this?*' As one teacher said:

*We all feel a shared responsibility for NESB [non-English speaking background] students now. We are mindful that teachers need to be aware.*

#### SNAPSHOT: KITCHEN GARDEN

The Kitchen Garden program was implemented in one MLMT school in 2009 and focused on the development of oral language skills for all students, but particularly ESL/LBOTE students. Students were placed into Language Groups and spent time each week in the garden, learning about vegetables, the environment and gardening while at the same time increasing their vocabulary. The school reported the program has been a huge success in improving the oral and reading comprehension skills for all students. Consequently, the Kitchen Garden activities continue to expand.

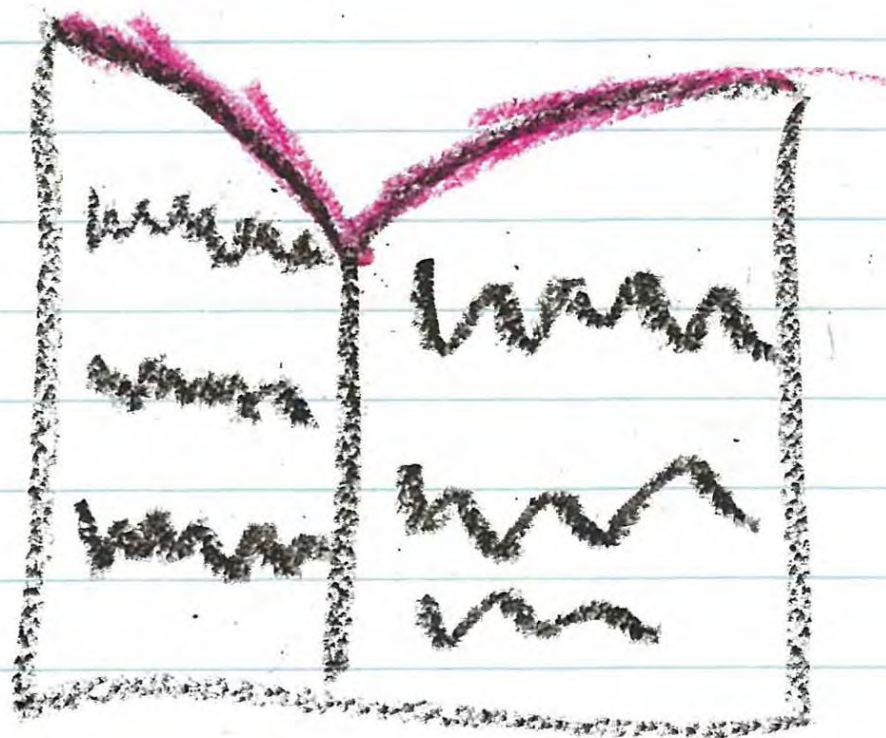
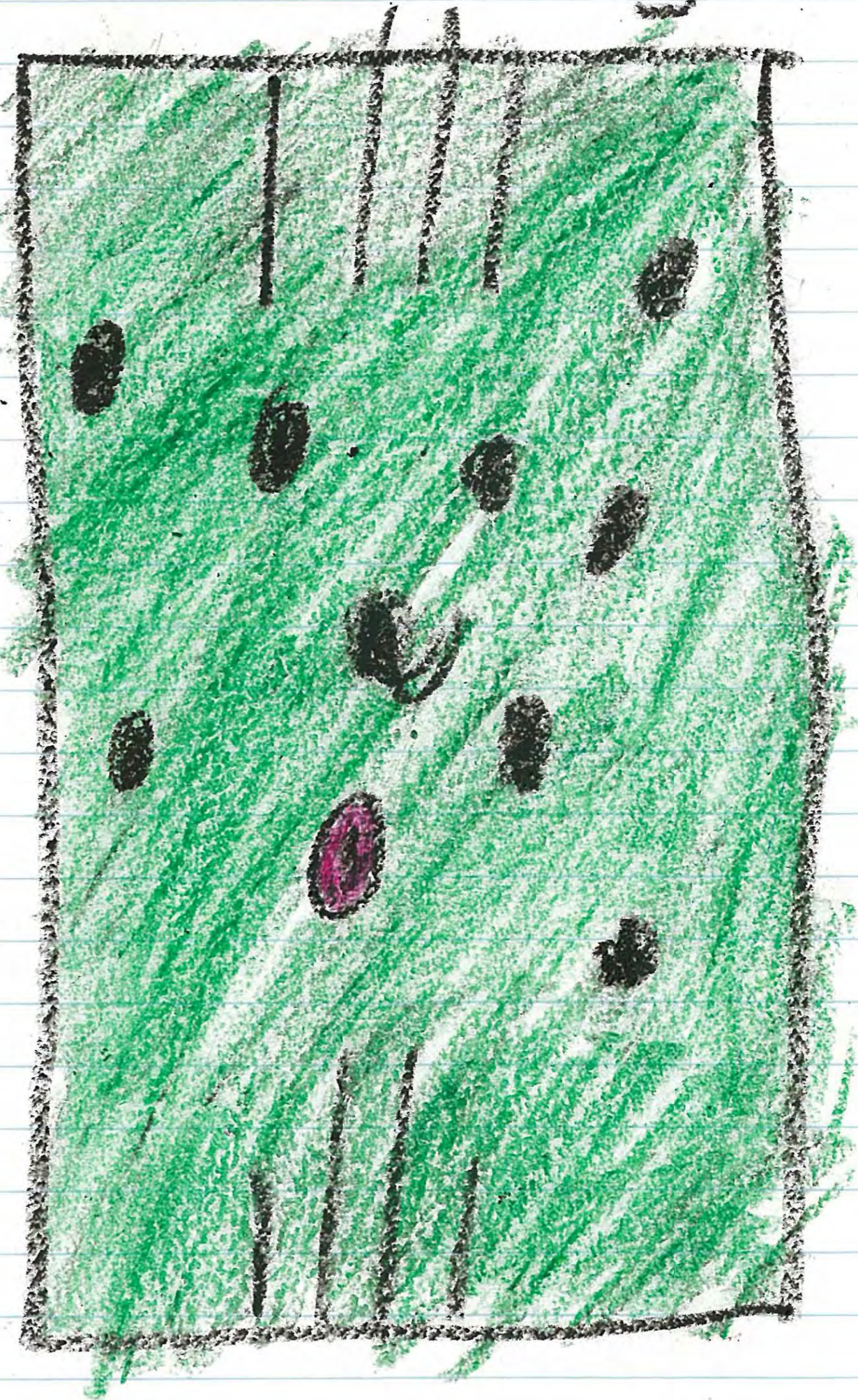
## 5.6 SUCCESS FACTORS

While there were a number of critical factors that contributed to the success of MLMT overall, the key success factors that resulted in the outcomes for students outlined above generally included:

- making reading fun – using activities and texts that would both interest and engage students, and also improve their reading comprehension
- encouraging students to express their opinion on various texts, thereby increasing their confidence in reading comprehension

- tailoring existing evidence-based reading comprehension activities to meet the needs of students in the classroom
- purchasing new and varied texts as well as electronic resources such iPods, iPads, lap tops, voice recorders and interactive whiteboards
- explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies
- clearly setting the parameters with students (ie making it clear that they had to read for meaning)
- developing ILPs to facilitate tracking of students falling below the NAPLAN benchmarks and other struggling students.

# playing Sport and Reading



## 6 Impact on schools

### KEY FINDINGS

- In the online survey, the majority of teachers agreed that since MLMT there is more clarity about their school's goals and expectations on reading outcomes. They also agreed that teaching of reading is now more explicit and focused, and that MLMT has resulted in greater transparency and consistency in the way literacy is taught in the school.
- These online survey findings are consistent with the qualitative research. A common theme during school visits was that teachers were now using the same language, the same data to assess student needs, and the same assessment tools, all of which contributed to a collaborative whole-of-school approach.
- School staff said MLMT made the school environment more collegiate and supportive. The strong school focus on reading comprehension and the various supports provided to teachers motivated staff to work to a common goal and seek to achieve real outcomes in the reading comprehension levels of students.
- Outcomes varied across schools because each one started MLMT at different points.

### 6.1 IMPACT ON SCHOOLS

In the online survey, teachers were presented with a series of statements relating to the impact of MLMT on school literacy practices. As demonstrated by Table 18, the statements with which teachers agreed most (in terms of both *total agreement* and proportion of *strongly agree* responses) were:

- *Since the introduction of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, there is now more clarity about my school's goals and expectations re reading outcomes (53% strongly agree and 97% total agreement)*
- *Through participating in Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, teaching of reading in my school is now more explicit and focussed (50% strongly agree and 96% total agreement)*
- *Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has resulted in greater transparency and consistency in the way literacy is taught in my school (49% strongly agree and 96% total agreement).*



TABLE 18 – AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENT ABOUT IMPACT OF MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING ON THE SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

STATEMENT	TOTAL AGREEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	HARD TO SAY
<b>SCHOOL PRACTICES</b>							
Since the introduction of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, there is now more clarity about my school's goals and expectations re reading outcomes	97.4	52.6	44.7	1.3	-	-	1.3
Most teachers in my school are using the teaching strategies they learnt through Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in their everyday teaching across KLAs.	88.2	31.6	56.6	6.6	-	-	5.3
Through participating in Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, teaching of reading in my school is now more explicit and focussed	96.1	50.0	46.1	2.6	-	-	1.3
I have a sound understanding of the Timperley Inquiry Cycle	59.2	15.8	43.4	21.1	6.6	2.6	10.5
Helen Timperley's Inquiry Cycle provided a sound basis for the implementation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in my school	61.8	14.5	47.4	23.7	1.3	-	13.2
The aims and objectives of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching are clear to me	85.5	27.6	57.9	10.5	-	-	3.9
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has resulted in greater transparency and consistency in the way literacy is taught in my school	96.1	48.7	47.4	2.6	-	-	1.3
It is clear how Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching is operationalised at both the whole-of-class and at the individual student level	82.9	26.3	56.6	13.2	1.3	1.3	1.3

These findings reflect the comments made by school staff during school visits. A common theme was that schools now had a whole-of-school approach to, and focus on, reading comprehension. Teachers in Years 3-6, and in some cases in all year levels, had the same training. They were using the same language, the same data to assess the needs of students, and the same assessment tools, all of which contributed to a collaborative whole-of-school approach. This common language and common approach also facilitated hand-overs at the end of the school year, and made it easier for teachers to 'get up to speed' on where each of their new students were at.

Another key theme in all schools was that MLMT had made the school environment more collegiate and supportive. School staff were no longer afraid to admit gaps in their knowledge and were not threatened by having someone observing their teaching practice. For the most part, teachers now welcomed being observed and were more eager to ask questions and share ideas. There was a real sense in MLMT schools that a strong focus on reading comprehension, and the supports that came with that, had

motivated teachers to work to a common goal and achieve real outcomes in the reading comprehension levels of students.

As noted in Section 5.3.4, many teachers commented that MLMT, being a reading comprehension program, had flow-on effects to other subjects, and that students were using comprehension strategies they had learnt to extract meaning in other key learning areas (eg science, maths and human society and its environment).

TEs reported that although all schools had seen outcomes as a result of MLMT, the outcomes were not consistent across schools. This was because schools had different starting points in terms of the capacity of teachers and the culture of the school. They were not all at the same point now because they did not all start at the same point.

## 6.2 SUCCESS FACTORS

Success factors related to teacher and student outcomes have already been outlined in Sections 4.3 and 5.6 respectively. However, one of the key success factors that led to the *overall* success of MLMT was that MLMT was not prescriptive, and was flexible enough to enable schools to mould it to meet the needs of the student community. Other key success factors included:

- a strong leadership team and a knowledgeable and supportive TE
- funding to allow for professional learning and the purchase of new and varied texts
- a strong school focus on reading comprehension
- willingness by teachers to adopt a new approach to teaching reading comprehension
- a 'whole of school' approach and use of common language
- training *in situ* that was targeted and relevant to the school environment
- collegiality and support among school staff which facilitated classroom observation and feedback and the sharing of ideas
- using data to ensure classroom teaching strategies met the needs of all students in the classroom
- making reading fun for children by being *mindful* about the texts and activities likely to engage them.

## 7 Strengthening the impact of MLMT

### KEY FINDINGS

- Many schools said MLMT was very effective for students in Years 3-6, and would be more effective if it was formally expanded to include Kindergarten–Year 6.
- Several schools reported that MLMT could be improved by having a formal channel for MLMT Lead Teachers to communicate (other than the NING) given Lead Teachers were generally responsible for the day-to-day management of MLMT in schools.
- Schools were optimistic about the sustainability of MLMT after the cessation of NPLN funding, particularly because MLMT is not a program *per se* but an approach or a way of doing things. Critical to the sustainability of MLMT in schools will be: a committed Leadership Team; the degree to which MLMT has already been embedded in school processes; and continued professional learning for staff (including new staff).

### 7.1 FACTORS THAT MAY LIMIT SUCCESS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Schools were generally very satisfied with MLMT as a tool to improve reading comprehension. The main factors that may limit success or areas for improvements identified relate to:

- *Focus on Years 3-6:* many schools said MLMT was very effective for students in Years 3-6, and would be more effective if it was formally expanded to also include Kindergarten–Year 2.
- *Networking opportunities for MLMT teachers:* several schools said MLMT could be improved by having a formal channel for MLMT Lead Teachers to communicate. Such a channel exists for principals but does not exist for Lead Teachers, who are generally responsible for the day-to-day management of MLMT in schools.

### 7.2 SUSTAINABILITY

The qualitative and quantitative research both indicate that schools are optimistic about the sustainability of MLMT after the cessation of NPLN funding.

In the online survey, 85.5% of respondents agreed with the statement *There is a clear pathway for sustaining Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching improvements/approach in the school beyond the funding period.* During school visits, school staff regularly mentioned that MLMT had brought about a cultural shift. MLMT was not a program *per se*, rather an approach or a way of doing things that would not change with the cessation of funding.

One of the main objectives of TEs was to embed MLMT into school processes and to eventually hand over management and implementation of MLMT to the Lead Teacher. Schools agreed that they have the knowledge within the school, and suggested the challenge would be to continue building on this knowledge and ensuring new staff are given appropriate training on MLMT. Some schools said they were already developing training materials to 'bring new staff up to speed':

*MLMT has no start and end date and will continue organically because it has been embedded into teaching practice.*

*MLMT has achieved what it set out to do. It changed attitudes, understandings and expectations. The change is deep. It's not just a pocket that has been affected.*

Schools said that although they would not be able to continue doing everything they had been doing over the past two years, professional learning and data analysis would continue. There would no longer be funding to release teachers for classroom observation, but some schools were looking at options to enable this to continue (eg having teachers undertake classroom observation during library time). There would also no longer be funding to buy new and engaging texts for students, nor would there be regular

access to TEs. One school commented that it was located in a low SES area and had a lot of parents on assisted fees. Its existing budget would therefore not allow the school to continue to purchase new texts for students.

A couple of schools mentioned the NING when discussing the issue of sustainability. One school, for example, said it planned to start videoing lessons and putting it on the NING to help train other schools. Another school said it was trying to build the willingness of staff to contribute to the NING so that they had a virtual connection to other MLMT schools and could learn from their collective knowledge.

Despite the optimism within schools, it is clear that sustaining MLMT within schools will be challenging, and will require a strong commitment from all school staff, but particularly the Leadership Team.

### 7.2.1 SUCCESS FACTORS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

In summary, the success factors for the sustainability of MLMT in schools after the cessation of NPLN funding appear to be:

- commitment by the Leadership Team and school staff to MLMT
- the degree to which the school has already managed to embed MLMT into school processes
- continued professional learning for teachers
- having a strategy in place to train new staff.

## 8 Summary and conclusion

This section draws together the findings from the qualitative and quantitative research to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of MLMT in line with the Terms of Reference for this evaluation.

### 8.1 AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MLMT

MLMT was designed by the CEO to build teacher capacity to improve the reading comprehension skills of students. MLMT is not a program in the formal sense, but can better be described as a new approach to, or a new focus on, reading comprehension. It centres on an inquiry cycle process which allows for a personalised approach for each learning community. This inquiry cycle involves:

- identifying students' learning needs
- Identifying teachers' learning needs
- designing a range of learning tasks and experiences to respond to these identified needs
- using professional learning to implement improved teaching strategies in the classroom
- evaluating the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

The qualitative and quantitative research demonstrates that MLMT has had a positive impact on each of the eight schools in the Parramatta diocese that implemented MLMT and delivered benefits to teachers and students within those schools.

#### 8.1.1 EFFECTIVENESS OF MLMT FOR TEACHERS

The majority of teachers agree that MLMT has had a positive impact on their literacy teaching practice and made them better teachers.

MLMT provided teachers with comprehensive, targeted and ongoing professional learning which had a positive impact on their knowledge, attitudes and skills, as well as their classroom teaching practice.

With respect to impacts on teachers' *knowledge, attitudes and skills*, the majority of teachers reported that MLMT gave them:

- a better understanding of comprehension strategies
- a better understanding of how to use datasets to identify the needs of students
- a better understanding of how to effectively teach reading comprehension in the classroom
- greater confidence and the belief that they have the capacity to improve the literacy outcomes of students.

Most teachers reported that MLMT has had a significant impact on their *classroom teaching practice*. The most common changes to teaching practice across the eight MLMT schools included:

- analysing data to identify the reading comprehension needs of students, and developing strategies to respond to these needs in the classroom setting
- explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies
- questioning students in a way that required them to demonstrate a deep understanding of texts
- using existing evidence-based strategies for teaching reading more effectively (eg Readers' Circle, Readers' Theatre, Reciprocal Teaching)

- strategically selecting texts that were likely to engage and interest students
- participating in teacher observation, and a continual cycle of feedback and reflection
- monitoring struggling students through ILPs.

### 8.1.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF MLMT FOR STUDENTS

This evaluation analysed the effectiveness of MLMT for students by looking at three data sources: NAPLAN and NPLN assessment data supplied by NSW DEC; an online survey of school staff; and qualitative data collected during our school visits. All of this data provides an indication that the reading comprehension skills of students in MLMT schools has improved, as has students' confidence in and enthusiasm for reading.

#### NAPLAN AND NPLN DATA

In both data sets (NAPLAN and NPLN assessments), gains in mean reading scores were observed for all student cohorts at MLMT schools. However, the extent of these gains varied compared to those observed for all NPLN literacy-focus schools, and for all State schools (for NAPLAN data only). In one NAPLAN cohort (students in Year 3 in 2008), students at MLMT schools achieved higher reading score gains than for students across all NPLN literacy-focus schools and the State as a whole. Conversely, for the other NAPLAN cohort (Year 3 in 2009), and all three NPLN cohorts, the MLMT reading gain scores were slightly lower than those achieved across all NPLN literacy-focus schools.

Despite slightly lower gains for most MLMT cohorts over the NPLN period, the mean reading scores for MLMT students both before and after the NPLN period were higher than those for NPLN literacy-focus schools as a whole.

Note that the limitations relating to NAPLAN and NPLN assessment data outlined in Section 5.1 of this document must be taken into account when considering these findings.

#### ONLINE SURVEY DATA AND QUALITATIVE DATA

The online survey data and qualitative data collected during the school visits also indicates that the reading comprehension of students in MLMT schools has improved. Many of the outcomes mentioned by school staff were related to the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of students. School staff reported MLMT had given students:

- greater enthusiasm for and confidence in reading
- a better understanding of reading comprehension strategies and how to use these strategies to read for meaning
- a better understanding of what is expected of them when they read (ie an understanding that they need to comprehend and not just read words on a page)
- greater willingness to discuss what they have read, and express an opinion on texts
- more diverse texts to choose from.

While parents generally did not know a lot about MLMT, several parents were able to give examples of a shift in their children's reading that demonstrated the reading comprehension strategies being taught at school, and a deeper understanding of texts. Parents also generally agreed that their children were now more enthusiastic about reading, and were reading more and different things this year than they were last year.

Many of the students we spoke to said literacy block was their favourite part of their school day. They said they liked reading because they understood more now, and had access to new and interesting texts. Students were also able to explain the various comprehension strategies they had learnt, as well as techniques to demonstrate a deeper level of understanding of the text.

## 8.2 AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH MLMT ACHIEVES ITS GOALS IN AN EFFICIENT MANNER

The second Term of Reference for this evaluation relates to whether MLMT achieved its goals in an efficient manner and, where applicable, addresses the mandatory reform elements of the NPLN which include:

- effective and evidence-based teaching of literacy
- strong school leadership and whole-of-school engagement with literacy
- monitoring student and school literacy performance to identify where support is needed.

### 8.2.1 EFFECTIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED TEACHING OF LITERACY

MLMT is defined by the CEO as an educator-led inquiry into the teaching of reading. The structure of MLMT draws on the inquiry cycle process developed by Helen Timperley and outlined in Section 2.1. The MLMT intervention also contains the elements identified by Allington (2007) as essential to building reading comprehension skills. These include:

- substantially expanding the volume of daily reading
- ensuring access to appropriate texts all day long
- providing needed expert, explicit, personalised instruction
- crafting a coherent and balanced array of reading lessons and activities.

Many of the strategies being implemented by teachers in the classroom as part of MLMT (eg Readers' Circle, Readers' Theatre, Reciprocal Teaching) are existing evidence-based strategies for teaching reading, but MLMT is about building capacity of teachers so they can be more *mindful* about *what* they are teaching, *how* they are teaching it, and whether they are *responding* to individual student needs.

School staff generally understood and supported the evidence-base for MLMT, even though they were not always using the formal terminology to describe MLMT. There was a common view that because MLMT was an 'approach' or a 'new way of doing things' rather than a prescriptive 'one size fits all program', schools were able to mould MLMT to effectively respond to the learning needs of teachers and students. Many schools attributed the flexibility of MLMT to the positive impact that MLMT had on teachers and students.

### 8.2.2 STRONG SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND WHOLE-OF-SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT WITH LITERACY

A Leadership Team was established within each MLMT school to oversee the implementation of MLMT, with the assistance of the CEO and TEs, and almost all professional learning for MLMT was provided *in situ* by the School Leadership Team.

School staff were very positive about the support and guidance they received from their School Leadership Teams and teacher colleagues in both the qualitative and quantitative research. The majority of teachers agreed that since the introduction of MLMT there was more clarity about their school's goals and expectations on reading outcomes. They also agreed that MLMT had resulted in greater transparency and consistency in the way literacy was taught in the school.

Although the NPLN was focused on Years 3-6, MLMT schools were implementing components of MLMT in Stage 1. A common theme was that schools now had a whole-of-school approach to, and focus on, reading comprehension. Teachers were using the same language, the same data to assess the needs of students, and the same assessment tools, all of which contributed to a collaborative whole-of-school approach to reading comprehension.

Another common theme was that MLMT had made the school environment more collegiate and supportive. School staff were no longer afraid to admit gaps in their knowledge and were not threatened

by having someone observing their teaching practice. For the most part, teachers now welcomed being observed and were more eager to ask questions and share ideas. There was a real sense in MLMT schools that a strong focus on reading comprehension, and the supports that came with that, had motivated teachers to work to a common goal and achieve real outcomes in the reading comprehension levels of students.

### 8.2.3 MONITORING STUDENT AND SCHOOL LITERACY PERFORMANCE TO IDENTIFY WHERE SUPPORT IS NEEDED

A critical component of MLMT was training teachers to use data to identify the reading comprehension needs of students, so that they could develop strategies to respond to individual student needs in the classroom setting.

MLMT devoted significant periods of professional learning time to interpreting data. The datasets used by schools differed slightly but schools were generally making use of NAPLAN data, NEALE analysis data, classroom assessments, running records, TORCH data and anecdotal evidence. Some schools were also using the TOWRE assessment tool. Schools said they had used data to inform teaching practice in the past, but MLMT meant they now used data more comprehensively and consistently across the school.

During school visits, the Urbis team saw several examples of how schools had identified a gap in student learning (for example, in inference) and had developed strategies to respond to this gap.

### 8.3 AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH MLMT HAS IMPROVED THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

Only around 6 students in all MLMT schools identified as Aboriginal. Given this is such a small sample, it is not possible for us to draw any conclusions from this evaluation about the impact of MLMT on the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students.

No demonstrable variation in NAPLAN and NPLN assessment results was observed in the key student comparison groups based on Aboriginality. In some cohorts, there was disparity in reading gains for Aboriginal students compared to non-Aboriginal students, but again the very small sample size means NAPLAN and NPLN assessment data do not allow us to form any reliable conclusions.

During school visits, staff generally said MLMT was as effective for Aboriginal students as it was for non-Aboriginal students because MLMT looked at the individual needs of students and responded to those needs. School staff said the only difference for Aboriginal students was that their progress was tracked under an ILP, which was a mandated requirement under the NPLN. Several schools said that if this was not a mandatory requirement, many of their Aboriginal students would not be on ILPs because they were generally not the students that struggled with reading.

### 8.4 AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS FOR SCHOOLS TO BE SUPPORTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EVALUATION AND FOR THE REFORMS TO BE INCORPORATED INTO SCHOOL PRACTICE

#### PARTICIPATION IN THIS EVALUATION

Urbis consulted widely for this evaluation, which involved both qualitative and quantitative components.

The qualitative components included:

- two meetings with Ms Trudie Hill from the CEO
- visits to all eight schools implementing MLMT to meet with the School Executive, School Leadership Teams, teachers, parents and students
- a focus group with TEs



- a meeting with Professor Robyn Ewing, the CEO's 'critical friend' from the University of Sydney.

With respect to school visits, Urbis worked with schools to identify a schedule of meetings that best fit with the school's other commitments. Most meetings took the form of focus groups or small group discussions with each of the stakeholder groups.

The quantitative components of this evaluation included:

- an online survey for school staff – a total of 76 school staff completed the survey from seven of the eight schools implementing MLMT
- an analysis of NAPLAN and NPLN assessment data provided by NSW DEC.

Urbis worked collaboratively with NSW DEC, the CEO and stakeholders within schools to ensure schools were given every opportunity to participate in this evaluation. Schools were very generous with their time, often staying back after school hours to speak with the Urbis team. Given schools were at the forefront of implementing MLMT, their input was critical to this evaluation. We are very grateful for their contribution and willingness to participate in this evaluation.

### INCORPORATING REFORMS INTO SCHOOL PRACTICE

The NPLN funding provided to schools to implement MLMT was acquitted by the end of 2011. Despite the cessation of funding, the qualitative and quantitative research indicates that schools are optimistic about the sustainability of MLMT. During school visits, school staff regularly said MLMT had brought about a cultural shift. MLMT was not a program *per se*, rather an approach or a new way of doing things that would not change with the cessation of funding.

One of the main objectives of TEs was to embed MLMT into school processes and to eventually hand over management and implementation of MLMT to the Lead Teacher. Schools agreed that they now have the knowledge within the school, and suggested the challenge would be to continue building on this knowledge and ensuring new staff are given appropriate training on MLMT. Some schools suggested that the NING may become increasingly important as a professional learning tool after the NPLN funding ceases.

Schools said that although they would not be able to continue doing everything they have done over the past two years, professional learning and data analysis would continue. However, they would no longer have the funds to regularly release teachers for classroom observation, or buy new and engaging texts for students.

Despite the optimism within schools, it is clear that sustaining MLMT within schools will be challenging, and will require a strong commitment from all school staff, but particularly the Leadership Team.

The research suggests that the success factors for sustaining MLMT in schools are:

- commitment by the Leadership Team and school staff to MLMT
- the degree to which the school has already managed to embed MLMT into school processes
- continued professional learning for teachers
- having a strategy in place to train new staff.



# Appendix A

# Interview Guides

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# Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching (MLMT) Discussion Guide

For use in meeting with Robyn Ewing, Faculty of Education, Sydney University, at 2pm on Monday, 25 July.

## *Introduction*

1. We understand you have been engaged by the CEO to conduct an evaluation of MLMT? What is the focus for this evaluation? Have you started this evaluation? What has it involved? What information/data have you collected as part of this evaluation? Would you be prepared to either share or discuss what you have collected with Urbis?
2. What other involvement have you had with MLMT? What role did you play in the development and implementation of MLMT?
3. How satisfied are you with MLMT as a tool/approach to improving literacy? How satisfied do you think the CEO, schools, teachers and students are with the decision to use MLMT? Why do you say this? Have views/attitudes towards MLMT changed since its introduction? If yes, why do you think this is?
4. *[if relevant]* To what extent has MLMT been implemented as directed? Which schools have implemented MLMT *most* effectively? Which schools have implemented MLMT *least* effectively? What have been the barriers to implementation and how have schools and the CEO responded to these?
5. What outcomes has MLMT delivered to teachers? What impact has it had on their skills, knowledge and teaching? What do you think have been the critical factors/ success ingredients that have led to any positive impacts on individual teachers and their teaching practice? Has MLMT benefitted all teachers or has it benefitted some groups of teachers more than others?
6. What outcomes has MLMT delivered to students? Has MLMT led to any improvements in students' literacy skills? What evidence do you have for this? What other benefits has it delivered to students? Has MLMT benefitted all students or have some students benefitted more than others? What impact has MLMT had on LBOTE/Aboriginal students? Has the impact on these students been any different to the impact on other non-LBOTE/Aboriginal students?
7. Do you see MLMT as having two streams – a whole of school approach and an individualised intervention for targeted students? If so, do you think schools see MLMT the same way? Has the CEO and schools made a clear distinction between the two streams? If so, how? If not, why not?
8. Do you think the CEO has provided schools with enough information and sufficient support and guidance to effectively implement MLMT? What sorts of support and guidance have been provided and what has been most useful? What opportunities have there been for professional development and peer networking across schools? Is there any additional support or assistance that could have been provided but wasn't?

# Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching (MLMT) Teaching Educators Discussion Guide

For use in the meeting with Teaching Educators from the Catholic Education Office (Parramatta Diocese): 5th August at 9am.

## *Introduction*

1. Can I start by asking you to introduce yourself and briefly explain your background (eg primary teacher, literacy specialist etc) and your involvement with MLMT (eg which schools you are working with, how long you have been working with them?)
2. How valuable is MLMT as a tool to improve literacy outcomes for students? What do you like/not like about it? What are MLMT's key strengths? Why? How does it differ from other tools you have used in the past?
3. Has MLMT's impact been the same across the 8 schools? Or have some schools benefitted more than others? If so, which schools have benefitted more? Why is that? What were the factors/ingredients that enabled them to benefit more/less?
4. What do you see as the role of Teaching Educators in implementing MLMT?
5. What *role* have you played in the implementation of MLMT in your school(s)? Has this role differed depending on the individual school? If so, how? What *impact* has your contribution had on schools? What factors have enabled you to have a greater impact?
6. What opportunities have teachers had for professional development and peer networking across schools? What role have you played in facilitating this? Is there any additional professional development or networking that you would have liked to provide, or that schools wanted, but you were unable to provide?
7. Which elements of MLMT do you feel have been implemented *most* effectively in the schools you work with, and which elements do you feel have been implemented *least* effectively? What do you see as the barriers and enablers to implementation of MLMT? How have schools responded to these barriers? How have you responded to these barriers?
8. Do you feel you were provided with sufficient training from the CEO to help schools effectively implement MLMT? What type of training did you receive and how regularly did you receive it? What other training, if any, would have been useful?
9. How did principals respond to having Teaching Educators in schools working with them to implement MLMT? How did teachers respond? Were some principals/teachers more responsive than others? Why was this? Have views/attitudes towards Teaching Educators and MLMT more generally changed over time? If yes, why do you think this is?

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10. What sort of support did schools provide you to help you do your job (eg support from principals, teachers, support staff)? How satisfied were you with this support? What, if any, other support what have helped you?
  11. What outcomes do you think MLMT has delivered to teachers? What impact has it had on their skills, knowledge and teaching? What do you think have been the critical factors/ success ingredients that have led to any positive impacts on individual teachers and their teaching practice? Has MLMT benefitted all teachers or has it benefitted some groups of teachers more than others? ?
  12. What outcomes has MLMT delivered to students? Has MLMT led to any improvements in students' literacy skills? What evidence do you have for this? What other benefits has it delivered to students? Has MLMT benefitted all students or have some students benefitted more than others (ESL/LBOT/Aboriginal)?
  13. How sustainable is MLMT? What will be the impact when Teaching Educators stop working with schools to implement MLMT? What other factors will impact on the sustainability of MLMT in schools? What support do you think schools will need to continue using MLMT?

## Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching (MLMT) Students Discussion Guide

Hello, my name is X and I am going to talk to you about some things you do at school.

Can I just start by getting your name and what class you are in.

Thankyou, now let's start with a little game.

I have some pens and paper here – what I'd like you to do is to draw something for me.

I'd like you to think about what you like most about coming to school. And then draw a picture of that. Ok let's talk a bit about what you have drawn.

Now I'd like you to think about something that you don't enjoy so much about school – can you draw a picture of that? Ok so let's see what some of your pictures are and you tell me about them.

1. Do you like reading? Why/ why not? Have you always like reading? If not, when did you start to like reading?
2. Thinking about when you are not at school – do you read much at home? Books, magazines, on the computer? What sorts of things do you like to read and why? Are you reading more at home now than you were reading at home when you were in year X? If you don't read so much at home – why is that?
3. Do you do a lot of reading at school? What sorts of things do you read? Do you do this all together in class? Or in small groups? Or on your own with a teacher or tutor?
4. Is your teacher doing any new reading activities in class? What sorts of reading activities do you enjoy doing in class? What sorts of reading activities do you not enjoy?
5. What sorts of things are you reading in school? I want you to think back to year X, are you reading *more* things than you did in year X? Are you reading *different* things to what you read in year X? Are you reading *more difficult* things that you did in year X..
6. Do you usually find reading easy or hard? What sorts of things are easy to read? What sorts of things are hard to read? Are there things you avoid reading?
7. Do you think you are better at reading now than when you were in year X? What sorts of things are easier to read now? Why do you think that is easier now than before? What sorts of things have helped you to read better?
8. Has the teacher been working with you on the specific things you find most difficult about reading? Did your teacher do this with you on your own, in a small group or as part of a class discussion? Is there anything that you think of that could help you even more with your reading?
9. Have you ever drawn up a list or plan with your teacher on how you could improve your reading? If so, do you think you can now read better because of this list or plan? Why or why not?

10. If things are easy to read – how does that help with your school work? The kinds of things you can do outside of school?

Thank you



# Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching (MLMT) School Staff Discussion Guide

For use with school staff implementing MLMT.

Please note we do not expect that all school staff will be able to answer all questions in this discussion guide. However, we would like to give all school staff the opportunity to comment on these issues as they so choose or are able.

All responses are of course confidential.

## *Introduction*

1. Could I start by asking each of you to introduce yourself and to explain how you are or have been involved in implementing MLMT?
2. What do you see as the fundamentals of MLMT? In what way does MLMT differ from or build on previous programs/approaches? Is this a significant departure from other programs/approaches?
3. [if not already answered by the principal] can you describe how MLMT has been implemented here (eg staffing, scheduling, new approaches, buying new texts). To what extent has MLMT been implemented as directed?
4. What new teaching strategies [if any] are teachers using that they were not using before? Have these new strategies enhanced teacher quality? If so, how have they done this?
5. A key component of MLMT is professional learning for teachers and other staff. What kinds of professional learning have teachers and other staff been given and how effective has this professional learning been? (*prompts: is it evidence-based, the time involved/intensity, does it provide specific enough guidance to staff, quality of written material?*) Have there been any opportunities for teachers and school staff implementing MLMT within schools and across the diocese to come together for peer discussion on effective practice? How frequently do you utilise the NING? Do you find it a useful resource?
6. What is the role of the Teaching Educator? How effective has the Teaching Educator been in assisting you to implement MLMT? Is there anything you wanted the Teaching Educator to do that he/she did not do? [For those schools that do not have a teaching educator – Who made the decision for your school not to have a teaching educator? Are you aware of their role? Do you feel your school would benefit from having a teaching educator?]
7. What other support has been provided to help you implement MLMT and by whom? How satisfactory has this level of support been? How could the provision of this support be improved?
8. How well suited do you feel MLMT is to the school setting? Are there components of MLMT that are easier/harder to implement in the school setting? What barriers have there been to MLMT's implementation? Why is that? How have you managed these issues?

9. Do you see MLMT as a two stream approach – (1) improving literacy for the class using new approaches and (2) individual interventions through Individual Learning Plans – or do you see it as one approach with several facets.

### *Engagement*

10. What has been the response of teachers and other school staff to MLMT? Has it been generally well-received? Why/why not?
11. What about any others who have been involved in MLMT? eg. education assistants, parents
12. Have some teachers engaged more than others in MLMT? If so, which ones and why is this the case? Has staff turn over had any impact? Why/why not?
13. What about the students – are you able to comment on how they have responded to MLMT? What evidence or examples can you provide? How have Aboriginal students responded? How have student from ESL or LBOTE backgrounds responded?

### *Impact on students and their educational outcomes*

We will be analysing data on educational outcomes as part of this evaluation. However, we are interested in any data or observation that you may have on this issue also.

14. In your view, has MLMT led to any improvements in students literacy skills? What evidence do you have for this? How does this compare to any other programs/approaches that you have been involved in?
15. Are there other benefits that have flowed to students since the introduction MLMT?
16. To what extent is this occurring across the board? Are particular students or groups of students benefitting more than others (eg younger students, CALD students, students with particular learning problems etc)? If so why might this be the case?
17. Has MLMT improved students' access to different texts? How has the school facilitated access to a balanced array of reading lessons and activities?
18. Under the program, Reciprocal Teaching, Reader's Circle and Reader's Theatre are intended to be implemented and become part of daily teaching. Has this occurred? Why or why not? How useful have these three initiatives been? Have some been more useful than others?
19. [if possible] What about Aboriginal students – are you able to comment on the extent to which they have benefitted from MLMT? How does this compare with the educational outcomes for non-Aboriginal students? Is MLMT appropriate for/ work well with Aboriginal students? Why/why not? What if anything has been done/might be done to improve the effectiveness of MLMT for Aboriginal students?
20. What about ESL students or students with a LBOTE - are you able to comment on the extent to which they have benefitted from MLMT? How does this compare with the educational outcomes for

non- ESL and non-LBOTE students? Is MLMT appropriate for/ work well with ESL or LBOTE students? Why/why not? What if anything has been done/might be done to improve the effectiveness of MLMT for ESL or LBOTE students?

21. Are there some students who are better/less suited to MLMT (as implemented in the school)? Why is that?
22. A key component of the program is intervention for students experiencing difficulty reading. What is the nature and frequency of such interventions? How effective have the interventions been? How different is the intervention for different students? Why is this so? Are parents actively engaged in the intervention?

### *Impact on teachers and schools*

23. What impact, if any, do you think MLMT has had on teachers? For instance, what if any impact has MLMT had on teachers' beliefs or confidence in teaching literacy? Has it impacted on their knowledge and awareness – if so how?
24. What about you personally – what has MLMT meant for you – how has MLMT impacted on teaching literacy in your class? How does MLMT compare to other programs you have been involved in? Why is that?
25. What [if any] impact has MLMT had at a broader school level? What evidence/examples can you provide for this? What factors have facilitated or hindered this?
26. How effectively have you analysed relevant data and used this data to inform effective practice at the school/classroom level? What sort of professional learning has been provided on data analysis? Has it been sufficient? What else could be done to improve understanding of relevant data?
27. Has MLMT's effectiveness been enhanced or hindered by any other literacy/numeracy initiatives operating in the school?
28. What if anything might be done to enhance the effectiveness of MLMT with individual teachers – or in this school more generally?

### *Final comments*

29. In your experience, what is the value and effectiveness of MLMT in comparison with other programs and approaches to improving literacy?
30. Would you support its continual use in this school – why/why not?
31. Would you recommend it to others – on what basis?

*Thankyou very much for your time*

## Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching (MLMT) Parents Discussion Guide

Today we are going to have a brief discussion about your children's reading, and whether the literacy program, Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, has had any impact on this. We are conducting an evaluation of some new reading programs that have been introduced into certain NSW schools over the last year or so and your school is one of these.

You may not be aware of or heard of these programs – that is OK. We just want to have a general discussion of how you think your child's reading ability is progressing.

Can I just start by asking each of you – what is your first name, how many children you have attending this school and what years they are in?

We are going to be talking about your children in Years 3 to 6 today.

1. Do your children like reading? Why/ why not? What sorts of things do they do (or not do) that tell you this?
2. How would you describe your child's progress in reading? Are they doing reasonably well? Are they struggling a bit? Or is it a bit hard to say?
3. If you think they are doing quite well – how do you know this? Is this from your own observations or what the school has told you? If they are struggling a bit – again how do you know this? What sorts of things are they having difficulty with and how do you know this?
4. Have you ever discussed your child's reading with the school? How often does that happen? What sorts of things are discussed in these meetings? Is that helpful to you as a parent? Why/why not? Have you been aware of any new reading programs introduced into the school?
5. Do you know anything about Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching? Has the teacher or school communicated anything about Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching to you and the fact that your child is involved in it? Do you think that you have been told enough about the program?
6. In the last year or two, have you noticed any change in your child's attitude to school? What sorts of things if any have changed?
7. In the last year or two, have you noticed any changes in your children's reading skills? Their reading habits? Their overall enjoyment of reading? If so, what has changed? Can you give examples?
8. What sorts of things are your children reading? Are they reading *more* things than they did before a year or two ago? Are they reading *different* things to what they read before? Are they reading *more difficult* things than they did before?
9. Have there been any other changes in their general attitude to say doing homework, or tests at school, or their confidence in approaching their schoolwork?

10. Do your children talk any more about what goes on in class now than they did in year X?
11. If there have been any improvements – is this just what you would expect given that your child is now a year older? Or has there been a more dramatic change? Is there anything you can point to that you think has had an impact eg something the school or teacher has done, something you have done as a parent?
12. Have your children talked about any strategies or things they do when reading to assist their comprehension, vocabulary or fluency skills?
13. If there has been no significant improvement, why do you think that is the case?
14. Do you think the MLMT program has made a difference to your child's reading? If so, in what ways?
15. Have any of your children been invited to participate in an Individual Literacy Plan (ILP)? If so, what does the ILP involve? Does it adequately address your children's needs? Why or why not? What impact has it had on your children's attitude to reading and reading skills? Did the school effectively engage you in the development of this plan? If so, how did they do this?
16. Are you happy with the access your children have to a range of different reading texts? Has the range of reading texts available to your children improved over the past year? What, if anything, do your children have access to now that they did not have access to last year?

Thank you

# Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching (MLMT) Leadership Team Discussion Guide

For use with school principals/executive staff in relation to MLMT. All responses are of course confidential.

## *Introduction*

1. Why was MLMT selected as your preferred approach to improving student's literacy? What other approaches or programs were considered if any by the school or the CEO? In retrospect, are you satisfied with the decision to use MLMT?
2. What do you see as the fundamentals of MLMT? In what way does this approach differ from or build on previous programs/approaches? Is this a significant departure from other approaches/programs?
3. Can you describe how MLMT has been implemented here (eg staffing, scheduling, new approaches, buying new texts). To what extent has MLMT been implemented as directed?
4. What other literacy programs are being implemented in the school? Has MLMT's effectiveness been enhanced or hindered by other literacy initiative operating in the school.
5. What levels of support have been provided and by whom? How satisfactory have the levels of support been? How could the provision of support be improved?
6. What do see is the role of the Teaching Educator [If your school has one]? How effective has the Teaching Educator been in assisting you to implement MLMT? Is there anything you wanted the Teaching Educator to do that he/she did not do? [For those schools that do not have a teaching educator – Who made the decision for your school not to have a teaching educator? Are you aware of their role? Do you feel your school would benefit from having a teaching educator?]
7. How well suited do you feel MLMT is to the school setting? Are there components of MLMT that are easier/harder to implement in the school setting? What barriers have there been to MLMT's implementation? Why is that? How have you managed these issues?
8. Do you see MLMT as a two stream approach – (1) improving literacy for the class using new approaches and (2) individual interventions through Individual Learning Plans – or do you see it as one approach with several facets.

## *Engagement*

9. What has been the response of teachers and other school staff to MLMT? Has it been generally well-received? Why/why not?
10. What about any others who have been involved in MLMT? eg. education assistants, parents
11. Have some teachers engaged more than others? If so, which ones and why is this the case? Has staff turn over had any impact? Why/why not?

12. What about the students – are you able to comment on how they have responded to MLMT? What evidence or examples can you provide? How have Aboriginal students responded? How have students from ESL or LBOTE backgrounds responded?
13. What opportunities have you had to engage with other schools implementing MLMT? How useful have these been? Would you have liked better/different opportunities to engage with these schools? How frequently do you and your teachers utilise the NING? Do you find it a useful resource?

### *Impact on students and their educational outcomes*

We will be analysing data on educational outcomes as part of this evaluation. However, we are interested in any data or observations that you may have on this issue also.

14. In your view, has MLMT led to any improvements in students literacy skills? What evidence do you have for this? How does this compare to any other programs that you have been involved in?
15. Are there other benefits that have flowed to students since the introduction of MLMT?
16. To what extent is this occurring across the board? Are particular students or groups of students benefitting more than others (eg younger students, CALD students, students with particular learning problems etc)? If so why might this be the case?
17. Has the program improved students' access to different texts? How has the school facilitated access to a balanced array of reading lessons and activities?
18. Under the program, Reciprocal Teaching, Reader's Circle and Reader's Theatre are intended to be implemented and become part of daily teaching. Has this occurred? Why or why not? How useful have these three initiatives been? Have some been more useful than others?
19. [if possible] What about Aboriginal students – are you able to comment on the extent to which they have benefitted from MLMT? How does this compare with the educational outcomes for non-Aboriginal students? Is MLMT appropriate for/ work well with Aboriginal students? Why/why not? What if anything has been done/might be done to improve the effectiveness of MLMT for Aboriginal students?
20. What about ESL students or students with a LBOTE - are you able to comment on the extent to which they have benefitted from MLMT? How does this compare with the educational outcomes for non- ESL and non-LBOTE students? Is MLMT appropriate for/ work well with ESL or LBOTE students? Why/why not? What if anything has been done/might be done to improve the effectiveness of MLMT for ESL or LBOTE students?
21. Are there some students who are better/less suited to MLMT (as implemented in your school)? Why is that?
22. A key component of the program is intervention for students experiencing difficulty reading. What is the nature and frequency of such interventions? How effective have the interventions been? How different is the intervention for different students? Why is this so? Are parents actively engaged in the intervention?

### *Impact on teachers and schools*

23. What impact, if any, do you think MLMT has had on teachers? For instance, what if any impact has MLMT had on teachers' beliefs or confidence in teaching literacy? Has it impacted on their knowledge and awareness – if so how?
24. What new teaching strategies [if any] are teachers using that they were not using before? Have these new strategies enhanced teacher quality? If so, how have they done this?
25. A key component of MLMT is professional learning for teachers and other staff. What kinds of professional learning have teachers and other staff been given and how effective has this professional learning been? (*prompts: is it evidence-based, the time involved/intensity, does it provide specific enough guidance to staff, quality of written material?*)
26. What [if any] impact has the MLMT had at a broader school level? What evidence/examples can you provide for this? What factors have facilitated or hindered this?
27. How effectively have you and teachers at the school used the relevant data (and undertaken analysis) to inform effective practice at the school/classroom level? What sort of professional learning has been provided on data analysis? Has it been sufficient? What else could be done to improve understanding of relevant data?
28. What, if anything, might be done to enhance the effectiveness of MLMT?

### *System issues*

29. Was your school provided with enough information and sufficient support and guidance to effectively implement MLMT? Were the aims and objectives of MLMT explained to you by the CEO? Is there any additional support you would have liked but did not get?
30. What plans are there to continue using this program in this school?
31. How is this going to occur – eg will it be embedded in school planning and budgets?
32. What factors will impact on the sustainability of this program in schools?

### *Final comments*

33. In your experience, what is the value and effectiveness of this program in comparison with other programs and approaches to improving literacy?
34. Would you support its continual use in this school – why/why not?
35. Would you recommend it to others – on what basis?

*Thankyou very much for your time*



## Appendix B

## On-line Survey

# Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching Draft School Survey

This survey is to be completed by all staff that have been or are currently involved in managing, coordinating or implementing Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in Years 3-6. This survey will take around 15 - 20 minutes to complete, and will ask you about your experiences in being involved in Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, and your views about any impacts or benefits.

All relevant staff should complete the survey, including those that have already participated in an interview or focus group as part of the evaluation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching.

All responses will remain confidential.

## You and your school

1. What school do you work at?

- <sub>1</sub> St Nicholas of Myra, Penrith
- <sub>2</sub> St John's, Riverstone
- <sub>3</sub> St Francis of Assisi, Glendenning
- <sub>4</sub> Holy Trinity, Granville
- <sub>5</sub> Trinity, Kemps Creek
- <sub>6</sub> Sacred Heart, Mt Druitt South
- <sub>7</sub> St Aidan's, Rooty Hill
- <sub>8</sub> St Patrick's, Blacktown

2. How many students attend your school?

- <sub>1</sub> Less than 100
- <sub>2</sub> 100 – 199
- <sub>3</sub> 200 – 299
- <sub>4</sub> 300 – 399
- <sub>5</sub> 400 or more

3. What is your gender?

- <sub>1</sub> Male
- <sub>2</sub> Female

4. What age group are you in?

- <sub>1</sub> Under 25 years
- <sub>2</sub> 25 – 29
- <sub>3</sub> 30 – 39
- <sub>4</sub> 40 – 49

- <sub>5</sub> 50 – 59  
<sub>6</sub> 60 – 64  
<sub>7</sub> 65 years or over

5. For how many years have you been teaching or working in primary schools? (Exclude extensive time off eg parental leave)

- <sub>1</sub> Less than a year  
<sub>2</sub> 1 – 2 years  
<sub>3</sub> 3 – 5 years  
<sub>4</sub> 6 – 10 years  
<sub>5</sub> 11 – 20 years  
<sub>6</sub> 21 – 30 years  
<sub>7</sub> Over 30 years

6. For how many years have you been teaching or working in your *current* school?

- <sub>1</sub> Less than a year  
<sub>2</sub> 1 – 2 years  
<sub>3</sub> 3 – 5 years  
<sub>4</sub> 6 – 10 years  
<sub>5</sub> 11 – 20 years  
<sub>6</sub> 21 – 30 years  
<sub>7</sub> Over 30 years

7. Were you at your *current* school at the start of the implementation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching?

- <sub>1</sub> Yes  
<sub>2</sub> No  
<sub>3</sub> Not sure

8. Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent?

- <sub>1</sub> No  
<sub>2</sub> Yes, Aboriginal  
<sub>3</sub> Yes, Torres Strait Islander  
<sub>4</sub> Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

9. Which of the following best describes your employment?

- <sub>1</sub> Permanent – full-time
- <sub>2</sub> Permanent – part-time
- <sub>3</sub> Fixed term/contract – full-time
- <sub>4</sub> Fixed term/contract – part-time
- <sub>5</sub> Casual/relief
- <sub>6</sub> Other (please specify .....)

10. Which one of the following best describes your *main* role in implementing Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in your school?

- <sub>1</sub> Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching Lead Teacher
- <sub>2</sub> Principal
- <sub>3</sub> Assistant/Deputy Principal
- <sub>4</sub> Teacher – K to 2
- <sub>5</sub> Teacher – Year 3
- <sub>6</sub> Teacher – Year 4
- <sub>7</sub> Teacher – Year 5
- <sub>8</sub> Teacher – Year 6
- <sub>9</sub> Special Education/Needs Teacher
- <sub>10</sub> School Learning Support Officer/Teacher's Aide
- <sub>11</sub> Aboriginal Education Officer
- <sub>12</sub> Literacy Specialist Teacher
- <sub>13</sub> ESL Specialist
- <sub>14</sub> Other (please specify .....)

11. Are you or were you a member of the Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching Leadership Team in your school?

- <sub>1</sub> Yes
- <sub>2</sub> No

## Content and quality of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching training

12. Overall, how satisfied have you been with the internal professional learning support provided by the Teaching Educators?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
a) The <i>content</i> of the professional learning?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
b) The <i>quality</i> of the professional learning?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
c) The <i>relevance/usefulness</i> of accompanying resources?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

**(Answer Q13 only if answered 1, 2 or 3 to Q10, otherwise skip to Q14)**

13. How adequate was the support you received from the following sources?

	Very adequate	Adequate	Neither adequate nor inadequate	Inadequate	Very inadequate	Not applicable/I did not seek support
a) The Parramatta Catholic Education Office	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
b) Networking with other Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching schools in the Parramatta diocese	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

## Knowledge, attitudes and skills

14. To what extent has Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching impacted on each of the following?

	Major extent	Moderate extent	Minor extent	Not at all	Can't say/ Hard to say
a) Increased your knowledge about how students learn to read	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
b) Increased your skills in using diagnostic tools/data to assess students' literacy learning needs	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
c) Deepened your understanding of comprehension strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
d) Deepened your understanding of effective teaching of reading comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
e) Deepened your understanding of the nature and needs of literacy learners in Years 3-6	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
f) Increased your knowledge about the latest evidence on best practice in relation to teaching reading in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
g) Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve the literacy outcomes of low achieving/ disadvantaged students	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
h) Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve literacy outcomes of all students	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
i) Increased your willingness to participate in shared reflection and discussion of your teaching of reading	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
j) Increased your ability to translate literacy theory into practice	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

15. Do you have a role in *teaching* literacy in the classroom on a regular basis?

- <sub>1</sub> Yes (Go to Q16)  
<sub>2</sub> No (Go to Q19)

16. To what extent has Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching impacted on each of the following?

	Major extent	Moderate extent	Minor extent	Not at all	Can't say/ Hard to say
a) Increased your confidence in teaching reading	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
b) Improved your ability to teach comprehension effectively in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
c) Improved your ability to teach comprehension effectively to individual students	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
d) Increased your skills in using Guided Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
e) Increased your skills in using Reciprocal Teaching	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
f) Enhanced your ability to reflect on and critique your teaching of reading	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
g) Increased your skills in using Readers' Theatre	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
h) Increased your skills in using Readers' Circle	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
i) Improved your ability to question students in a way that demonstrates deep understanding of texts	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
j) Increased your willingness to seek feedback on your teaching of reading from colleagues and Teaching Educators (eg through teacher observation).	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
k) Increased your knowledge of how to cater to all literacy learning needs in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

## Teaching practice

17.a) Which of the following statements best describes how Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has impacted on your literacy *teaching practice*?

- <sub>1</sub> Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had a *significant positive* impact on the way I teach reading in my classroom (Go to Q17(b))
- <sub>2</sub> Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had *some positive* impact on the way I teach reading in my classroom (Go to Q17(b))
- <sub>3</sub> Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had *little if any positive* impact on the way I teach reading in my classroom (Go to Q17(b))
- <sub>4</sub> Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had a *negative* impact on the way I teach reading in my classroom (Go to Q17(b))
- <sub>5</sub> Hard to say (Go to Q19)

b) Why do you feel Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had this impact on the way you teach reading in your classroom?

Please specify .....

.....

.....

**(For those who answered 1 or 2 to Question 17(a), go to Q18. For those who answered 3 or 4 to Q17(a) go to Q19)**

18. Please list the three key changes to your teaching practice that have occurred since implementing Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching?

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

## Critical factors

19. Thinking of the different components of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, how important were each of the following in improving your teaching of reading?

	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	No improvement in my teaching of reading	Not applicable / Hard to say
a) The external professional learning activities eg, symposium on Reader's Theatre	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>



	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	No improvement in my teaching of reading	Not applicable / Hard to say
b) Ability to reflect on and critique your literacy teaching practice	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
c) Ability to obtain feedback on your literacy teaching practice through teacher observation	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
d) In-school support from the Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching Leadership Team	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
e) In-school support from other teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
f) In-school support from the Teaching Educators	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
g) Observing colleagues modelling lessons or strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
h) Observing Teaching Educators modelling lessons or strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
i) Access to the NING	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
j) Access to useful professional learning resources (eg recommended articles, teaching guides for reading comprehension,)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
k) The amount of time you were given to participate in professional learning workshops and activities	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
l) Regular ongoing opportunities for professional learning	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

## Student outcomes

20. Since the introduction of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, what, if any, improvements or changes have you observed in students?

	Significant improvement	Some improvement	A little improvement	No improvement	Hard to say
a) Students' enthusiasm for reading	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
b) The <i>volume</i> of reading undertaken	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
c) The <i>complexity</i> of texts read	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
d) The <i>variety</i> of texts read	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
e) Students' confidence in reading	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
f) Students' ability to read for meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
g) Students' willingness to discuss what they have read	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
h) Students' understanding of what is expected of them when they read	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
i) Students' use of effective strategies to assist them understand and read text	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
j) Students' reading skills	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
k) Students' literacy levels more broadly	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
l) Students' enthusiasm for their other schoolwork (beyond literacy)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

21.a) Compared to non-Aboriginal students, how effective do you think Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has been in improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal students?

- <sub>1</sub> More effective than for non-Aboriginal students (Go to Q21b)
- <sub>2</sub> As effective as for non-Aboriginal students (ie no difference) (Go to Q21b)
- <sub>3</sub> Less effective than for non-Aboriginal students (Go to Q21b)
- <sub>4</sub> Not sure/hard to say (Go to Q21b)
- <sub>5</sub> Not applicable as there are no Aboriginal students participating in MLMT at my school. (Go to Q22)

b) Why is this (please specify)?

.....

.....

.....

22. Compared to non-ESL/LBOTE students, how effective do you think Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has been in improving educational outcomes for ESL/LBOTE students

- <sub>1</sub> More effective than for non-ESL/LBOTE students (Go to Q22c)
- <sub>2</sub> As effective as for non-ESL/LBOTE students (ie no difference) (Go to Q22c)
- <sub>3</sub> Less effective than for non-ESL/LBOTE students (Go to Q22c)
- <sub>4</sub> Not sure/hard to say (Go to Q22c)
- <sub>5</sub> Not applicable as there are no ESL/LBOTE students participating in MLMT at my school. (Go to Q23)

c) Why is this (please specify)?

.....

.....

.....

23. How effective is Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in improving the educational outcomes of the following student groups?

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	Not applicable / Hard to say
a) All students	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
b) Students above NAPLAN benchmarks	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
c) Students below NAPLAN benchmarks	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
d) Aboriginal students	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
e) ESL/LBOTE students	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
f) Student with a learning disability	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

24. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Hard to say
a) Since the introduction of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, there is now more clarity about my school's goals and expectations re reading outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
b) Most teachers in my school are using the teaching strategies they learnt through Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in their everyday teaching across KLAs.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
c) Through participating in Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, teaching of reading in my school is now more explicit and focussed	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
d) There is strong leadership support for Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in my school	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
e) I have a sound understanding of the Timperley Inquiry Cycle	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Hard to say
f) Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching was well planned and implemented by the Parramatta Catholic Education Office	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
g) Helen Timperley's Inquiry Cycle provided a sound basis for the implementation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in my school	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
h) I received good support and guidance on how to implement Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in my class/school	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
i) The aims and objectives of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching are clear to me	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
j) There is a clear pathway for sustaining Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching improvements/approach in the school beyond the funding period	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
k) Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has resulted in greater transparency and consistency in the way literacy is taught in my school	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
l) There is strong alignment between Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching and other programs/initiatives being implemented at the diocese level	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4a</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
m) I would recommend the use of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in other schools	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
n) It is clear how Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching is operationalised at both the whole-of-class and at the individual student level	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
o) Support for Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching at my school has grown over time	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>

25. Overall, how effective do you think Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has been in improving the reading outcomes for students?

- <sub>1</sub> Very effective
- <sub>2</sub> Effective
- <sub>3</sub> Neither effective nor ineffective
- <sub>4</sub> Not very effective
- <sub>5</sub> Not at all effective
- <sub>6</sub> Too soon to say
- <sub>7</sub> Hard to say

26. a) Can you think of any way that Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching (or its implementation) could be improved?

- <sub>1</sub> Yes (Go to Q26b)
- <sub>2</sub> No (Finish survey)

b) What suggestions do you have about how Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching or its implementation could be improved?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for completing this survey

## Appendix C

## Full Findings of the Survey



A

$$5 + 6 = 11$$

Z

External Evaluation of the Selected National Partnership  
on Literacy and Numeracy NSW Programs

## Evaluation of Mindful Learning, Mindful Teaching

ONLINE SURVEY REPORT

Prepared for NSW Department of Education and Communities  
2011

urbis



**URBIS STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS REPORT WERE:**

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## Key Findings

School staff involved in the implementation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching (MLMT) were invited to participate in an online survey, which was designed to capture their views on and experience with MLMT.

- A total of 76 school staff completed the survey, and were representative of seven of the eight schools in the Parramatta Diocese that implemented MLMT under the National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy.
- Respondents were mainly female and had fairly high levels of experience teaching in primary schools, with most having worked in primary schools for more than ten years.
- A fairly consistent number of responses were received from Executive staff, Stage 3 teachers and Stage 2 teachers. Interestingly, the highest number of responses came from K-2 teachers.
- Overall, respondents reported that MLMT had been effective in improving literacy teaching in schools. School staff said MLMT had positive impacts on their knowledge and skills; classroom and literacy teaching practice; and on students' engagement with reading.

Key findings for each of the main topics addressed in the survey are outlined below.

### KEY OUTCOMES FOR TEACHERS

- Overall, teachers reported that MLMT had a positive impact on the way they taught literacy in the classroom, with more than half of teachers indicating MLMT had a *significant positive impact*.
- All school staff reported that MLMT had an impact on their knowledge, attitudes and/or skills, with the biggest impact being a deepened understanding of comprehension strategies.
  - Stage 2 teachers, as well as those teachers who had between six and ten years' teaching experience, were more likely than other teachers to report higher levels of positive impact. These teachers particularly noted that MLMT had increased their knowledge about how students learn to read, as well as deepened their understanding of the nature and needs of literacy learners in Years 3-6.
- Of those respondents who had a classroom teaching role, the majority reported that MLMT had a positive impact on their classroom teaching practice, particularly in:
  - enhancing their ability to reflect on and critique their teaching of reading; and
  - improving their ability to question students in a way that demonstrates deep understanding of texts.
- Again, Stage 2 teachers were more likely than other teachers to report a greater degree of positive impact on their teaching practice, particularly noting
  - increases in their confidence in teaching reading; and
  - increases in their knowledge of how to cater to all literacy learning needs in the classroom.
- Teachers who had more than 11 years' experience also reported greater impacts on their classroom teaching practice.
- The most commonly reported change to teaching practice since the implementation of MLMT was the use of literacy teaching strategies, such as Readers' Theatre and Guided Reading.

## KEY OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

- Overall, the majority of respondents reported that MLMT had been effective in improving literacy outcomes for all students
  - specialist aides/support staff and Executive staff were more likely to report that MLMT had been effective in improving outcomes for students
  - teachers who had 20 years or more experience were more likely than other teachers to report that MLMT had been very effective for students.
- School staff reported they had observed a significant improvement in students' ability and capacity to engage in literacy since the introduction of MLMT. The key areas of improvement related to:
  - students' enthusiasm for reading
  - students' understanding of what is expected of them when they read
  - students' use of effective strategies to assist them understand and read text.
- In line with earlier findings, Stage 2 teachers were more likely than other teachers to report observed improvements in students' capability and engagement with reading. K-2 teachers were the least likely to report observed improvements in students' confidence in reading.
- School staff reported that MLMT was effective in improving educational outcomes for all student groups
  - the survey specifically asked teachers about the effectiveness of MLMT for Aboriginal students and students with English as a Second Language (ESL) or a Language Background other than English (LBOTE). Overall, respondents reported that MLMT catered equally to the needs of all students, and was improving literacy levels for all students at similar rates.

## IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL

- School staff reported that since the implementation of MLMT there was more clarity around the school's goals and expectations of reading outcomes, and that teaching of reading was more explicit and focused than it had been previously.
- Teachers reported there was strong leadership and support for MLMT in their schools, and most respondents reported that there was a clear pathway for sustaining it in their school beyond the funding period.

## SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Of the 76 teachers completing the survey, 14 respondents put forward suggestions for improving MLMT. This group was primarily composed of teachers with more than ten years teaching experience, who were members of the Executive staff and who had been at their school at the start of the implementation of MLMT.

- The most commonly reported suggestions for improving MLMT included:
  - the continuation and/or enhancement of the Teaching Educator role in schools
  - the provision of ongoing training and support
  - the continued provision of resources
  - increased networking and sharing among other schools involved.

# 1 Design and conduct of the survey

## 1.1 SURVEY DESIGN

The survey was designed to capture the views and experiences of school staff who have been involved in the implementation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching (MLMT). The survey was targeted at class room teachers, as well as executive staff (eg Principals, Assistant Principals) and staff who provide assistance with teaching literacy (Reading Recovery assistants, literacy coordinators, and teaching librarians).

The key topics addressed in the design of the survey were:

- the content and quality of MLMT training
- teaching practice
- critical factors
- student outcomes
- impact on schools

The survey questionnaire is attached at Appendix B of this report.

## 1.2 SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the survey was through an online survey method. The total sample comprised 76 school staff.

## 2 Respondents

### 2.1 SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

A total of 76 school staff completed the survey. In total, the respondents represented seven of the eight (88%) schools in the Parramatta Diocese that implemented MLMT under the National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy.

Of the seven schools that responded, three had less than 200 students. The remaining schools were larger, with two schools having 200–399 students and two schools having over 400 students.

### 2.2 PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Of the 76 teachers who completed the survey, the majority (88%) were female, with 12% male respondents. As shown in Table 1 below, around half (55%) of the respondents were aged 40 years and over, while around one quarter (28%) were aged between 30 and 39 years.

TABLE 1 – AGE BY GENDER (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AGE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Under 25 years	3	0	2
25-29 years	14	0	11
30 – 39 years	28	2	19
40 – 59 years	47	4	32
60 years and over	8	3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

No respondents identified themselves as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

### 2.3 RESPONDENT ROLE AND EXPERIENCE

#### 2.3.1 EXPERIENCE

Respondents had fairly high levels of experience teaching in primary schools. As shown in Table 2 below, over half the respondents (57%) had been working in primary schools for more than ten years, and 42% had over 20 years' experience. Relatively few respondents were recently qualified.

TABLE 2 – YEARS TEACHING/WORKING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

YEARS	TOTAL %
2 years or less	6.6
3 – 5 years	13.2
6 – 10 years	23.7
11 – 20 years	14.5
Over 20 years	42.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents were also asked to specify how long they had been working at their current school. As can be seen in Table 3, more than half the respondents (57%) had been working at their current school for six

years or longer, while one third of respondents (34%) had been based at their current school for between one and five years.

TABLE 3 – YEARS TEACHING/WORKING AT CURRENT SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

YEARS	TOTAL %
Less than a year	9.2
1 – 2 years	13.2
3 – 5 years	21.1
6 – 10 years	31.5
11 – 20 years	21
Over 20 years	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

MLMT was implemented in schools in 2009. The majority of respondents (77%) indicated that they were at their current school at the start of the implementation of MLMT.

The majority of respondents (74%) were employed at their school on a full time basis (62% permanent, 12% fixed term/contract), while one quarter of respondents worked part time (16% permanent, 9% fixed term/contract) and only 1% worked at their school on a casual or relief basis.

### 2.3.2 ROLE IMPLEMENTING MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING

Teachers were asked to indicate their *main* role in implementing MLMT in their school. As shown in Table 4, there was a fairly similar number of responses from Executive staff (17%), Stage 3 (18%) and Stage 2 (16%) teachers. Interestingly, the highest numbers of respondents were K-2 teachers (21%).

MLMT was targeted at Stages 2 and 3; however some schools adopted a whole-school approach using elements of MLMT in Stage 1. Many of the respondents who are currently K-2 teachers may also have taught a Stage 2 or 3 class since MLMT’s implementation.

TABLE 4 – MAIN ROLE IMPLEMENTING MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING IN THE SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

ROLE	TOTAL
Executive (Principal/ Deputy Principal)	17.1
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching Lead Teacher	2.6
Teacher K-2	21.0
Teacher Stage 2 (3/4)	15.8
Teacher Stage 3 (5/6)	18.4
Specialist teacher/ aide/ other support*	6.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Includes: SLSO/Teacher’s Aide, Numeracy Specialist Teacher, Special Education/ Needs Teacher, and Admin Support

Respondents were also asked whether they were or had been a member of the MLMT Leadership Team in their school. In total, 40% of respondents reported they were or had been part of the Leadership Team. This group comprised experienced staff who had been teaching for at least six years, with 65% having taught for more than 20 years. Just under half (45%) of these respondents also indicated they had been at their current school since the implementation of MLMT.



## 3 Outcomes for teachers

### 3.1 SATISFACTION WITH PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT

Respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the internal professional learning support provided by the Teaching Educators. Teaching Educators (TEs) were provided by the CEO (Parramatta) to assist the implementation of MLMT.

As shown in Table 5, overall the majority of respondents reported high levels of total satisfaction (*very satisfied* or *satisfied*) with the internal support provided by the TEs. Around four-fifths of the respondents were satisfied with the *content of the professional learning* (83%) and the *quality of the professional learning* (80%). Around three-quarters of respondents were satisfied with the *relevance/usefulness of accompanying resources* (76%).

Overall, Executive staff were more satisfied with *the relevance/usefulness of resources* than teachers K-6; while teachers K-6 were more satisfied with the *quality of the professional learning* than Executive staff.

TABLE 5 –SATISFACTION WITH THE INTERNAL PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE TEACHING EDUCATORS

	TOTAL SATISFACTION	EXECUTIVE	TEACHERS (K-6)
The <i>content</i> of the professional learning	82.9	84.6	81.4
The <i>quality</i> of the professional learning	80.3	76.9	81.7
The <i>relevance/usefulness</i> of accompanying resources	76.3	84.6	72.4

### 3.2 SATISFACTION WITH EXTERNAL SUPPORT RECEIVED

Respondents who indicated they were a member of the School Executive (ie Principal or Assistant Principal) or MLMT Lead Teachers were asked a question about the *adequacy* of support they had received from external sources and through networking. Adequacy is presented in terms of *total adequacy* which comprises *very adequate* and *adequate* responses.

As shown in Table 6, overall, respondents felt that the level of external support had been adequate, particularly the support derived from networking with other MLMT schools.

TABLE 6 – ADEQUACY OF SUPPORT FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES (PERCENTAGE OF EXECUTIVE SUPPORT AND LEAD TEACHERS)

SOURCE	TOTAL ADEQUACY	VERY ADEQUATE	ADEQUATE	INADEQUATE
The Parramatta Catholic Education Office	93.3	13.3	80	6.7
Networking with other Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching schools in the Parramatta Diocese	100	46.7	53.3	-

### 3.3 KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND SKILLS

Respondents were provided with a series of outcome statements relating to the *impact* of MLMT on their knowledge, attitudes and skills, and were asked to indicate the extent to which MLMT had had an impact on each. These responses are presented in Table 7 below, including a calculation of *total impact*, which comprises the combined set of *major extent* and *moderate extent* responses.

TABLE 7 – IMPACT ON TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND SKILLS (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	MAJOR EXTENT	MODERATE EXTENT	MINOR EXTENT	NOT AT ALL
Increased your knowledge about how students learn to read	80.2	35.5	44.7	14.5	2.6
Increased your skills in using diagnostic tools/data to assess students' literacy learning needs	67.2	21.1	46.1	30.3	-
Deepened your understanding of comprehension strategies	92.1	56.6	35.5	5.3	-
Deepened your understanding of effective teaching of reading comprehension	89.5	56.6	32.9	7.9	-
Deepened your understanding of the nature and needs of literacy learners in Years 3-6	82.9	40.8	42.1	14.5	-
Increased your knowledge about the latest evidence on best practice in relation to teaching reading in the classroom	85.5	43.4	42.1	11.8	-
Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve the literacy outcomes of low achieving/ disadvantaged students	84.2	47.4	36.8	10.5	1.3
Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve literacy outcomes of all students	90.8	47.4	43.4	6.6	1.3
Increased your willingness to participate in shared reflection and discussion of your teaching of reading	89.5	48.7	40.8	6.6	1.3
Increased your ability to translate literacy theory into practice	85.5	31.6	53.9	11.8	-

As shown in Table 7 for all outcome statements the majority of teachers reported that MLMT had had an impact on their knowledge, attitudes and/or skills. The areas reported to have had the greatest impact for respondents were:

- *Deepened your understanding of comprehension strategies (92% total impact; 57% to a major extent)*
- *Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve literacy outcomes of all students (91% total impact; 47% to a major extent)*
- *Deepened your understanding of effective teaching of reading comprehension (90% total impact; 57% to a major extent)*
- *Increased your willingness to participate in shared reflection and discussion of your teaching of reading (90% total impact; 57% to a major extent).*

The one area that had the least impact on respondent's knowledge, attitudes and/or skills was:

- Increased your skills in using diagnostic tools/data to assess students' literacy learning needs (67%).

For each outcome statement, there was only a small minority of teachers who reported no impact on their knowledge, attitudes and/or skills as a result of implementing MLMT.

In general, a greater proportion of Executive staff and specialist teachers/aides reported that MLMT had impacted on their knowledge, attitudes and skills in teaching literacy. Among teachers, Stage 2 teachers were more likely than other teachers to report higher levels of positive impact. In particular, Stage 2 teachers were more likely to report that MLMT had:

- *Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve literacy outcomes of all students (100% positive impact)*
- *Deepened your understanding of the nature and needs of literacy learners in Years 3-6 (92% positive impact)*
- *Increased your knowledge about how students learn to read (83% positive impact).*

TABLE 8 – IMPACT ON TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND SKILLS BY ROLE

IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	EXECUTIVE	K-2 TEACHERS	STAGE 2 TEACHERS	STAGE 3 TEACHERS	SPECIALIST/ AIDES
Increased your knowledge about how students learn to read	80.2	92.3	68.8	83.4	71.5	88.9
Increased your skills in using diagnostic tools/data to assess students' literacy learning needs	67.2	84.6	56.3	50.0	64.3	77.8
Deepened your understanding of comprehension strategies	92.1	100	93.8	91.7	92.9	88.8
Deepened your understanding of effective teaching of reading comprehension	89.5	100	87.5	83.4	85.8	100
Deepened your understanding of the nature and needs of literacy learners in Years 3-6	82.9	100	75.0	91.7	71.5	77.8
Increased your knowledge about the latest evidence on best practice in relation to teaching reading in the classroom	85.5	92.3	81.3	83.4	85.8	88.9
Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve the literacy outcomes of low achieving/disadvantaged students	84.2	84.6	87.6	75.0	85.7	88.8
Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve literacy outcomes of all students	90.8	92.3	93.8	100	85.7	77.8
Increased your willingness to participate in shared reflection and discussion of your teaching of reading	89.5	92.3	87.6	91.6	85.8	88.9
Increased your ability to translate literacy theory into practice	85.5	100	75.0	83.4	85.7	88.9

Considering the responses according to the teachers' level of experience reveals notable variation in the extent of the reported impact on attitudes, knowledge and skills (see Table 9). Interestingly, respondents who were at an early stage in their careers were much *less* likely to report a positive impact resulting from their participation in MLMT than those respondents who were more experienced teachers (the small sample size needs to be borne in mind when considering these results).

Overall, a higher proportion of teachers with six to 10 years' experience reported the highest degree of positive impacts in the following areas:

- *Deepened your understanding of comprehension strategies (100% positive impact)*
- *Increased your willingness to participate in shared reflection and discussion of your teaching of reading (100% positive impact)*
- *Increased your ability to translate literacy theory into practice (94% positive impact)*
- *Increased your knowledge about how students learn to read (94% positive impact)*
- *Deepened your understanding of the nature and needs of literacy learners in Years 3-6 (94% positive impact).*

TABLE 9 – IMPACT ON TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND SKILLS BY YEARS TEACHING EXPERIENCE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	2 YEARS OR LESS	3-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS	11-20 YEARS	20 OR MORE
Increased your knowledge about how students learn to read	80.2	60.0	90.0	94.4	72.8	75.0
Increased your skills in using diagnostic tools/data to assess students' literacy learning needs	67.2	20.0	60.0	77.8	63.7	71.9
Deepened your understanding of comprehension strategies	92.1	80.0	90.0	100	90.9	90.7
Deepened your understanding of effective teaching of reading comprehension	89.5	60.0	90.0	94.5	90.9	90.6
Deepened your understanding of the nature and needs of literacy learners in Years 3-6	82.9	60.0	80.0	94.5	81.9	81.3
Increased your knowledge about the latest evidence on best practice in relation to teaching reading in the classroom	85.5	60.0	80.0	100	81.8	84.4
Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve the literacy outcomes of low achieving/ disadvantaged students	84.2	40.0	80.0	94.4	91.0	84.4
Increased your belief in teachers' ability to improve literacy outcomes of all students	90.8	80.0	90.0	100	100	84.4
Increased your willingness to participate in shared reflection and discussion of your teaching of reading	89.5	60.0	90.0	100	81.8	90.6
Increased your ability to translate literacy theory into practice	85.5	60.0	90.0	94.4	72.8	87.5

### 3.4 IMPACT ON CLASSROOM TEACHING PRACTICE

The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they had a role in teaching literacy in the classroom on a regular basis. Of the 76 respondents completing the survey, 62 (82%) indicated that they regularly undertook classroom teaching. Those respondents who reported having a classroom teaching role were then asked a number of questions relating to the *impact* of MLMT on their literacy teaching practice.

Teachers were firstly provided with a series of outcome statements relating to the impact of MLMT on elements of their classroom teaching practice, and were asked to indicate the extent to which MLMT had had an impact on each. As shown in Table 10, for all outcome statements the majority of teachers reported that MLMT had had an impact on their classroom teaching practice. The areas that had been impacted for the highest proportion of respondents were:

- *Enhanced your ability to reflect on and critique your teaching of reading (94%)*
- *Improved your ability to question students in a way that demonstrates deep understanding of texts (92%)*
- *Improved your ability to teach comprehension effectively in the classroom (92%).*

For each outcomes statement, there was only a small minority of teachers who reported no impact on their classroom teaching practice as a result of implementing Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching.

TABLE 10 – IMPACT ON CLASSROOM TEACHING PRACTICE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS) \*

IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT**	MAJOR EXTENT	MODERATE EXTENT	MINOR EXTENT	NOT AT ALL	HARD TO SAY
Increased your confidence in teaching reading	82.3	45.2	37.1	14.5	3.2	-
Improved your ability to teach comprehension effectively in the classroom	91.9	51.6	40.3	6.5	1.6	-
Improved your ability to teach comprehension effectively to individual students	87.1	45.2	41.9	12.9	-	-
Increased your skills in using Guided Reading	79.0	38.7	40.3	19.4	1.6	-
Increased your skills in using Reciprocal Teaching	77.4	46.8	30.6	12.9	4.8	4.8
Enhanced your ability to reflect on and critique your teaching of reading	93.5	38.7	54.8	4.8	-	1.6
Increased your skills in using Readers' Theatre	79.0	43.5	35.5	14.5	6.5	-
Increased your skills in using Readers' Circle	74.2	37.1	37.1	16.1	6.5	3.2
Improved your ability to question students in a way that demonstrates deep understanding of texts	91.9	48.4	43.5	8.1	-	-
Increased your willingness to seek feedback on your teaching of reading from colleagues and Teaching Educators (eg through teacher observation).	75.8	38.7	37.1	12.9	4.8	6.5
Increased your knowledge of how to cater to all literacy learning needs in the classroom	82.3	37.1	45.2	14.5	1.6	1.6

\*Note this question was answered only by respondents with a regular classroom teaching role

\*\* 'Total impact' comprise *major extend and moderate extent* responses

Similar to the findings for reported impacts on attitudes, knowledge and skills, Stage 2 teachers were more likely than other teachers to report a greater degree of positive impact on their teaching practices

resulting from their participation in MLMT. In particular higher impacts were reported among Stage 2 teachers in the following areas:

- *Increased your confidence in teaching reading*
- *Increased your skills in using Guided Reading*
- *Increased your skills in using Reader's Circle*
- *Increased your knowledge of how to cater to all literacy learning needs in the classroom.*

TABLE 11 – IMPACT ON CLASSROOM TEACHING PRACTICE BY ROLE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)\*

IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	EXECUTIVE	K-2 TEACHERS	STAGE 2 TEACHERS	STAGE 3 TEACHERS	SPECIALIST /AIDES
Increased your confidence in teaching reading	82.3	100	87.6	91.6	64.3	75.0
Improved your ability to teach comprehension effectively in the classroom	91.9	100	93.8	100	78.6	87.5
Improved your ability to teach comprehension effectively to individual students	87.1	100	87.6	91.7	78.6	87.5
Increased your skills in using Guided Reading	79.0	100	75.0	91.7	57.1	87.5
Increased your skills in using Reciprocal Teaching	77.4	100	75.0	75.0	85.8	62.5
Enhanced your ability to reflect on and critique your teaching of reading	93.5	100	81.3	91.6	100	100
Increased your skills in using Readers' Theatre	79.0	100	81.3	75.0	57.2	100
Increased your skills in using Reader's Circle	74.2	100	50.1	91.7	78.6	62.5
Improved your ability to question students in a way that demonstrates deep understanding of texts	91.9	100	93.8	83.3	85.7	100
Increased your willingness to seek feedback on your teaching of reading from colleagues and Teaching Educators (eg through teacher observation).	75.8	100	68.8	83.3	78.6	62.5
Increased your knowledge of how to cater to all literacy learning needs in the classroom	82.3	100	75.1	91.7	64.3	87.5

\*Note this question was answered only by respondents with a regular classroom teaching role

An analysis of teachers' level of experience showed no major variation in the extent of impact reported as shown in Table 12. Overall teachers who had greater than three years' experience were more likely to report a higher degree of positive impact on their classroom teaching practice than teachers who were at

an early stage of their career. In particular a higher proportion of teachers with 11 or more years' experience, reported higher impacts in the following areas:

- *Increased your skills in using Reciprocal Teaching*
- *Increased your willingness to seek feedback on your teaching of reading from colleagues and Teaching Educators (eg through teacher observation).*

TABLE 12 – IMPACT ON CLASSROOM TEACHING PRACTICE BY YEARS TEACHING EXPERIENCE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS) \*

IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	2 EYARS OR LESS	3-5 YEARS	6-10 YERS	11-20 YEARS	20 YEARS OR MORE
Increased your confidence in teaching reading	82.3	80.0	100	76.5	88.9	77.3
Improved your ability to teach comprehension effectively in the classroom	91.9	100	100	100	100	77.2
Improved your ability to teach comprehension effectively to individual students	87.1	60.0	100	94.2	100	77.3
Increased your skills in using Guided Reading	79.0	100	88.9	82.4	88.8	63.6
Increased your skills in using Reciprocal Teaching	77.4	60.0	77.8	94.2	100	59.1
Enhanced your ability to reflect on and critique your teaching of reading	93.5	60.0	100	94.2	100	95.4
Increased your skills in using Readers' Theatre	79.0	80.0	77.7	76.5	88.9	77.3
Increased your skills in using Readers' Circle	74.2	60.0	88.9	82.4	77.7	63.6
Improved your ability to question students in a way that demonstrates deep understanding of texts	91.9	80.0	100	100	100	81.8
Increased your willingness to seek feedback on your teaching of reading from colleagues and Teaching Educators (eg through teacher observation).	75.8	60.0	77.8	76.5	100	68.2
Increased your knowledge of how to cater to all literacy learning needs in the classroom	82.3	60.0	88.9	94.1	88.9	72.8

\*Note this question was answered only by respondents with a regular classroom teaching role

### 3.4.1 IMPACT ON OVERALL LITERACY TEACHING PRACTICE

Teachers with a regular classroom teaching role were then asked to select from a list of statements to describe the *overall impact* of MLMT on their literacy teaching practice. The responses are summarised in Table 13 below, including an analysis by main role in implementing MLMT.

Overall, teachers reported that MLMT had had a *positive impact* on the way they teach literacy in the classroom. Just over half (55%) of the respondents indicated MLMT had had a *significant positive impact*, and 44% identified *some positive impact* on the way they teach literacy. Executive staff were most likely to identify a *significant positive impact* (80%), followed by Stage 3 teachers (57%). A small number (6%) of K-2 teachers reported it was *hard to say* the impact MLMT had on their literacy teaching practice.

No respondents indicated that MLMT had had *little if any, or a negative impact* on their literacy teaching practice.

TABLE 13 – OVERALL IMPACT OF MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING ON LITERACY TEACHING PRACTICE BY ROLE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)\*

STATEMENT	TOTAL	EXECUTIVE	TEACHER K-2	TEACHER STAGE 2	TEACHER STAGE 3	SPECIALIST/AIDE/OTHER SUPPORT
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had a <i>significant positive impact</i> on the way I teach reading in my classroom	54.8	80	37.5	50	57.1	50
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had <i>some positive impact</i> on the way I teach reading in my classroom	43.5	20	56.3	50	42.9	50
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had <i>little if any positive impact</i> on the way I teach reading in my	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has had a <i>negative impact</i> on the way I teach reading in my classroom	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hard to say	1.6	-	6.3	-	-	6.3

\*Note this question was answered only by respondents with a regular classroom teaching role

In line with earlier findings on the impact of MLMT on key elements of literacy teaching, respondents who had over 10 years’ teaching experience were more likely to report a greater degree of positive impact (67%) on their teaching practice. One-fifth (20%) of teachers who were in earlier stages of their career (less than two years) reported it was *hard to say* the impact of MLMT on their literacy teaching practice.

Respondents were also asked to specify why they felt MLMT had had this impact on their literacy teaching practice. The most common responses provided by those respondents reporting a *significant positive impact* or *some positive impact* on their literacy teaching practice included:

- increased confidence among teachers
- the provision of new literacy teaching strategies
- an increased focus and emphasis on comprehension
- providing teachers with an enhanced ability to understand students’ needs
- encouraging teachers to be more reflective and explicit in their teaching and learning
- increased professional learning, staff sharing and engagement



- a greater whole-of-school focus on literacy, including literacy block planning, teaching strategies and sharing knowledge
- increased focus on utilising available data.

### 3.4.2 KEY CHANGES TO TEACHING PRACTICE SINCE IMPLEMENTING MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING

Teachers with a regular classroom teaching role who reported a *significant positive impact* or *some positive impact* on their literacy teaching practice were then asked in an open-ended question to nominate *three key changes* to their teaching practice that had occurred since implementing MLMT. These responses are summarised in Table 14 below.

The most commonly mentioned changes to teaching practice were; the use of literacy teaching strategies, such as Reader’s Theatre, Guided Reading, Reader’s Circle and Think Alouds (15%); and also a better understanding of the various strategies to use when teaching reading comprehension (11%).

TABLE 14 – KEY CHANGES TO TEACHING PRACTICE

CHANGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
A stronger emphasis and focus on comprehension	10.0	5.4
More reflective on teaching practice	4.0	2.1
Enhanced understanding of students needs	14.0	7.6
More/increased strategies for teachers to use when teaching literacy, reading and comprehension	20.0	11.0
Greater analysis, interpretation and utilisation of data	12.0	6.5
Reciprocal teaching strategies	15.0	8.1
Readers Theater’s /Guided Reading/Reader’s Circle/Think Alouds	27.0	15
Structure of literacy block	7.0	3.8
Deeper questioning skills/techniques	12.0	3.8
Focus on explicit teaching	7.0	3.8
Collaboration among staff	9.0	4.9
Changes to planning/programming	9.0	4.9
Increase in resources	8.0	4.3
Greater staff engagement, conversations around teaching literacy and comprehension	4.0	2.1
Providing students with more strategies to use	10.0	5.4
Professional learning/development	2.0	1.0
Other	10.0	5.4
Whole-of-School approach	2.0	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Note this question was answered only by respondents with a regular classroom teaching role

### 3.5 CRITICAL FACTORS

Respondents with a regular classroom teaching role were presented with a set of different components of MLMT and were asked to rate how *important* each of the elements had been in improving their teaching of reading. These responses are presented in Table 15 below, including a calculation of *total importance*, which comprises the combined set of *very important* and *important* responses.

As Table 15 shows, the factors deemed important in improving teaching of reading by the highest proportion of teachers were (in terms of *total importance*):

- *Regular ongoing opportunities for professional learning (97%)*
- *Ability to reflect on and critique your literacy teaching practice (93%)*
- *In-school support from other teachers (93%)*
- *The amount of time you were given to participate in professional learning workshops and activities (92%).*

The elements nominated as *very important* by the highest proportion of respondents were in-school support received from other teachers (47%) and regular opportunities for professional learning (43%).

The elements *least* frequently nominated as an important factor in improving reading teaching were (in terms of *total importance*):

- *In-school support from the Teaching Educators (70%)*
- *Access to the NING (68%)*
- *Observing Teaching Educators modelling lessons or strategies (59%).*

TABLE 15 – CRITICAL FACTORS IN IMPROVING LITERACY TEACHING (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

FACTOR	TOTAL IMPORTANCE	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	NO IMPROVEMENT IN MY TEACHING OF READING	NOT APPLICABLE/HARD TO SAY
The external professional learning activities eg, symposium on Reader's Theatre	71.1	21.1	50.0	14.5	2.6	3.9	7.9
Ability to reflect on and critique your literacy teaching practice	93.4	34.2	59.2	2.6	-	-	3.9
Ability to obtain feedback on your literacy teaching practice through teacher observation	86.8	31.6	55.3	2.6	1.3	-	9.2
In-school support from the Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching Leadership Team	85.5	32.9	52.6	6.6	-	1.3	6.6
In-school support from other teachers	93.4	47.4	46.1	3.9	-	-	2.6
In-school support from the Teaching Educators	69.7	30.3	39.5	11.8	2.6	3.9	11.8
Observing colleagues modelling lessons or strategies	88.2	36.8	51.3	2.6	2.6	-	6.6
Observing Teaching Educators modelling lessons or strategies	59.2	17.1	42.1	6.6	7.9	1.3	25
Access to the NING	68.4	9.2	59.2	22.4	2.6	1.3	5.3

FACTOR	TOTAL IMPORTANCE	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	NO IMPROVEMENT IN MY TEACHING OF READING	NOT APPLICABLE/HARD TO SAY
Access to useful professional learning resources (eg recommended articles, teaching guides for reading comprehension)	88.2	32.9	55.3	7.9	2.6	-	1.3
The amount of time you were given to participate in professional learning workshops and activities	92.1	35.5	56.6	6.6	-	-	1.3
Regular ongoing opportunities for professional learning	97.4	43.4	53.9	-	-	-	2.6

\*Note this question was answered only by respondents with a regular classroom teaching role

## 4 Outcomes for students

### 4.1 OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

The questionnaire sought respondents' views on the impact of MLMT on students at their school. School staff were asked to rate the *overall effectiveness* of MLMT in improving literacy outcomes for students. The responses are summarised in Table 16 below, including an analysis of these results by school role.

Overall, the majority of respondents (90%) reported that MLMT had been *effective* or *very effective* in improving literacy outcomes for students. Among teachers there were no significant differences in total effectiveness, with most teachers reporting MLMT as being *effective*. Specialist aides or other support and Executive staff were most likely to report that MLMT had been very effective (56% and 46% respectively). However specialist aides/other support staff were slightly more likely to report it was *too soon to say* (11%) followed by Stage 2 teachers (8%). No respondents reported that Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching had been *not very* or *not at all effective*.

TABLE 16 – OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING IN IMPROVING LITERACY OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS BY ROLE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL	EXECUTIVE	TEACHER K-2	TEACHER STAGE 2	TEACHER STAGE 3	SPECIALIST/AIDE/ OTHER SUPPORT
Very effective	36.8	46.2	31.3	16.7	28.6	55.6
Effective	52.6	46.2	62.5	66.7	64.3	33.3
Neither effective nor ineffective	2.6	7.7	-	8.3	-	-
Not very effective	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not at all effective	-	-	-	-	-	-
Too soon to say	5.3	-	6.3	8.3	-	11.1
Hard to say	2.6	-	-	-	7.1	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Total effective*</i>	89.5	92.3	93.8	83.3	92.9	88.9

\*Total effective' comprises *effective* and *very effective* responses.

Considering the variation in views on the *overall effectiveness* of MLMT according to respondents' level of teaching experience showed those respondents with 20 years or more experience were more likely to report that MLMT had been *very effective* (44%) when compared with other respondents. Respondents at earlier stages of their career (less than two years) were more likely to indicate it was *too early to say* (40%) or *hard to say* (20%) than respondents who had more years teaching experience.

### 4.2 OBSERVED IMPROVEMENTS

School staff were asked to indicate the extent of *improvement* observed in twelve areas relating to students' engagement with and capability in literacy since the introduction of MLMT. These responses are presented in Table 17, including a calculation of *total improvement* which comprises the combined set of *significant improvement* and *some improvement* responses.

Of all twelve areas, the majority of respondents reported having observed *some* or *significant improvement* in the students since the introduction of MLMT. The top three observed improvements were (in terms of *total improvement*):

- *Students' enthusiasm for reading* (92%)

- *Students' understanding of what is expected of them when they read (92%)*
- *Students' uses of effective strategies to assist them understand and read text (92%).*

Areas with the highest proportion of *significant improvement* observed in students related to:

- *Students' willingness to discuss what they have read (62%)*
- *Students' understanding of what is expected of them when they read (58%)*
- *Students' use of effective strategies to assist them understand and read text (58%)*
- *Students' enthusiasm for reading (57%).*

TABLE 17 – OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' LITERACY (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVEMENT	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT	SOME IMPROVEMENT	A LITTLE IMPROVEMENT	NO IMPROVEMENT	HARD TO SAY
Students enthusiasm for reading	92.1	56.6	35.5	2.6	1.3	3.9
The <i>volume</i> of reading undertaken	90.8	51.3	39.5	3.9	1.3	3.9
The <i>complexity</i> of texts read	84.2	35.5	48.7	9.2	1.3	5.3
The <i>variety</i> of texts read	90.8	52.6	38.2	5.3	-	3.9
Students' confidence in reading	90.8	56.6	34.2	3.9	-	5.3
Students' ability to read for meaning	90.8	53.9	36.8	3.9	-	5.3
Students' willingness to discuss what they have read	89.5	61.8	27.6	5.3	-	5.3
Students' understanding of what is expected of them when they read	92.1	57.9	34.2	3.9	-	3.9
Students' use of effective strategies to assist them understand and read text	92.1	57.9	34.2	2.6	1.3	3.9
Students' reading skills	86.8	53.9	32.9	9.2	-	3.9
Students' literacy levels more broadly	85.5	39.5	46.1	6.6	-	7.9
Students' enthusiasm for their other schoolwork (beyond literacy)	84.2	35.5	48.7	6.6	2.6	6.6

Considering the responses according to role, as shown in Table 18, specialists/aides and other support staff were most likely to report observed improvement in students' literacy across the majority of areas. Stage 2 teachers also more commonly reported observed improvements to students' capability and engagement with reading. The proportion of K-2 teachers who reported an improvement in students' reading was slightly lower than classroom teachers at other levels. For example 81% of K-2 teachers noted improvement in *students' confidence in reading*, compared to 100% of Stage 2 teachers and 93% of Stage 3 teachers.

TABLE 18 – OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' LITERACY BY ROLE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVEMENT	EXECUTIVE	TEACHER K-2	TEACHER STAGE 2	TEACHER STAGE 3	SPECIALIST/AIDE/ OTHER SUPPORT
Students enthusiasm for reading	92.1	100	81.3	100	92.9	100
The <i>volume</i> of reading undertaken	90.8	100	87.5	100	85.7	88.9
The <i>complexity</i> of texts read	84.2	100	81.3	66.7	85.7	88.9
The <i>variety</i> of texts read	90.8	92.3	87.5	100	92.9	88.9
Students' confidence in reading	90.8	92.3	81.3	100	92.9	100
Students' ability to read for meaning	90.8	100	87.5	91.7	92.9	100
Students' willingness to discuss what they have read	89.5	92.3	81.3	100	92.9	100
Students' understanding of what is expected of them when they read	92.1	100	81.3	100	92.9	100
Students' use of effective strategies to assist them understand and read text	92.1	100	81.3	100	92.9	100
Students' reading skills	86.8	92.3	81.3	83.3	85.7	100
Students' literacy levels more broadly	85.5	100	81.3	83.3	78.6	100
Students' enthusiasm for their other schoolwork (beyond literacy)	84.2	92.3	75.0	83.3	85.7	77.8

## 4.3 STUDENT GROUPS

### 4.3.1 EFFECTIVENESS FOR DIFFERENT STUDENT GROUPS

School staff were asked to rate the effectiveness of MLMT in improving the educational outcomes for a number of different student groups. These responses are presented in Table 19 below, including a calculation of *total effectiveness*, which comprises the combined set of *very effective* and *somewhat effective* responses.

Overall respondents indicated that MLMT was effective in improving the education outcomes for most students. The student groups with the highest proportion of responses reported as *not at all effective* or *not applicable/hard to say* were *Aboriginal students* (53%) and *students with a learning disability* (78%), however this could be attributed to lower numbers of these student populations in the schools.

TABLE 19 – EFFECTIVENESS OF MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING FOR DIFFERENT STUDENT GROUPS (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

STUDENT GROUP	TOTAL EFFECTIVE	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	NOT VERY EFFECTIVE	NOT AT ALL EFFECTIVE	NOT APPLICABLE/HARD TO SAY
All students	94.7	48.7	46.1	1.3	-	3.9
Students above NAPLAN benchmarks	89.5	39.5	50.0	3.9	1.3	5.3
Students below NAPLAN benchmarks	89.5	43.4	46.1	5.3	-	5.3
Aboriginal students	52.6	21.1	31.6	-	-	47.4
ESL/LBOTE students	89.5	39.5	50.0	3.9	-	6.6
Student with a learning disability	77.6	28.9	48.7	6.6	1.3	14.5

#### 4.3.2 EFFECTIVENESS FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

School staff were also asked to report their view on the relative effectiveness of MLMT in improving literacy outcomes for Aboriginal students compared to non-Aboriginal students. Table 20 below shows the results. Around one in five respondents (22%) indicated MLMT was as effective as for non-Aboriginal students. However, the large majority of respondents indicated either they were *not sure/too hard to say* (41%) or it was *not applicable as there were no Aboriginal students participating in the program at my school* (37%).

TABLE 20 – EFFECTIVENESS OF MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS COMPARED TO NON-ABORIGINAL STUDENTS (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL %
More effective than for non-Aboriginal students	-
As effective as for non-Aboriginal students (ie no difference)	22.4
Less effective than for non-Aboriginal students	-
Not sure/hard to say	40.8
Not applicable as there are no Aboriginal students participating in Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching at my school	36.8

School staff were asked to specify why they thought MLMT might be more effective for some student groups than others. As indicated above, the majority of teachers found it not applicable or too hard to say.

The main reasons provided for this response included:

- Small cohorts of Aboriginal students in schools or in classrooms (23 mentions)

*‘As I have not been involved in teaching these students it is hard to comment on any improvements or changes’*

*‘I don’t have any Aboriginal students in my class’*

*‘Only a couple of Aboriginal students and not sure of the impact.’*

- A lack of evidence (2 mentions)

*'Don't assess them separately.'*

Around one-fifth of respondents indicated that MLMT was as effective for Aboriginal students as for non-Aboriginal students. The main reasons indicated for this included:

- MLMT caters equally for needs of all students (15 mentions)

*'Strategies are appropriate for all students regardless of background.'*

*'Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching was about being purposeful in teaching so it applied to all students. Also all children who were underperforming in literacy had their needs identified and were placed on an individual learning plan.'*

*'Because I don't think that Aboriginal students learn in ways different to non-Aboriginal students. I think that all students get the same out of taught lessons, as long as the teacher is teaching at the students instructional level.'*

*'I don't believe it to be culturally biased at all.'*

- Students were equally responsive to new teaching strategies (2 mentions)
- Aboriginal students are at the same level as non-Aboriginal students (5 mentions)

*'Aboriginal students at the school generally are 2nd, 3rd, 4th generation and have had similar language input as non-Aboriginal students.'*

#### 4.3.3 EFFECTIVENESS FOR ESL/LBOTE STUDENTS

School staff were also asked to report their view on the relative effectiveness of MLMT in improving literacy outcomes for ESL/LBOTE students compared to non-LBOTE students. Table 21 below shows the results.

The large majority of respondents indicated Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching was *as effective* for English as a second language (ESL)/Language Background other than English (LBOTE) students as for non-ESL/LBOTE students (67%). A small minority reported MLMT had been *more effective* for ESL/LBOTE students (11%).

TABLE 21 – EFFECTIVENESS OF MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING FOR ESL/LBOTE STUDENTS COMPARED TO NON- ESL/LBOTE STUDENTS (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL %
More effective than for non- ESL/LBOTE students	10.5
As effective as for non- ESL/LBOTE students (ie no difference)	67.1
Less effective than for non- ESL/LBOTE students	2.6
Not sure/hard to say	19.7
Not applicable as there are no ESL/LBOTE students participating in Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching at my school	-

Teachers were then also asked to specify why MLMT was more or less effective for ESL/LBOTE students. Overall the most common reason noted by respondents was that MLMT caters equally for the needs of all students, and that students across the school were improving at a similar rate, regardless of their ethnicity:

*'I have found that students develop skills at their own pace regardless of ESL or not, students in each group are operating at all levels in my year group'*



*'ESL students ask just as many questions trying to clarify their ideas as much as any other students'*

*'Have noticed that strategies implemented have benefited all members of the class group.'*

*'They are improving just like the other students in the class.'*

*'There has always been a great range of abilities amongst the ESL and NESB students, just as the English speaking children. I have seen improvements in all children.'*

*'All students achieved success which is evidenced by the confidence children have when expressing themselves in various situations.'*

## 5 Impact on the school

Teachers were presented with a series of statements relating to the impact of MLMT on school literacy practices and the level of support and guidance for implementing MLMT. Respondents were asked to express how strongly they *agreed* or *disagreed* with each statement. The responses are presented in Table 22 below.

TABLE 22 – AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT IMPACT OF MINDFUL LEARNING MINDFUL TEACHING ON THE SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

STATEMENT	TOTAL AGREEMENT*	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	HARD TO SAY
<b>School practices</b>							
Since the introduction of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, there is now more clarity about my school's goals and expectations re reading outcomes	97.4	52.6	44.7	1.3	-	-	1.3
Most teachers in my school are using the teaching strategies they learnt through Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in their everyday teaching across KLAs.	88.2	31.6	56.6	6.6	-	-	5.3
Through participating in Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, teaching of reading in my school is now more explicit and focussed	96.1	50.0	46.1	2.6	-	-	1.3
I have a sound understanding of the Timperley Inquiry Cycle	59.2	15.8	43.4	21.1	6.6	2.6	10.5
Helen Timperley's Inquiry Cycle provided a sound basis for the implementation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in my school	61.8	14.5	47.4	23.7	1.3	-	13.2
The aims and objectives of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching are clear to me	85.5	27.6	57.9	10.5	-	-	3.9
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has resulted in greater transparency and consistency in the way literacy is taught in my school	96.1	48.7	47.4	2.6	-	-	1.3
It is clear how Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching is operationalised at both the whole-of-class and at the individual student level	82.9	26.3	56.6	13.2	1.3	1.3	1.3
<b>Support and guidance</b>							
Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching was well planned and implemented by the Parramatta Catholic Education Office	81.6	15.8	65.8	9.2	5.3	-	3.9
I received good support and guidance on how to implement Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in my class/school	82.9	28.9	53.9	11.8	1.3	-	3.9

STATEMENT	TOTAL AGREEMENT*	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	HARD TO SAY
There is strong leadership support for Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in my school	93.4	40.8	52.6	5.3	-	-	1.3
Support for Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching at my school has grown over time	85.5	34.2	51.3	7.9	2.6	-	3.9
<b>Value and sustainability</b>							
There is strong alignment between Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching and other programs/initiatives being implemented at the diocese level	65.8	25.0	40.8	18.4	1.3	-	14.5
I would recommend the use of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in other schools	88.2	39.5	48.7	5.3	1.3	-	5.3
There is a clear pathway for sustaining Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching improvements/approach in the school beyond the funding period	85.5	27.6	57.9	7.9	3.9	-	2.6

\* 'Total agreement' comprises *strongly agree* and *agree* responses

With respect to the impact of MLMT on school literacy practices, overall, there was a high level of agreement with all statements. The statements with which teachers agreed most (in terms of both *total agreement* and proportion of *strongly agree* responses) were:

- *Since the introduction of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, there is now more clarity about my school's goals and expectations re reading outcomes (53% strongly agree and 97% total agreement)*
- *Through participating in Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching, teaching of reading in my school is now more explicit and focussed (50% strongly agree and 96% total agreement)*
- *Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching has resulted in greater transparency and consistency in the way literacy is taught in my school (49% strongly agree and 96% total agreement).*

Conversely, significantly fewer respondents agreed with the statements around having a *solid understanding of the Timperley Inquiry Cycle (59% total agreement)* and the *Timperley's Inquiry Cycle provided a sound basis for the implementation of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in my school (61% total agreement)*.

In terms of the level of support and guidance for implementing MLMT in the school, the majority of respondents agreed with statements relating to the support and guidance received. The highest level of agreement expressed for any statement was *there is strong leadership support for Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in my school (41% strongly agree and 93% total agreement)*. The majority of respondents also indicated that *support for Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching at my school has grown over time (34% strongly agree and 86% total agreement)*. A minority of respondents noted they *disagreed* that *Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching was well planned and implemented by the Parramatta Catholic Education Office (5%)*.

There was a fairly high level of agreement on the sustainability of the MLMT approach, with the vast majority (86%) of respondents agreeing *there is a clear pathway for sustaining Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching improvements/approach in the school beyond the funding period*. Likewise, most respondents (88%) agreed they would *recommend the use of Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching in other schools*.

## 6 Suggested improvements

Respondents were asked whether they could think of any improvements to MLMT or its implementation. Of the 76 teachers completing the survey, 14 respondents put forward suggestions for improvement. This group was primarily composed of teachers with more than ten years teaching experience, who were members of the Executive staff and who had been at their school at the start of the implementation of MLMT.

The most common suggestions for improving MLMT included:

- The continuation and/or enhancement of the Teaching Educator role in schools

*'Teaching Educators could be excellent teachers of reading comprehension at a primary level and be able to demonstrate this at a school level.'*

*'Continue the relationship of the Teaching Educators with the school.....this role is a very important aspect of the program. I would hate the great quality of professional development and learning to slow because of the absence of our Teaching Educators.'*

- The provision of ongoing training and support

*'Make sure any new teachers receive training and ongoing support.'*

- The continued provision of resources

*'Assist schools to update and increase literacy resources by providing monetary grants to build up a data base of the strategies that teachers have found have improved the way they teach literacy.'*

*'It would be great to have continued funding to support this initiative within all schools.'*

- Increased networking and sharing among other schools involved

*'Sharing of the learning within the schools involved in Mindful Learning Mindful Teaching through peer observation and mentoring.'*

*'Exploring how other schools use their literacy time/teach literacy.'*

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