



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

Evaluation of MULTILIT

FINAL REPORT

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urbis

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Glossary

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
AECGs	Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups
BST	Basic Skills Test
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CEC	Catholic Education Commission
DASA	Data Analysis Skills Assessment
EMSAD	Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate
ESL	English as a Second Language
KLA	Key Learning Area
LBOTE	Language Background Other Than English
MULTILIT	Making Up Lost Time in Literacy Reading Tutor Program
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NP	National Partnership
NPLN	National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy
NSW DEC	NSW Department of Education and Communities
RTP	Reading Tutor Program
SLSO	School Learning Support Officer
STLA	Support Teacher Learning Assistance

Executive Summary

1. THIS PROJECT

Urbis was contracted by the then NSW Department of Education and Training (now NSW Department of Education and Communities – NSW DEC) to conduct an evaluation of Making Up Lost Time in Literacy Reading Tutor Program (henceforth referred to as MULTILIT). MULTILIT is one of eight programs in NSW funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy (NPLN). Four of these programs are being evaluated externally by Urbis, and four evaluated by NSW DEC. This report provides a summary and analysis of the outcomes of the evaluation of MULTILIT.

The terms of reference include:

- An assessment of the effectiveness of MULTILIT
- An assessment of the extent to which MULTILIT 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 and numeracy
 - strong school leadership and whole school engagement with literacy and numeracy
 - monitoring student and school literacy and numeracy performance to identify where support is needed
- An assessment of the extent to which MULTILIT has improved the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students
- An investigation of the most effective way for schools to be supported to participate in the evaluation and for the reforms to be incorporated into school practice.

2. MULTILIT

MULTILIT was developed by researchers at the Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC). The program targets low-progress readers from Year 2 and above through one-to-one tuition. It comprises three components:

- MULTILIT Word Attack Skills, which teaches the phonics skills needed for decoding, using a synthetic phonics approach.
- MULTILIT Sight Words, which teaches the 200 most frequently encountered words in children's books.
- MULTILIT Reinforced Reading, which is supported book reading based on an updated version of the 'Pause, Prompt and Praise' model. The aim of this component is to promote regular reading for learners for 20 minutes each day.

Additional resources are provided on the MULTILIT website and extension materials are available for purchase. Professional training is also made available by MUSEC.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology comprised the following components:

- Knowledge review – a review of program documentation, previous evaluation reports and related articles concerning MULTILIT
- 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 timeframe

- Visits to nine government and Catholic schools that had used MULTILIT to interview the School Executive, MULTILIT Coordinators, MULTILIT tutors, teachers, students and parents
- Online survey of staff in all NSW NPLN schools that selected MULTILIT as the individual intervention component of the NPLN. Responses were received from 177 staff members across 55 schools
- Stakeholder interviews
- 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 MULTILIT

Most schools used MULTILIT for the first time under the NPLN. Two-thirds of schools implemented the program in all seven terms of the funding period.

Years 3 and 4 were the most frequently targeted years. The majority of schools targeted students whose literacy levels fell well below NAPLAN benchmarks and students with low literacy levels assessed in another way (other than NAPLAN).

In many cases, the frequency of MULTILIT was not implemented in accordance with the program's recommendations. Only 55% of schools implemented the program the recommended minimum of four sessions per student per week. Only 16% did the full 40-minute sessions as recommended and close to a quarter of schools delivered sessions of 20 minutes or less.

The three components of the program were not implemented equally. MULTILIT Word Attack was the most consistently implemented element, followed by MULTILIT Sight Words. In around 10% of schools, MULTILIT Reinforced Reading was rarely or never used.

The most important sources of support for the program were the written MULTILIT books, support from the School Executive and in-school support from the MULTILIT Coordinator.

Around three-quarters of MULTILIT Coordinators and just over half of MULTILIT Tutors undertook a formal training course. Most of the others undertook internal training within their schools.

5. KEY FINDINGS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT

Schools implementing MULTILIT achieved gains in NAPLAN and NPLN Assessments that were equivalent to all NPLN literacy-focused schools. While these data do not indicate significant gains in literacy at the State level, our analysis concludes that gains in literacy are being made at a local level. Numerous examples were provided by school staff of students whose test scores and reading levels had improved, many of them significantly. Anecdotal evidence was also provided by students who were involved in the program, parents/carers and staff to demonstrate the gains in reading.

Nevertheless, participation in MULTILIT clearly resulted in greater and faster gains for some students, and slower or minimal gains for others. The evaluation found that relative gains in reading may be significantly impacted by the degree to which the program was implemented as intended. The program methodology is highly prescriptive in its approach and sets minimum session duration and frequency requirements. The research found that most schools did not implement the program strictly as recommended.

However gains in reading were only one part of the equation. It was also clear that for many children, participation in the program and the improvements they made had led to increased levels of confidence,

greater enjoyment in reading, improved attitudes to school and schoolwork, and a broadening of their world.

The specific benefits MULTILIT delivered to students, staff and schools are summarised below.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

In both the NAPLAN and NPLN Assessment data sets, gains in mean reading scores were observed for all student cohorts at MULTILIT 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 both NAPLAN cohorts (students in Year 3 in 2008 and 2009), students at MULTILIT schools achieved slightly higher reading score gains than for students across the State as a whole. In all cohorts, the reading growth observed for students at MULTILIT schools was generally in line with the gains achieved across all NPLN literacy focus schools. A range of limitations on the reliability and validity of results observed in these data sets have been outlined in this report; these should be considered when drawing conclusions from the results discussed.

The majority of survey respondents and staff consulted in the qualitative research believed that MULTILIT had overall been an effective program for improving literacy.

The main areas in which improvements were seen were in the decoding of texts and confidence in reading. Improvements were also observed in fluency, comprehension, reading levels and attitudes towards school.

Numerous examples of improved reading levels and/or NPLN Assessment scores were provided by schools that were visited in the qualitative stage. Examples were also provided of instances in which MULTILIT had been less effective: these generally involved a learning difficulty on the part of the student.

The program had reportedly been effective not only in improving reading levels, but in boosting students' confidence in themselves, which in several instances had led to achievement or improvement in other areas.

OUTCOMES FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

The majority of staff believed that MULTILIT was as effective when used with Aboriginal students as with non-Aboriginal students. Some believed the program was particularly well suited to Aboriginal students because of the one-on-one nature of the methodology. Confirmation of the program's efficacy was provided by a number of parents/carers of Aboriginal children who observed improvements in their children's reading.

Overall, the reading gains in NAPLAN and NPLN Assessments for Aboriginal students were in line with those for non-Aboriginal students.

OUTCOMES FOR STAFF AND SCHOOLS

MULTILIT has generally enjoyed a high level of support within the participating schools. At some schools the staff are very enthusiastic and supportive, while at others there is more muted support.

Lack of support amongst staff at some schools was thought to relate to the disruptions that MULTILIT causes to regular classes when children are withdrawn. Some schools have put in place strategies for limiting the disruptions to classes.

A number of teachers and tutors reported positive impacts through using MULTILIT, including greater use of data in student monitoring and planning, a greater appreciation of the difficulties some children experience in learning to read, and improved confidence in teaching reading.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Critical success factors identified were:

- the intensive one-on-one nature of the program
- the clear and prescriptive approach
- effective engagement of students
- seeing the program in the context of a whole-of-school strategy
- the role of the MULTILIT Coordinator
- School Executive support.

The main factors that may limit success of the program was seen to be the suitability of the program to some students eg students with a learning disability, older 'too cool' students, and failure to implement the program as intended, which may result in slower gains.

6. STRENGTHENING THE IMPACT OF MULTILIT

The main areas for strengthening the program's impact were:

- Expansion of the program through increased and ongoing funding, to allow more children to participate, more tutors to be employed and purchase of more resources.
- Improved links to classroom literacy program, so that what occurs in the classroom is consistent with what is occurring in individualised interventions. Better understanding of the approaches used in MULTILIT amongst classroom teachers would assist in improving the linkage.
- Difficulty with certain aspects of the program were experienced by teachers/tutors, suggesting either modification or better explanation is warranted. These included the use of the 'nonsense words' in MULTILIT Word Attack; identifying/finding suitable reading material for older learners in the Reinforced Reading component; and additional activities/work sheets for each level.
- Incorporating broader literacy components into the programs eg spelling, comprehension and writing activities.
- Provision of more information/guidance on approaches for students with learning difficulties.
- Improved timetabling to limit the impact of student withdrawal - concerns around withdrawing children for too long and interrupting classes were one reason that a number of schools truncated the sessions.
- Strengthening the training requirement. While a fairly high proportion of MULTILIT Coordinators undertook MULTILIT training, only about half of MULTILIT Tutors undertook the formal training. Those who did not undertake formal training were significantly more likely to report that the training they undertook did not prepare them sufficiently for implementing the program. Ongoing and refresher training was also an issue.

SUSTAINABILITY

A significant level of doubt was expressed regarding the likelihood that MULTILIT would be sustained in the same way as under the NPLN in many of the schools consulted. The most significant threat to sustainability was seen to be lack of ongoing funding to resource the program, in terms of staff and physical resources.

The main success factors for sustainability of the program were the willingness and capacity of the school to support a staff-intensive program, capacity to purchase the materials required, and developing training strategies for new MULTILIT tutors.

1 Introduction

In November 2010, Urbis was contracted by the NSW Department of Education and Training (now NSW Department of Education and Communities – NSW DEC) to conduct an evaluation of Making Up Lost Time in Literacy Reading Tutor Program (henceforth referred to as MULTILIT). MULTILIT is one of eight programs in NSW funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy (NPLN).

This report provides a summary and analysis of the outcomes of the evaluation of MULTILIT.

1.1 POLICY CONTEXT

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 NP 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 (DEEWR, 2008). The idea is that effective practice will be disseminated to support system-wide improvements in educational attainment (COAG, 2008).

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 numeracy or literacy at either the individual student levels 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 (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) 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 MULTILIT, the evaluation of which is contained in this report.

1.2 MAKING UP LOST TIME IN LITERACY READING TUTOR PROGRAM

The MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program was developed by researchers at the Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC). The program targets low-progress readers from Year 2 and above and comprises three components:

- MULTILIT Word Attack Skills, which teaches the phonics skills needed for decoding, using a synthetic phonics approach. It comprises a manual for the tutor and a recording booklet for the student. A separate recording booklet is required by each student participating in the program. A set of sound prompt cards is also included to assist with teaching of single letter sounds.
- MULTILIT Sight Words, which teaches the 200 most frequently encountered words in children's books. This component includes a manual for the tutor and a recording book for the student. A separate recording booklet is required by each student participating in the program.
- MULTILIT Reinforced Reading, which is supported book reading based on an updated version of the 'Pause, Prompt and Praise' model. The aim of this component is to promote regular reading for learners for 20 minutes each day. The component comprises a training DVD for tutors which outlines the skills and approach to providing supported book reading in a one-to-one context; an accompanying guide; and access to free resources for supporting MULTILIT Reinforced Reading in homes and schools via the MULTILIT Toolbox on the MULTILIT website.

Extension materials are available for students who have progressed through the program but require further assistance. MULTILIT Word Attack Skills Extension Program takes students through the more complex letter combinations, affixes and multi-syllable words. The same format is used as in the Word Attack component of the MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program with some additional features.

It is recommended that MULTILIT be provided as a daily intervention if possible, and no fewer than four times a week for optimal progress. The recommended schedule for each of the components is as follows:

- 10 minutes of MULTILIT Word Attack Skills
- 5-10 minutes of MULTILIT Sight Words including both current and revision lists
- 20 minutes of MULTILIT Reinforced Reading where the child reads to the tutor from appropriate level text.

Daily and weekly student progress monitoring comprises curriculum-based assessments of progress in accuracy and fluency in the MULTILIT Word Attack Skills and MULTILIT Sight Words components, and by book level placement in the MULTILIT Reinforced Reading component. Students may also be monitored by using a curriculum-based measurement (the Wheldall Assessment of Reading Passages) that tracks individual performance weekly towards target performance goals.

Professional training workshops are run throughout the year in Sydney at MUSEC, and elsewhere, including regional workshops. On-site training can also be provided by arrangement. The following professional training workshops in MULTILIT are offered:

- MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program (1 day)
- MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program (Advanced 3-day course)
- Word Attack Skills Extension Program (1 day).

1.3 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

There is a common Terms of Reference for each literacy and numeracy program evaluation. Each evaluation is to assess the efficacy and value of the program in relation to the priority areas for reform mandated by the National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy. In particular, the evaluations involve:

- An assessment of the effectiveness of the programs specified in the Literacy and Numeracy section of the NSW Implementation Plans for Schools National Partnerships
- An assessment of the extent to which each of the programs 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 and numeracy
 - strong school leadership and whole school engagement with literacy and numeracy
 - monitoring student and school literacy and numeracy performance to identify where support is needed
- An assessment of the extent to which each of the programs has improved the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students
- An investigation of the most effective way 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.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 OVERVIEW

The evaluation methodology was developed in consultation with NSW DEC, particularly as some consistency and coordination was desired across the eight program evaluations being undertaken simultaneously by Urbis and NSW DEC.

The methodology comprised a review of program documentation, previous evaluation reports and related articles concerning MULTILIT; 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 timeframe; visits to nine government and Catholic schools that had used MULTILIT (see Appendix A for the interview guides); online survey of staff in all NSW NPLN schools that selected MULTILIT as the individual intervention component of the NPLN. Responses were received from 177 staff members across 55 schools (see Appendix B for the online survey instrument, and Appendix C for a full analysis of the online survey); stakeholder interviews; and an analysis of NAPLAN and NPLN assessment data.

All research instruments, including interview guides and the online survey, were designed following a review of MULTILIT documentation and resources and key literature on evaluation of literacy programs, as well as consultation with DEC staff.

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 at Appendix A and the online survey at Appendix B.

1.4.2 QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

The qualitative component of the evaluation involved face-to-face interviews in schools and face-to-face and telephone interviews with a small number of stakeholders.

CONSULTATIONS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Two face-to-face consultations were held with Professor Kevin Wheldall and Dr Robyn Beaman from MUSEC, once during the orientation phase of the evaluation, and once after the fieldwork and survey had been completed.

Telephone interviews were conducted with two Regional Facilitators who were able to comment on the implementation of MULTILIT and were still in their positions at the time of the consultations.

SCHOOL VISITS

Visits to nine schools were carried out in May-June 2011. The nine schools visited are set out in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1 – SCHOOLS VISITED FOR THE EVALUATION

SCHOOL	REGION/DIOCESE	SECTOR
Marayong Public School	Western Sydney	Government
Tumbarumba Public School	Riverina	Government
Hillvue Public School	New England	Government
Cambridge Park Public School	Western Sydney	Government
Daceyville Public School*	Sydney	Government
Mannering Park Primary School	Hunter Central Coast	Government
Holy Family Primary School, Parkes	Wilcannia-Forbes	Catholic
St Joseph's Primary School, Quirindi	Armidale	Catholic
St Philomena's Primary School	Armidale	Catholic

*Daceyville Public School implemented MULTILIT although it was not part of the NPLN.

In-depth interviews and small group discussions were held with the following:

- the School Principal
- the School Leader/Teaching Educator
- MULTILIT Coordinator
- MULTILIT tutors
- classroom teachers
- Aboriginal Education Workers and Teaching Assistants
- parents of children on the MULTILIT program
- students in Years 3-6 on the MULTILIT program.

School selection was made on the basis of achieving:

- diversity in size and location of schools
- a range of student populations – including proportions of Aboriginal students and of Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) students
- the mix of National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy programs in each school
- engagement with other initiatives under the National Smarter Schools Partnership, including the National Pathways
- no overlap with the other seven program evaluations being conducted
- no overlap (if possible) with any program (self) evaluations.

1.4.3 QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

ONLINE SURVEY FOR SCHOOL STAFF

All staff who participated in the implementation of MULTILIT were invited to participate in an online survey, which was conducted in September 2011. 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.

The full findings of the survey are presented at Appendix C. The key findings are provided in the body of the report.

A total of 177 school staff completed the survey from 55 out of the 72 MULTILIT schools (76%). The survey questionnaire is at Appendix B.

Data on the characteristics of respondents is provided at Appendix C. In brief:

- 38% worked in schools in smaller rural/remote areas, 37% worked at schools in regional cities or towns, and 25% worked in metropolitan schools.
- There was a spread of school size, with 32% from smaller schools of less than 200 students, nearly half (46%) from schools with 200-400 students, and 22% from schools with more than 400 students.
- The vast majority of respondents (90%) were female, and 72% were aged 40 years or over.

- There was a range of experience levels represented, but more than half (56%) had been working in primary schools for over 10 years, and 33% had done so for over 20 years. About one quarter of respondents had worked in schools for 5 years or less.
- There was similarly a range of years' experience at their current school, but half (51%) had worked at their current school for more than five years.
- There was a fairly even spread across roles in relation to the program. MULTILIT tutors made up the largest group (37%), followed by the Executive (21%) and MULTILIT Coordinators (21%). Nearly one quarter of respondents (22%) were classroom teachers or other staff, a factor that needed to be taken into consideration in interpreting the survey findings, as these staff may have had little or no direct involvement in the delivery of MULTILIT. Where appropriate, these issues were factored into the analysis.

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 the literacy and numeracy program evaluations.

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 are:

- effective and evidence-based teaching of literacy and numeracy
- strong school leadership and whole 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 (see Table 2).

TABLE 2 – 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 2 (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 3 – 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 has provided the following aggregate data sets.

TABLE 4 – DATA SPECIFICATIONS

DATA SET	DATA	PROGRAM COMPARISON GROUPS	STUDENT COMPARISON GROUPS
NAPLAN	▪ Sample size (N) ▪ Mean scale score (reading/numeracy) and standard deviation ▪ Performance bands: % below national minimum standard; % at national minimum standard; % above national minimum standard	▪ Program schools (aggregated data for all NPLN schools implementing a given literacy or numeracy program) ▪ All NPLN schools (literacy/numeracy) ▪ All NSW	▪ All students ▪ Boys ▪ Girls ▪ Aboriginal ▪ Non-Aboriginal ▪ Non-LBOTE ▪ LBOTE
NPLN Assessments	▪ Mean scale score (literacy/numeracy) and standard deviation ▪ Performance bands: % band 1 (lowest); % above band 1	▪ Program schools (aggregated data for all NPLN schools implementing a given literacy or numeracy program) ▪ All NPLN schools (literacy/numeracy)	▪ All students ▪ Boys ▪ Girls ▪ Aboriginal ▪ Non-Aboriginal ▪ Non-LBOTE ▪ LBOTE

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 MULTILIT has had on educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. It should be noted that the small sample size of Aboriginal students in these cohorts means that it is difficult to draw conclusions on the outcomes for Aboriginal students with any degree of reliability. However, a considerable amount of qualitative data was collected during the fieldwork stage from schools that had significant Aboriginal populations – the schools visited ranged from those that had as little as 2% Aboriginal students, to 66% Aboriginal students. The analysis

on this term of reference therefore relies more on the qualitative data and data from the online survey, than from the benchmark tests.

1.5.2 NPLN AND NAPLAN DATA

The research design sought to be as rigorous as possible, however it was limited by the extent to which the critical NAPLAN and NPLN data could be analysed to identify impacts at the school and student levels. During our consultations with schools, some schools were able to provide good quality tracking data on students on the program, while others could provide no such 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 on 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 4.1.

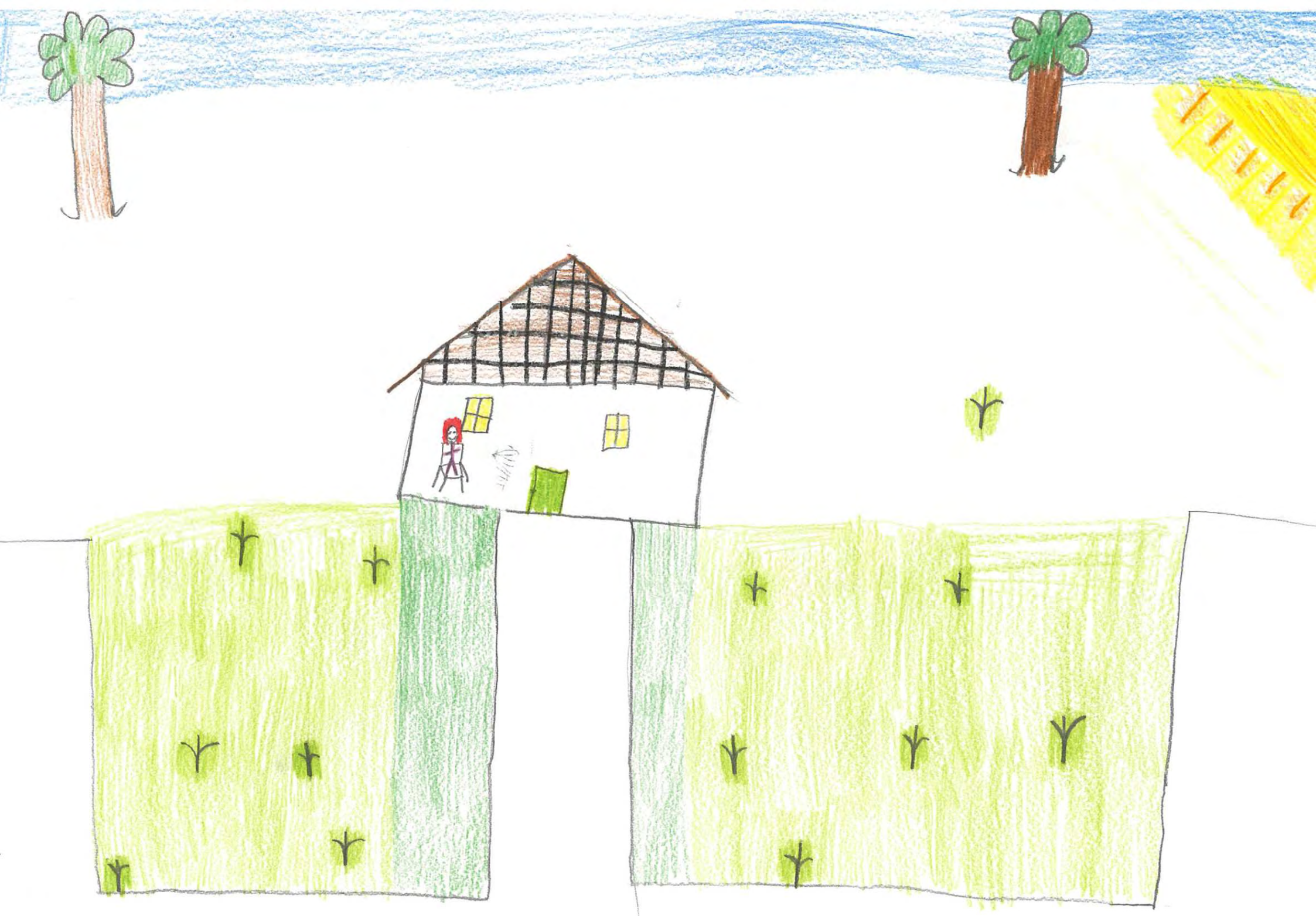
1.5.3 ATTRIBUTION

It is important to understand the context in which MULTILIT was used, particularly that the program 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.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 discusses the evidence-base for the MULTILIT program
- Section 3 addresses the implementation of MULTILIT
- Section 4 examines the outcomes for students
- Section 5 examines the outcomes for staff and schools as well as the sustainability of the program
- Section 6 examines areas for strengthening the impact of MULTILIT
- Section 7 presents a summary and conclusions.



2 Evidence-base for MULTILIT

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE-BASE FOR MULTILIT¹

MULTILIT was developed by researchers at MUSEC who were looking at more effective ways of teaching older low-progress students experiencing difficulties in learning literacy skills. The program is predicated on:

- A non-categorical approach to instruction – which avoids labelling children with special needs and is committed to the conviction that all children can learn, given effective instruction. The type of teaching approach should be determined by a needs-based appraisal of the student's current level of functioning. The approach also holds that measures of intelligence have little relevance to how to go about teaching a child to read.
- A Positive Teaching approach to effective classroom behaviour management-Positive Teaching is based on applied behaviour analysis and observed classroom processes. The approach advocates increasing teacher praise and approval and decreasing disapproval and reprimands. Reprimands are used very sparingly, specifically and privately and in a positive overall context. Positive Teaching is also concerned with classroom 'ecologies' that influence classroom behaviour, eg seating arrangements.
- A balanced, interactive model of effective literacy instruction – which combines both bottom-up and top-down methods.

The program claims to build on current research into low-progress readers. In particular, findings upon which the program has developed include:

- An emphasis on systematic phonics instruction with the reading of natural language texts is the most effective and efficient way to approach both initial and remedial reading instruction. This view of reading, which acknowledges the simultaneous integration of orthographic, phonemic, syntactic and semantic cues, is referred to as an interactive model.
- Approaches such as Spalding and Reading Recovery use an interactive model but have limitations.
- Systematic, skills-based reading instruction, as reflected in a truly interactive approach, comprises two components: first, that which allows language to be recognised through its graphic representations (decoding); and second, that which allows language to be understood (comprehension).
- There is a strong relationship between word recognition and reading comprehension. The majority of low-progress readers show deficits in their ability to use phonological information to decode written text. The primary factor preventing the vast majority of low-progress readers from improving their reading performance is their poor word decoding skills. They are unable to match letters with their corresponding sounds to decode words. In other words, their phonic word attack skills are poor.
- While low-progress readers often rely on other strategies to make sense of text, the use of phonics word attack skills is more likely to result in consistent and independent word recognition. It is also widely accepted that readers need to build a bank of high frequency sight words which can be recognised accurately and fluently without the need to analyse their component parts.

The program developers' conclusion is that:

Effective reading instruction for low-progress readers requires: (i) a well developed phonic word attack skills program; (ii) opportunities to acquire and practice a bank of useful, high frequency sight words; and (iii) regular practice in reading meaningful, connected text in a supportive context. This is the

¹ Information in this section was sourced from Wheldall, K. And Beaman, R. 2000. *An Evaluation of MULTILIT*, Macquarie University Special Education Centre, Macquarie University, Sydney.

basis of the interactive model. Such a truly interactive model is operationalised within the MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program. Instruction focuses on phonic word attack skills (understanding and applying the alphabetic principle to decoding words), sight word recognition (developing lexical access in memory) and the practice of these skills through reading natural language in meaningful and age appropriate text matched to the child's reading level, within a supportive tutoring context. (Wheldall and Beaman 2000, p.5).

The three components of the MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program are described below (from Wheldall and Beaman 2000, pp. 8-9).

MULTILIT WORD ATTACK SKILLS

Children learning to read primarily need to learn how to 'crack the code' - how to decode words they have not previously encountered by breaking words down into their component phonic parts. Low-progress readers need intensive, systematic instruction both in how to break up ('segment') words into their component letter sounds and, even more importantly, how to 'blend' component letter sounds into words. MULTILIT Word Attack Skills is designed to do precisely this: to teach older low-progress readers the phonic skills essential for rapid decoding.

MULTILIT SIGHT WORDS

Sight words are words that can be read automatically on sight without recourse to decoding strategies. When learning to read, it makes good sense for children to learn a small corpus of very common sight words so that they will not need to struggle to decode every single word that they encounter in a sentence. MULTILIT Sight Words systematically teaches the automatic recognition of 300 high frequency sight words.

MULTILIT REINFORCED READING

Reinforced Reading is a program developed to enhance the student's independent reading skills and is based on the set of tutoring strategies for use with older low- progress readers known as Pause, Prompt and Praise (PPP). The aim of the tutoring session is for the tutor to listen to the low-progress reader read natural language books at an appropriate level of difficulty for up to fifteen minutes. The tutor is trained to pause for up to five seconds or wait until the end of a sentence when a mistake is made to permit time for self-correction. If no self-correction occurs, the tutor supplies up to two prompts in the form of a graphophonic prompt ('How does this word begin?', 'What sound do these letters make?'), a contextual cue ('Does that word make sense?') or a re-read prompt ('Read that again from the beginning of the sentence.'). When the student correctly reads a sentence or paragraph, self-corrects without a prompt, or successfully uses a given prompt to identify a word, specific praise is given.

PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS OF MULTILIT

MUSEC built assessment and evaluation into the University-based program and across various sites. A range of reading and spelling tests have been used to assess student levels and track progress, including:

- The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability
- The Burt Word Reading Test
- The Wheldall Assessment of Reading Passages (WARP)
- South Australian Spelling Test
- Book Level (Reading Rigby).

Results of the program were assessed over three years, 1996 to 1998. The 142 students who participated were referred by teachers, school counsellors or parents. The mean age of the sample was 10 years and 5 months and the students were on average three years behind their chronological age in reading accuracy and over two and a half years behind for reading comprehension. Three quarters of the sample were boys and students in years 5 and 6 were heavily represented. The evaluation found that MULTILIT had been effective in improving reading amongst the groups. Specifically, after two terms (20 weeks) of MULTILIT instruction:

- The students made a mean gain of 15 months in reading accuracy and 13.5 months for reading comprehension.
- Amongst a subset of 97 students for whom WARP data were available, students could read 38 more words correctly per minute than at pre-test, an increase of 96%.
- Amongst a subset of 85 students who completed the South Australian Spelling Test, a mean gain of 16 months was made.
- Amongst a subset who completed the BURT Word Reading Test, a mean gain of 15 months was made.
- Powerful effect sizes were shown on all literacy variables, particularly reading accuracy (Neale), reading fluency (WARP), single word recognition (Burt), and spelling (SA Spelling Test).
- 87% of the sample made gains in reading accuracy of at least 6 months or more, and 61% made gains of 12 months or more.
- 71% of the sample made gains in reading comprehension of at least 6 months and 51% made gains of 12 months or more.

Follow up of 57 of the 142 students six months after the intervention found that these students had, on average, maintained their program gains in reading accuracy and reading comprehension, with reading age scores improving by a further 2.5 months (reading accuracy) and 1.0 month (reading comprehension). Closer analysis of the results showed that in reading accuracy, while the top quartile made additional gains of over eight months, the bottom quartile lost at least four months. In reading comprehension the top quartile made additional gains of over nine months, while the bottom quartile lost up to eight months. Further follow up after 12 months of a smaller group found similar trends to the six-month follow-up. The evaluators concluded that 'the gains did not wash out, on average, over the period but nor did the students continue to gain appreciably after leaving the program' (Wheldall and Beaman 2000, p.23). They further concluded that there are three distinct groups of students: those who do not hold their gains, those who maintain their gains, and those who continue to progress after leaving the program.

In another study, the results for a sample of students who participated in a MULTILIT program for a whole year in 1997 were assessed. The students were assessed on the Neale test and WARP test every 5-6 months, prior to, during and both 6 and 12 months after leaving the program. For reading accuracy and comprehension, there was little or no change in performance in the period prior to the intervention, however dramatic growth was evident during the four terms of the intervention. Over the six months after leaving the program, there was little evidence of further gains but the existing gains made in MULTILIT were clearly maintained. At the 12 month follow-up, little further gains were evident in reading accuracy, but further appreciable gains were evident for reading comprehension and reading fluency (Wheldall and Beaman 2000, p.23-24).

MULTILIT was delivered as an intensive literacy intervention program for students in Years 6 and 7 as part of the 'Schoolwise Project', in conjunction with the Exodus Foundation. The project sought to address students' severe literacy problems that made them at risk of becoming seriously disaffected from school. The results of six successive intakes between 1996 and 1998 were analysed, a total sample of 106 students. Standardised testing showed that prior to the intervention these students were on average over four years behind their chronological age in reading accuracy and nearly four years behind in reading comprehension. Some were complete non-readers at commencement of the program. In under five months in the program, the students made average gains in Neale reading accuracy of 15 months, 11 months in Neale reading comprehension, 15 months in Burt word reading, 35 words read correctly per minute in WARP and 14 months in spelling. MULTILIT appeared to benefit both Year 6 and Year 7 students and boys and girls in the program evenly. Follow up at six and 12 months after leaving the program found that while minimal further gains had been made, the gains made during the program had not dissipated.

Further studies were undertaken in 1998 and 1999 at individual primary schools, which also showed significant improvements across literacy measures. One of these programs implemented at a Catholic primary school was delivered by two teachers and two aides who undertook MUSEC's MULTILIT training

workshop. The program was a cut-down version with each student receiving two 15-minute periods a day in addition to independent folder work. Significant improvements were evident nevertheless, which the evaluators suggest may be related to the less delayed starting point of these students than in previous samples (Wheldall and Beaman 2000, p.30-33).

MUSEC also surveyed parents of MULTILIT students in 1997-98 in order to obtain consumer feedback. 94% of parents surveyed said that the program had benefitted their child, and over half believed their child's skills were now adequate to access their regular classroom curriculum (Wheldall and Beaman 2000, p.24).

In summary, analysis of data from a number of samples over several years has established a considerable body of evidence for the effectiveness of MULTILIT in delivering gains in reading accuracy and comprehension, reading fluency, single word recognition and spelling. Gains were apparent regardless of gender and chronological age, with significant gains being made even amongst students in early high school. While often remarkable gains were made during the program, after leaving the program students varied considerably in terms of ongoing improvements. While gains made during the program tended to be maintained, some students continued to make impressive improvements, while others made little or no further progress once out of the program.

It is worth noting that these studies were mostly conducted using samples of students who participated in the MULTILIT program at the University-based MUSEC, delivered by MUSEC staff, and in this sense the programs were delivered in 'ideal' conditions. Two studies involved programs delivered in a primary school setting, and these programs also showed very positive results, however only one of these programs was delivered by school staff (the other program was delivered by a MUSEC staff member seconded to the school).

2.2 STAKEHOLDER VIEWS ON THE EVIDENCE-BASE FOR MULTILIT

In general, school staff implementing MULTILIT believed that the program was founded on solid evidence for assisting low progress readers. Several teachers commented that the approach was consistent with their own understanding and approaches in helping individual students, and identified similarities between MULTILIT and other evidence-based methods such as Spalding. Several teachers believed that the approach taken by MULTILIT was not novel, that there was no 'magic' in the MULTILIT approach, but that the program was packaged well and was highly accessible for teachers and tutors.

A view put forward by one departmental stakeholder criticised the 'withdrawal' approach used by MULTILIT, whereby a student is withdrawn from their regular class to participate in an individual intervention. The argument was partly a philosophical one – that literacy teaching should take place in the class setting, thereby including struggling students rather than stigmatising and alienating them from their class. It was also argued that students who are withdrawn miss out on important work in their class which exacerbates their learning problems. A few classroom teachers consulted during the evaluation also expressed concern about students missing out on class work and the interruption to the class generally.

However most teachers and tutors consulted argued that the benefits gained from the intervention through withdrawal, in terms of improved literacy and increased confidence of students, outweighed the negatives associated with missing class work. Several argued that some children required the individual attention that can best be achieved with a withdrawal approach, including the provision of a calm, quiet and safe environment in which to learn. It was also argued that, providing withdrawal is managed appropriately by staff, there need not be stigma attached; indeed, leaving a student to struggle and fall further behind was thought to be more stigmatising than withdrawing them and helping them to improve.

3 Implementation of MULTILIT

KEY FINDINGS

- Most schools used MULTILIT for the first time under the NPLN.
- Two-thirds of schools implemented the program in all seven terms of the funding period.
- Years 3 and 4 were the most frequently targeted years.
- The majority of schools targeted students whose literacy levels fell well below NAPLAN benchmarks and students with low literacy levels assessed in another way (other than NAPLAN).
- Just over half of schools implemented the program the recommended minimum of four sessions per student per week. However, only 16% did the full 40-minute sessions as recommended and close to a quarter of schools delivered sessions of 20 minutes or less.
- The three components of the program were not implemented equally. MULTILIT Word Attack was the most consistently implemented element, followed by MULTILIT Sight Words. In around 10% of schools, MULTILIT Reinforced Reading was *rarely or never* used.
- The most important sources of support for the program were the written MULTILIT books, support from the School Executive and in-school support from the MULTILIT Coordinator.
- Around three-quarters of MULTILIT Coordinators and just over half of MULTILIT tutors undertook a formal training course. Most of the others undertook internal training within their schools.

3.1 ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE IN MULTILIT

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 DEC and Catholic Education Commission (CEC) Diocesan offices
- the regional/Diocesan capacity to support school leaders and teachers as they participated in the initiative
- the school's student background characteristics including:
 - enrolment size
 - student language background
 - student enrolment data, for instance, a large proportion of Aboriginal and/or refugee students
 - the degree of disadvantage of the schools or group of schools.

NSW Government schools received funding directly from NSW DEC, while Catholic schools received funding through their Diocesan Office.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION

MULTILIT was selected as the individual intervention of the NPLN by 72 schools, including 63 government schools and nine Catholic schools. A whole-school intervention was selected by most schools also, and these were:

- *Focus on Reading 3-6* (selected by 42% of NPLN schools using MULTILIT)
- *Accelerated Literacy* (selected by 29% of NPLN schools using MULTILIT)
- *Reading to Learn* (selected by 25% of NPLN schools using MULTILIT).

Three NPLN schools that selected MULTILIT did not select a whole-school intervention.

Under the NPLN, NSW schools were able to allocate funds in order to:

- participate in self-evaluation, data analysis and team leadership workshops, courses and ongoing professional learning
- access expertise in student data analysis
- access whole-class and student intervention programs
- release classroom teachers, as literacy/numeracy leaders, with reading or numeracy expertise to mentor colleagues in and across communities of schools
- facilitate schools working together to share ideas and expertise
- support the work of the school/classroom program facilitator and learning and teaching classroom leaders in implementing specific classroom based interventions and in supporting staff involvement in professional learning
- purchase resources to support the implementation of selected programs as identified in the School Plan
- support staff to participate in a local Aboriginal cultural awareness program
- employ teacher aides where essential to the implementation of an intervention.

Thus, in relation to MULTILIT, NPLN funds could be used by selected schools to:

- purchase one or more MULTILIT RTP kits
- purchase the required number of Student Recording Books
- attend MULTILIT training courses
- employ casual tutors
- support the MULTILIT Coordinator and/or teachers with release time.

Implementation of MULTILIT involved the following elements:

- purchase of the MULTILIT resources, including individual workbooks for each participating student
- formal or informal training by Coordinators and Tutors in the use of MULTILIT (optional)
- individual MULTILIT sessions with a Tutor, implemented on a withdrawal basis and on a regular basis.

3.3 IMPLEMENTATION IN THE SCHOOL

3.3.1 PARTICIPATION

For most schools, the NPLN provided an opportunity to use MULTILIT for the first time. According to the survey, 84% of schools had not used MULTILIT prior to the NPLN. Of the small proportion of schools that had previously used MULTILIT, the majority had been using the program for less than two years before the start of the NPLN and their use had been fairly infrequent.

While most schools had not used MULTILIT before, many indicated that they had used other individual withdrawal-based programs in the school such as Reading Recovery, Macquarie Word Attack program and Jolly Phonics.

The program was implemented strongly across all terms in both 2010 and 2011, with two-thirds of schools represented in the survey implementing the program in all seven terms of the funding period (up to the time of the survey).

The majority of schools (74%) had had between 25 and 59 students participate in the program under the NPLN. A small proportion of schools (13%) had had 60 or more students on MULTILIT, with one school reporting that a total of 181 students had participated in the program since early 2010. The minimum participation reported in the survey was 14 students.

As might be expected, most small schools (less than 200 students) had fewer than 40 students participate in the program over the funding period. Interestingly, mid-size schools were more likely than large schools to have had 40 or more students use the program (71% of mid-size schools compared to 50% of large schools).

3.3.2 TARGETING APPROACH

The survey found that the majority of schools targeted Year 3 (88%), Year 4 (78%) and Year 5 (69%) with MULTILIT. A slightly smaller proportion of schools targeted Year 6 students (44%), and over one-third of schools (38%) had extended MULTILIT participation to Year 2 students. A small minority of schools (6%) also targeted Year 1 students.

The majority of schools (84%) targeted students whose literacy levels fell *well below* NAPLAN benchmarks, while 71% also selected students with low literacy levels assessed in another way (other than NAPLAN). Just over half used MULTILIT to target improved literacy levels in students whose literacy levels fell *just below* NAPLAN benchmarks. Other selection criteria nominated by respondents included testing all students on MULTILIT to determine starting levels, and feedback from the previous school of a new student.

The qualitative research found that within the group of students whose literacy levels were lower, a number of schools prioritised children who were soon to sit Year 3 or Year 5 NAPLAN.

3.3.3 PROGRAM FIDELITY

The developers of the program recommend that MULTILIT be provided as a daily intervention where possible, and no fewer than four times per week for optimal progress. The recommended schedule for each session is as follows:

- 10 minutes of MULTILIT Word Attack skills
- 5-10 minutes of MULTILIT Sight Words
- 20 minutes of MULTILIT Reinforced Reading.

More than half the schools represented in the survey (55%) were delivering the recommended four or more MULTILIT sessions to each student every week. Approximately two fifths of schools (42%) were delivering three sessions per week, and a very small minority of schools (3%) were only providing two sessions per week to students.

TABLE 5 – AVERAGE NUMBER OF SESSIONS PER STUDY PER WEEK (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

NUMBER OF SESSIONS	TOTAL
2	3.2
3	41.9
4	41.9
5	12.9
TOTAL	100

* Base = 31 schools

Only 16% of schools in the survey sample were delivering sessions of 35-40 minutes, as recommended by the program developers. Nearly one-fifth (19%) came close, delivering 30-35 minute sessions on average; 42% delivered 20-30 minute sessions, while close to a quarter of schools (23%) delivered sessions of 20 minutes or less.

TABLE 6 – AVERAGE SESSION LENGTH (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

SESSION LENGTH	TOTAL
5-10 minutes	3.2
10-15 minutes	-
15-20 minutes	19.4
20-25 minutes	25.8
25-30 minutes	16.1
30-35 minutes	19.4
35-40 minutes	16.1
TOTAL	100

* Base = 31 schools

The survey findings mirror the findings of the qualitative research, where the length of sessions varied considerably, and depended on factors such as tutor availability and timetabling (eg at one school, MULTILIT was given a two-hour block in the timetable, and each student was allocated 20 minutes inclusive of commuting time from their classroom, so that each tutor could see six students in the two-hour block). Some MULTILIT Coordinators said that they were wary of taking students out of their classes for long periods of time because they would miss out on important work and classroom teachers were often unhappy about the disruption to their classes. One school opted to split each student's MULTILIT session in two, doing 20 minutes of MULTILIT Word Attack and MULTILIT Sight Words in the morning with the School Support Teacher, and 20 minutes of Reinforced Reading later in the day with volunteer parents/community members.

A number of schools reported that the number of sessions per week was limited by the Principal's capacity or willingness to allocate teacher aids as tutors, as well as the willingness of classroom teachers to accommodate student withdrawal. Comments were made at several schools about some initial reluctance by some MULTILIT Coordinators, who were concerned about the disruption to their classes:

Withdrawing children can be difficult – some teachers are hesitant because of the interruption to their class.

It's a disruption on top of other disruptions – we were doing Quicksmart last year which was also withdrawal, and there's AL [Accelerated Literacy]...

At first they were reluctant because it would mean interrupting their class and the students would miss out on some class time, but when they realised that it was part of the NP and

then they started to see improvements, and the timetabling improved, they were more supportive.

One MULTILIT Coordinator had been unaware that students on the program were supposed to participate in the program a minimum of four times a week, and for two terms participating students did MULTILIT just twice a week. Once the NP Facilitator made them aware of the issue, they had to reduce the number of children on the program so that they could implement it more often within existing resources (this was a Catholic school and no additional funding was available from the Diocese).

The survey found that all schools reported regular use of MULTILIT Word Attack and the majority indicated regular delivery of MULTILIT Sight Words and MULTILIT Reinforced Reading (both 90% total usage). A small minority of schools indicated that MULTILIT Reinforced Reading was *rarely* or *never* used in the students' MULTILIT sessions. In total, 84% of schools were using all three components of the program *always* or *usually*.

TABLE 7 – FREQUENCY OF USE OF MULTILIT COMPONENTS (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

COMPONENT	TOTAL USAGE	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
MULTILIT Word Attack	100.0	93.6	6.4	-	-	-
MULTILIT Sight Words	90.3	67.7	22.6	6.4	-	3.2
MULTILIT Reinforced Reading	90.3	71.0	19.4	-	6.4	3.2

* Base = 31 schools

The qualitative research found similar results, with MULTILIT Word Attack being the most universally implemented component. MULTILIT Sight Words was also commonly implemented, except where students had completed the Sight Words program. The highest degree of inconsistency in implementation was found with MULTILIT Reinforced Reading. Most MULTILIT Coordinators and tutors said they usually did Reinforced Reading, but a number said there was often not enough time in the session to do this component fully, or even at all. Some tutors reported that they helped students to choose a new reader and then the student went back to class. These findings are consistent with the survey results which showed that only 16% of schools were implementing MULTILIT for the recommended 35-40 minutes per session.

Over one third of schools (38%) had used the MULTILIT Extension Program with students. Those schools that were regularly using all three components of the main MULTILIT program (Sight Words, Word Attack and Reinforced Reading) were more likely to have used the Extension Program than those schools that were not (42% of schools compared to 20% of schools not using the three components regularly).

3.3.4 MODIFICATIONS MADE TO THE PROGRAM

During the qualitative consultations at schools, some staff indicated they had made some modifications or additions to the program. These included:

- the development of supplementary resources based on the program, such as word lists and flow charts
- incentive charts eg sticker wall charts
- providing parents with the student books in order to practice at home.

3.4 TRAINING

3.4.1 TRAINING UNDERTAKEN

MUSEC recommends that coordinators of the program undertake the three-day MULTILIT Reading Tutor Advanced Program Training provided by MUSEC, and that any tutors delivering the program at least do the one-day MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program Training.

The survey found that just over three-quarters of MULTILIT Coordinators had undertaken either the one-day or the three-day training course provided by MUSEC (57% had done the one-day program and 22% had done the three-day program). Some 55% of MULTILIT tutors in the survey had done the one-day training program, and less than 2% had done the three-day training course. A small number (about 6%) of Coordinators and tutors had done the MULTILIT Extension Program Training course.

Most of the other tutors had undertaken internal training by the MULTILIT Coordinator or a teacher. A small number of Coordinators (5%) and tutors (3%) said they did no training at all. Other training specified by a small number of respondents included *visiting other schools to observe MULTILIT, previously working for MULTILIT at Macquarie, and post graduate training at Macquarie University as part of an education degree.*

A common approach found in the qualitative research was for the MULTILIT Coordinator at a school to undertake the formal training with MUSEC (either the three-day or the one-day training) and then this person trained the tutors back at the school, through one or more school training sessions or more informal coaching and discussion about the program.

3.4.2 SATISFACTION WITH TRAINING

The survey found that the extent to which staff felt the training prepared them sufficiently for implementing MULTILIT was significantly higher amongst those who undertook formal training. The vast majority of respondents who completed formal external training in MULTILIT indicated that the training had been sufficient for implementing the program (95% of respondents), whereas a smaller proportion of those who had undertaken internal training by a teacher/coordinator said the training was sufficient (79%).

There was also a very high level of satisfaction amongst Coordinators and tutors who did formal training on MULTILIT with the content, relevance and quality of the training programs, with more than 96% of respondents reporting they were *satisfied* or *very satisfied*.

The qualitative research supports these findings. Those Coordinators and tutors who undertook formal training in MULTILIT reported that the training had been very worthwhile. Even teachers who had specialist literacy training and experience felt they gained important insights about the MULTILIT program that had helped with implementation, eg pacing and time management, having the lessons modelled:

As STLA teachers we've had training on a lot of these things. They're not necessarily new approaches – a lot of these things we've done before, so for us it's not terribly difficult to take on board.

The training was great, a really good refresher.

The only staff who expressed doubt about the sufficiency of the training were those who had not done the formal training. As one teachers aide and MULTILIT tutor explained:

The only thing is the video shows only kids who are able to do it all. They don't show someone who has problems. It would be good if they could show how you deal with that.

Having said that, most of the tutors interviewed, most of whom had not undertaken formal training, said they felt confident about implementing MULTILIT:

It's not that hard to learn and if you have any questions it's usually in the handbook or you can ask [Coordinator].

You learn on the job, as you're actually doing it.

I only started tutoring four weeks ago, so I didn't do the initial training, but I've had an overlap with the other tutor so I've been able to watch her, and there's the DVD – it's really pretty straightforward.

It's really beneficial to watch another tutor for a week or so. There's a lot to read [in the handbook] but it's very rewarding.

3.5 SOURCES OF IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

The types of resources and support deemed important in delivering MULTILIT by the highest proportion of teachers were (in terms of *total importance*):

- the written MULTILIT books (89%)
- support from the school Executive (88%)
- in-school support from the MULTILIT Coordinator (86%).

The written MULTILIT books were also nominated as very important by the highest proportion of respondents (64%). The resources least frequently nominated by respondents an important source of support were *access to online forums/blogs* (24%) and *support from MULTILIT (Macquarie University)* (40%).

TABLE 8 – IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT AND RESOURCES IN DELIVERING MULTILIT (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

RESOURCE/SUPPORT	TOTAL IMPORTANCE	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	HARD TO SAY	NOT APPLICABLE
The written MULTILIT books	88.7	64.4	24.3	1.7	-	2.3	7.3
Support from the school Executive	88.1	54.8	33.3	3.4	0.6	1.1	6.8
In-school support from the MULTILIT Coordinator	85.9	58.2	27.7	2.8	1.1	1.1	9.0
Internal school training/ mentoring on MULTILIT	81.4	50.3	31.1	4.0	1.7	1.7	11.3
Formal MULTILIT training workshops	78.0	46.3	31.7	4.0	1.1	1.1	15.8
Access to research/ professional development resources	59.9	20.3	39.6	16.4	4.0	4.5	15.3
Support from MULTILIT (Macquarie University)	39.5	14.1	25.4	22.6	6.8	7.3	23.7
Access to online forums/ blogs etc	24.3	6.8	17.5	31.1	12.4	9.0	23.2

It is important to consider these findings in conjunction with a further breakdown of the responses by role, as a good proportion of respondents to the survey did not have a direct role in implementing MULTILIT. As Table 9 shows, those respondents with a direct role in delivering or overseeing MULTILIT (Executives, MULTILIT Coordinators and tutors) were more likely than classroom teachers/other teaching staff to

highlight the importance of resources and support including the MULTILIT books, in-school support from the Executive and Coordinator, and formal and internal training.

TABLE 9 –IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT AND RESOURCES BY ROLE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

RESOURCE/SUPPORT	TOTAL IMPORTANCE	EXECUTIVE	MULTILIT COORDINATOR	MULTILIT TUTOR	CLASSROOM TEACHER/ OTHER STAFF*
The written MULTILIT books	88.7	83.8	100.0	96.9	68.4
Support from the school Executive	88.1	86.5	86.5	96.9	76.3
In-school support from the MULTILIT Coordinator	85.9	86.5	83.8	90.8	78.9
Internal school training/ mentoring on MULTILIT	81.4	83.8	83.8	83.1	73.7
Formal MULTILIT training workshops	78.0	81.1	81.1	80.0	68.4
Access to research/ professional development resources	59.9	64.9	43.2	66.2	60.5
Support from MULTILIT (Macquarie University)	39.5	43.2	29.7	46.2	34.2
Access to online forums/ blogs etc	24.3	29.7	2.7	35.4	21.1

* Not involved in delivery of MULTILIT

3.5.1 MULTILIT HANDBOOK AND MATERIALS

The survey found that the MULTILIT handbook was the single most important source of support for the program, with 100% of Coordinators and 97% of tutors reporting that it was *important* or *very important*. Coordinators and tutors were in agreement that the handbook was critical to the program. The handbook was generally viewed as being well laid-out and explained the details of implementing the program clearly. Some tutors commented that the handbook contains 'everything you need to know'.

Most staff who used MULTILIT were very positive about the MULTILIT materials. Several Coordinators and tutors praised the way the program is based on solid theories of literacy. The comment was also made that while the program does not present a new approach to teaching reading, it is packaged in a way that makes it accessible and easy for teachers to use without having to source additional materials:

It's not new – the approaches have been around for a while, it's just they're in different places and you have to take a bit from here, and a bit from there. MULTILIT packages it all together, and it's set out nicely. You don't have to source all your materials from other places, so it's much easier for the teachers.

I like the consistency of it. When you go into a classroom there's a lot of interruptions. It's set and has to be completed as it's set out. It's also good that all the resources are there in the kit – you don't have to go hunting for anything else.

This is not a new approach – we've been doing these sorts of things for years as teachers. But it's packaged very well and it's all there, you don't have to look for other resources.

The main criticism that some staff had regarding the materials was their inability to photocopy them (MULTILIT does not permit reproduction of the materials). The need to purchase all materials was thought to affect the program's sustainability in the long run (see 5.2.1).

3.5.2 MULTILIT CENTRE/MUSEC AND WEBSITE

Some 30% of Coordinators and 46% of tutors said that support from MULTILIT staff at MUSEC was *important* or *very important*. The main form of contact they had with MUSEC was attendance at the MULTILIT training courses.

During the qualitative phase of the evaluation, very few staff reported contacting MUSEC for advice or information. A few Coordinators and tutors said they had looked up the MULTILIT website, generally in relation to a specific issue, but that it had not been an important source of information.



4 Outcomes for students

KEY FINDINGS

- In both the NAPLAN and NPLN Assessment data sets, gains in mean reading scores were observed for all student cohorts at MULTILIT 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 both NAPLAN cohorts (students in Year 3 in 2008 and 2009), students at MULTILIT schools achieved slightly higher reading score gains than for students across the State as a whole. In all cohorts, the reading growth observed for students at MULTILIT schools was generally in line with the gains achieved across all NPLN literacy focus schools.
- The majority of survey respondents and staff consulted in the qualitative research believed that MULTILIT had overall been an effective program for improving literacy.
- The main areas in which improvements were seen were in the decoding of texts and confidence in reading. Improvements were also observed in fluency, comprehension, reading levels and attitudes towards school.
- Numerous examples of improved reading levels and/or NPLN Assessment scores were provided by schools that were visited in the qualitative stage. Examples were also provided of instances in which MULTILIT had been less effective, these generally involved a learning difficulty on the part of the student.
- The program had reportedly been effective not only in improving reading levels, but in boosting students confidence in themselves, which in several instances had led to achievement or improvement in other areas.
- The majority of staff believed that MULTILIT was as effective when used with Aboriginal students as with non-Aboriginal students. Some believed the program was particularly well suited to Aboriginal students because of the one-on-one nature of the methodology. Confirmation of the program's efficacy was provided by a number of parents/carers of Aboriginal children who observed improvements in their children's reading.
- Overall, the reading gains in NAPLAN and NPLN Assessments for Aboriginal students were in line with those for non-Aboriginal students.
- Critical success factors identified were
 - the intensive one-on-one nature of the program
 - the clear and prescriptive approach
 - effective engagement of students
 - seeing the program in the context of a whole-of-school strategy
 - the role of the MULTILIT Coordinator
 - School Executive support
- The main factors that may limit success of the program was seen to be the suitability of the program to some students eg students with a learning disability, older 'too cool' students, and failure to implement the program as intended, which may result in slower gains.

4.1 NAPLAN AND NPLN ASSESSMENT DATA

4.1.1 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 MULTILIT:

- 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 the NPLN period (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 MULTILIT:

- 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 BST.
- 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 program evaluation (and therefore these variables have been excluded from the analysis).

- 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 MULTILIT 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. For example, NPLN schools implementing MULTILIT as an individual literacy intervention for target students will also have implemented a whole school literacy intervention (such as Focus on Reading). The aggregate reading scores provided by EMSAD are for *all students* at schools implementing MULTILIT under the NPLN (not just the individual students that have participated in MULTILIT). Given the noted variation in the extent that MULTILIT has been used in NPLN schools (in terms of the number of target students and the number of weekly sessions), the extent to which aggregate reading gains for these schools can be attributed to MULTILIT is somewhat limited.

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 taken 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 descriptive commentary on the student outcomes observed.

4.1.2 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 10 – NAPLAN COHORT 1 READING SCORES

COMPARISON GROUP	YEAR 3 2008		YEAR 5 2010		GAIN SCORE
	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV	
MULTILIT schools	372.2	83.4	460.7	79.4	88.5
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, Individual Learning Plans, Reading 2 Learn)

TABLE 11 – NAPLAN COHORT 2 READING SCORES

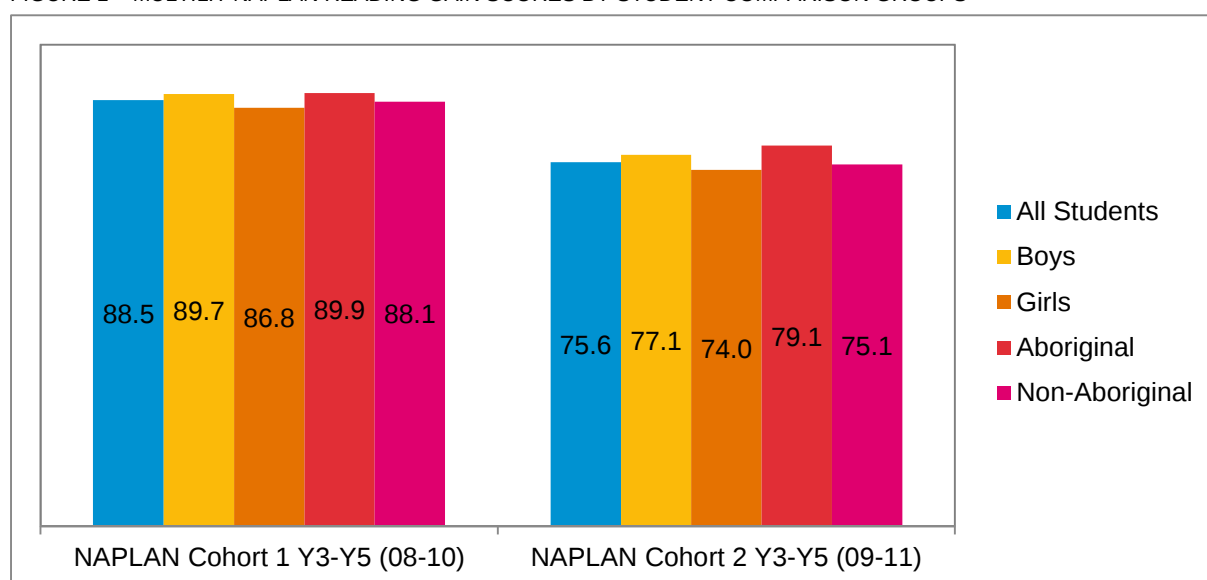
COMPARISON GROUP	YEAR 3 2009		YEAR 5 2011		GAIN SCORE
	MEAN	STD DEV	MEAN	STD DEV	
MULTILIT schools	383.1	83.7	458.7	80.0	75.6
NPLN literacy focus schools	384.0	84.4	459.9	79.3	75.9
All State schools	423.7	91.3	496.1	82.8	72.4

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

This data shows that NPLN schools participating in MULTILIT have achieved gains in the NAPLAN mean reading score for both student cohorts. In both NAPLAN cohorts, the gain score for students at MULTILIT schools was effectively equal to that for all NPLN literacy focus schools, and slightly higher than that for all State schools. However, the mean reading score at MULTILIT schools over the NPLN period was still notably lower than the State average. It should be noted that 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 MULTILIT program.

The NAPLAN reading gain scores for MULTILIT schools were also compared for key student comparison groups (gender and Aboriginality). This data is presented in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1 – MULTILIT NAPLAN READING GAIN SCORES BY STUDENT COMPARISON GROUPS



The comparison of gain scores shows no notable variance in reading growth according to gender, with growth for male students marginally exceeding that for female students in both cohorts. The gain scores for Aboriginal students were slightly higher than those for non-Aboriginal students in both cohorts. However, the sample size of Aboriginal students completing the NAPLAN tests in MULTILIT schools was small (≤ 315 students) and the aggregate school data does not specify the proportion of these students who specifically participated in MULTILIT; therefore the ability to draw any reliable conclusions from this data is limited.

4.1.3 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 12 – 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	
MULTILIT schools	41.9	8.0	50.6	7.5	53.1	8.0	11.2
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, Individual Learning Plans, Reading 2 Learn)

TABLE 13 – 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	
MULTILIT schools	47.7	8.1	53.8	8.2	55.4	8.1	7.7
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, Individual Learning Plans, Reading 2 Learn)

TABLE 14 – 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	
MULTILIT schools	51.7	8.2	55.4	8.3	58.3	8.5	6.7
NPLN literacy focus schools*	51.6	8.2	55.5	8.2	58.7	8.5	7.0

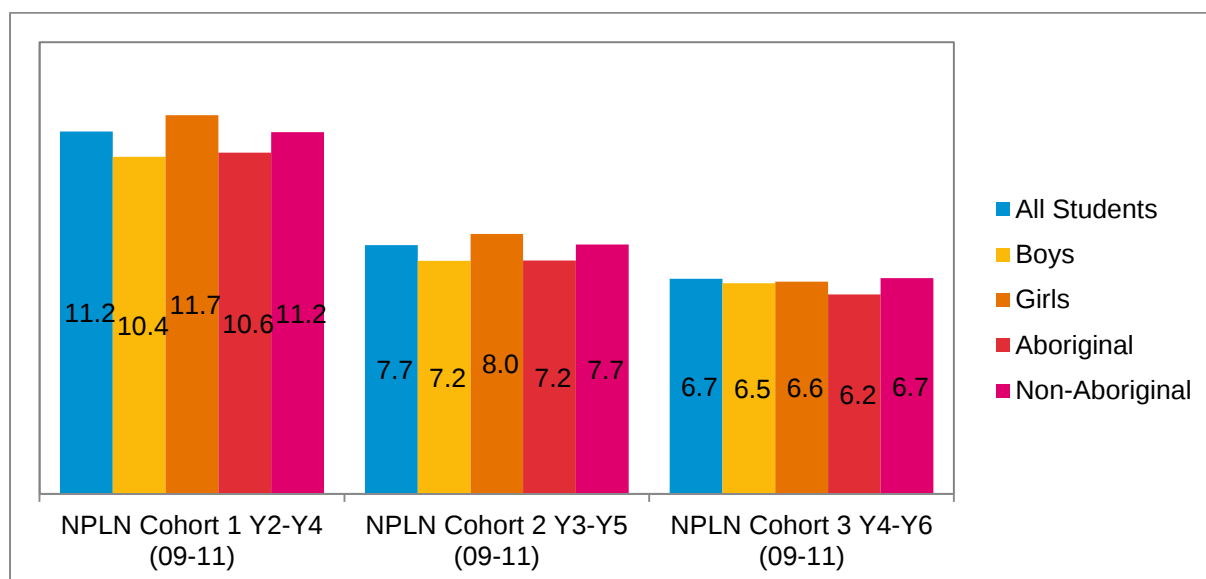
*NPLN schools implementing whole school and individual literacy interventions (includes MLMT, Focus on Reading, MULTILIT, Accelerated Literacy, Individual Learning Plans, Reading 2 Learn)

This data shows that MULTILIT 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 scores for students from MULTILIT schools were in line with the gains across all NPLN literacy focus schools.

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

FIGURE 2 – MULTILIT NPLN ASSESSMENT 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 all three cohorts. In contrast to the NAPLAN results, the NPLN assessment data shows that the literacy gain scores for Aboriginal students were marginally lower than those for non-Aboriginal students in all three cohorts. However, again, given the small sample size of Aboriginal students in MULTILIT schools (≤ 315 students), and no indication of the proportion that have participated in the program, the validity of this result is limited.

4.1.4 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 previously outlined. Of particular note is the fact that the aggregate results for NPLN-funded MULTILIT schools include data for all students at the school, not just the individual students who participated in MULTILIT. These limitations 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 MULTILIT 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 both NAPLAN cohorts (students in Year 3 in 2008 and 2009), students at MULTILIT schools achieved slightly higher reading score gains than for students across the State as a whole. In all cohorts, the reading growth observed for students at MULTILIT schools was generally in line with the gains achieved across all NPLN literacy focus schools.

No demonstrable variation in results was observed in the key student comparison groups (gender and Aboriginality). Overall, the reading gains for Aboriginal students were in line with those for non-Aboriginal students; however, the small sample size of test data for Aboriginal students in MULTILIT schools means that the validity and reliability of this result is limited.

4.2 STUDENT OUTCOMES

4.2.1 OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

The survey of school staff found that the vast majority of respondents (91%) believed that MULTILIT had been *effective* or *very effective* in improving reading outcomes for students. This view was fairly consistent across respondent roles, although MULTILIT tutors were more likely than others to report that the program had been effective (see Table 15 below).

TABLE 15 – OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT IN IMPROVING READING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS BY ROLE
(PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL	EXECUTIVE	MULTILIT COORDINATOR	MULTILIT TUTOR	CLASSROOM TEACHER/ OTHER STAFF
Very effective	44.6	40.5	43.2	49.2	42.1
Effective	46.3	51.4	45.9	46.2	42.1
Neither effective nor ineffective	2.3	2.7	2.7	1.5	2.6
Not very effective	1.7	2.7	2.7	-	2.6
Not at all effective	0.6	-	2.7	-	-
Too soon to say	3.4	2.7	2.7	1.5	7.9
Hard to say	1.1	-	-	1.5	2.6
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total effective</i>	<i>91.0</i>	<i>91.9</i>	<i>89.2</i>	<i>95.4</i>	<i>84.2</i>

In terms of *total effectiveness*, there was no notable variation in responses according to whether schools had delivered the recommended number of sessions per week (four or more), or had regularly used all three components of MULTILIT in students' sessions. However respondents from schools delivering four or more weekly sessions were significantly more likely to report that the program had been *very effective* in improving student reading outcomes than those respondents that had only run three or fewer weekly sessions (48% compared to 28%) (see Table 16 below).

TABLE 16 – OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT IN IMPROVING READING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS BY IMPLEMENTATION MODEL (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL	NUMBER SESSIONS PER WEEK			USE OF ALL 3 COMPONENTS**		
		4 OR MORE	1-3	UNKNOWN*	YES	NO	UNKNOWN*
Very effective	44.6	47.9	28.1	59.2	37.0	39.6	59.2
Effective	46.3	42.3	59.6	36.7	51.9	49.5	36.7
Neither effective nor ineffective	2.3	2.8	1.8	2.0	3.7	2.0	2.0
Not very effective	1.7	2.8	1.8	-	3.7	2.0	-
Not at all effective	0.6	-	1.8	-	3.7	-	-
Too soon to say	3.4	4.2	3.5	2.0	-	5.0	2.0
Hard to say	1.1	-	3.5	-	-	2.0	-
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total effective</i>	<i>91.0</i>	<i>90.1</i>	<i>87.7</i>	<i>95.9</i>	<i>88.9</i>	<i>89.1</i>	<i>95.9</i>

* Information for school unavailable as survey not completed by the school's MULTILIT Coordinator or respondent did not identify their school

** Always or usually use Sight Words, Word Attack and Reinforced Reading in student sessions

Other significant variables identified in the survey were *rurality* - respondents from schools in rural/remote and regional areas were slightly more likely to report finding MULTILIT effective in improving student reading outcomes (91%) than respondents from metropolitan schools (86%); and *school size* - a higher proportion of teachers working in small (95%) and medium-size schools (94%) reported that MULTILIT had been effective for students compared to teachers in large schools (80%) (See Table 17 below).

TABLE 17 – OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT IN IMPROVING READING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS BY SCHOOL SIZE AND LOCATION (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL	SCHOOL LOCATION			SCHOOL SIZE (NO. STUDENTS)		
		METRO	REGIONAL CITY OR TOWN	RURAL/ REMOTE	LESS THAN 200	200 – 400	MORE THAN 400
Very effective	44.6	45.5	43.1	45.6	53.6	53.7	12.8
Effective	46.3	40.9	47.7	48.5	41.1	40.2	66.7
Neither effective nor ineffective	2.3	6.8	-	1.5	-	-	10.3
Not very effective	1.7	2.3	3.1	-	3.6	-	2.6
Not at all effective	0.6	-	1.5	-	-	1.2	-
Too soon to say	3.4	2.3	3.1	4.4	1.8	3.7	5.1
Hard to say	1.1	2.3	1.5	-	-	1.2	2.6
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total effective</i>	<i>91.0</i>	<i>86.4</i>	<i>90.8</i>	<i>91.0</i>	<i>94.6</i>	<i>93.9</i>	<i>79.5</i>

The survey results on the effectiveness of MULTILIT in improving reading outcomes should be qualified by the fact that the responses included a significant proportion of school staff who did not have a direct program delivery role. Those with a direct delivery role tended to rate the improvement more highly than those without such a role.

The results from the qualitative research were consistent with the survey results. The vast majority of MULTILIT Coordinators, tutors, school staff, parents and students felt that MULTILIT had noticeably improved students' reading levels and increased their confidence. A common view was that the program had worked extremely well for some students, and marginally well for others:

Some students have made big improvements. Some it's just baby steps.

Some have come on leaps and bounds, they've really blossomed. And some it's been a lot slower – they've made some improvement but it's been much more of a challenge.

4.2.2 DECODING OF TEXTS

A very high proportion of the survey respondents reported that MULTILIT had improved students' text decoding skills. In particular:

- 95% saw improvement in students' recognition of sight words
- 94% saw improvement in students' word attack skills
- 91.5% saw improvement in students' ability to decode texts
- 91.5% saw improvement in students' use of effective strategies to assist them to understand and read text.

While the overall results are very positive, distinctions were made by respondents in relation to how much of an improvement they observed. Table 18 below suggests that the most significant improvements were seen in relation to *recognition of sight words* and *word attack skills*. Respondents were evenly split between observing significant improvement and some improvement in relation to *ability to decode texts* and *use of effective strategies to assist them to understand and read text*.

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

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVEMENT	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT	SOME IMPROVEMENT	A LITTLE IMPROVEMENT	NO IMPROVEMENT	HARD TO SAY
Students' recognition of sight words	94.9	65.5	29.4	2.3	-	2.8
Students' word attack skills	93.8	60.5	33.3	3.4	-	2.8
Students' ability to decode texts	91.5	44.6	46.9	6.2	0.6	1.7
Students' use of effective strategies to assist them to understand and read text	91.5	44.1	47.5	4.0	1.7	2.8

Feedback from the consultations with schools and families support the positive survey findings. The large majority of teachers, tutors and parents reported that their child/ren's ability to decode texts had improved. Indeed several teachers and tutors commented that the teaching of strategies for decoding text was one of MULTILIT's major strengths:

It's very good for decoding words, sounding out, letter recognition. It would be great to start it in Year 2, identify those kids who are struggling early and intervene.

Even if they can't get [the spelling] right, they are now sounding it out and having a go, whereas they wouldn't have done that before.

4.2.3 FLUENCY

A high proportion (88%) of the survey respondents reported that MULTILIT had improved students' reading fluency. However the results were evenly split between those who thought there had been a *significant improvement* and those who thought there had been *some improvement*, which is a less positive result than other areas in which improvement was observed. Nevertheless, no one thought there had been *no improvement* in fluency.

TABLE 19 – OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENT LITERACY - FLUENCY (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVEMENT	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT	SOME IMPROVEMENT	A LITTLE IMPROVEMENT	NO IMPROVEMENT	HARD TO SAY
Students' reading fluency	88.1	44.1	44.1	8.5	-	3.4

In the qualitative research, staff had mixed views about the impact of the program on fluency. Some staff believed fluency of a number of children in the program had improved, while others did not see as much improvement in fluency as in other aspects of reading. Some staff at schools where there was less

emphasis on the Reinforced Reading component thought that this may have impacted on fluency improvement.

4.2.4 COMPREHENSION

A high proportion of survey respondents reported that students' comprehension of texts had improved (86%) and students' ability to read for meaning had improved (85%). However, the majority of these thought that there had been *some improvement* rather than *significant improvement*. Very few staff thought there had been no improvement.

TABLE 20 – OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' LITERACY - COMPREHENSION (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVEMENT	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT	SOME IMPROVEMENT	A LITTLE IMPROVEMENT	NO IMPROVEMENT	HARD TO SAY
Students' comprehension of texts	86.4	31.1	55.4	6.8	2.3	4.5
Students' ability to read for meaning	84.7	30.5	54.2	9.0	1.7	4.5

In the qualitative research, school staff were divided about the extent to which MULTILIT had improved students' comprehension of texts. Several MULTILIT Coordinators and tutors commented that they observed improvement in decoding/word attack skills, but less improvement in comprehension:

I'm not sure how good it is for comprehension. It doesn't require comprehension to sail through the levels.

MULTILIT doesn't address comprehension enough. We're also limited by time – with only 30 minutes we can't be sure they're understanding everything.

MULTILIT doesn't address comprehension. It doesn't help kids with expressive language problems and comprehension problems.

Other staff felt the program was having an impact on students' comprehension levels:

At the start of the year they couldn't do the blue box [of readers]. Now they can all get one and do it.

(Coordinator)

4.2.5 CONFIDENCE AND ENTHUSIASM FOR READING

A very high proportion of the survey respondents reported that MULTILIT had improved students' confidence and enthusiasm in reading. In particular:

- 94% saw an improvement in students' confidence in reading
- 88% saw an improvement in students' enthusiasm for reading
- 88% saw an improvement in students' willingness to discuss what they have read.

TABLE 21 – OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' LITERACY – CONFIDENCE/ENTHUSIASM FOR READING
(PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVEMENT	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT	SOME IMPROVEMENT	A LITTLE IMPROVEMENT	NO IMPROVEMENT	HARD TO SAY
Students' confidence in reading	94.4	67.8	26.6	4.0	-	1.7
Students' enthusiasm for reading	87.6	49.7	37.9	6.8	1.1	4.5
Students' willingness to discuss what they have read	87.6	46.9	40.7	7.9	1.1	3.4

A major impact of the program was reported to be the increase in confidence shown by many of the students who have participated and shown improvement in their reading. Staff, parents and students themselves made a number of comments in relation to this:

MULTILIT inspired me to write a book, and The Secret Garden, and my mum... She said I can do anything I want.

(Aboriginal girl, Year 5)

When we make speeches we know heaps more words.

(Boy, Year 4)

I was always scared to read in reading groups and now I'm not.

(Girl, Year 3)

This year [my son] has been putting up his hand to answer questions, whereas before he would try and hide.

(Parent)

He'd be in the top part of his class now in literacy – after someone you had to bribe to get to do his home reader and called himself dumb. I haven't heard him call himself dumb for a while.

(Parent)

Before MULTILIT [son] was very withdrawn. Now he has a go, he sounds out his words. It's given him the confidence to go forward. He was still on his kindergarten words in Year 2.

(Parent)

It's turned a shy little boy into a confident little boy.

(Parent)

It's given him confidence – he's getting more awards at school.

(Parent)

NAPLAN didn't worry them.

(Parent)

Both the school captains this year were MULTILIT kids. I doubt very much they would have stood for captain last year.

(MULTILIT Coordinator)

A girl in Year 6 read part of an Anzac Day speech – she would never have done that before MULTILIT.

(MULTILIT Coordinator)

[Year 3 boy] believed reading was too hard. Through MULTILIT he realised he could do it. We would see him become much more confident.

(Teacher)

They say they feel better because they can read.

(MULTILIT Tutor)

A number of parents also commented on their children's newfound enthusiasm for reading, which they ascribed to the gains they had made through MULTILIT:

Now he's really passionate about his 'Ripley's Believe It or Not' and we've progressed from just looking at the pictures.

(Parent of a Year 3 child with Asperger's Syndrome)

[Daughter] is ordering books from book club now and she never used to do that. She's bringing home books from the library. She reads at night and when I tell her it's time to put the light out, she says 'Can't I just finish this book'?

They're reading books now that I wouldn't have.

[Daughter] has joined the library. The girls go up to the library and borrow books on weekends and during the holidays. They want to go as soon as they wake up.

4.2.6 IMPROVED READING LEVELS

The survey results found that school staff believed MULTILIT had had a significant impact on reading levels and reading in the school. Specifically:

- 85% saw an improvement in the complexity of texts read
- 83% saw an improvement in the volume of reading undertaken
- 79% saw an improvement in the variety of texts read.

TABLE 22 – OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' LITERACY – TEXTS READ (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVEMENT	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT	SOME IMPROVEMENT	A LITTLE IMPROVEMENT	NO IMPROVEMENT	HARD TO SAY
The complexity of texts read	85.3	29.4	55.9	8.5	1.1	5.1
The volume of reading undertaken	83.1	33.9	49.2	10.2	2.3	4.5
The variety of texts read	79.1	32.8	46.3	13.6	1.1	6.2

During the qualitative phase of the research, a few schools were able to provide some data at the school and student levels to demonstrate the effectiveness of the NPLN interventions including MULTILIT at the school. For example:

SCHOOL1 – REGIONAL SCHOOL WITH LARGE ABORIGINAL STUDENT POPULATION

2010 NAPLAN RESULTS SHOWED:

- Year 3 to Year 5 growth that was above the State's average in reading (94 average school growth, 83.8 average State growth).
- Year 5 boys were 32 scale scores above the State average growth in the NAPLAN Reading test (much of the first intake for MULTILIT at this school was boys in this cohort who did two terms of MULTILIT before sitting the NAPLAN tests).
- Year 5 girl had growth of 133 points in reading and moved from band 2 to band 5.
- Year 5 boy had growth of 133 points in reading – 'MULTILIT unbelievably switched him on and gave him confidence' (MULTILIT Coordinator).
- Year 5 boy had growth of 341 points in reading (he completed the test in Year 5, whereas he didn't complete in Year 3).
- Year 5 boy had growth of 107 points in reading – 'He went on to become school captain'.
- There appeared to be a correspondence between MULTILIT and growth in the grammar and punctuation results: several Year 5 students on MULTILIT achieved growth of between 112-146 points.
- The school got the Year 6 children to do the NAPLAN test papers after the NAPLAN testing days in order to see how they were going. Several of the children who were on the MULTILIT program scored very well eg three boys who were band 3 in Year 5 were in band 6 in Year 6, one of them at the top of the band.
- The results also included some surprises – eg one Year 5 girl who did very well on MULTILIT and had worked hard achieved only 64 point growth in reading; another girl achieved 148 point growth in grammar and punctuation but did not do so well in reading.
- The school's average growth in writing and spelling remained below the State average.

The school's NPLN assessment data showed significant decrease in the percentage in the bottom two bands:

- in 2009 37% were in band 1; in 2010 5% were in band 1
- in 2009 74% were in bands 1 and 2; in 2010 38% were in bands 1 and 2
- there were several MULTILIT students who moved up one or more bands between 2009 and 2010, including a few who moved from band 1 to band 3.

We anticipate that without MULTILIT these kids would all be sitting around band 1. (MULTILIT Coordinator)

SCHOOL2 – METROPOLITAN SCHOOL

- Girl who was borderline IM, started at level 15 and exited at level 26. Her goal was to be able to read a Paul Jennings book like her friends, and she achieved this.
- Boy, who had always struggled with reading got to a point where he could read a level 30 text, and his self esteem noticeably increased.
- Boy started at level 15 and exited at level 26.
- Year 3 boy – made big improvements in 5 weeks – better reader, and more confidence. His comprehension improved also – *'If you stop him when he's reading he can now tell you what it's all about'* (MULTILIT Coordinator)
- Year 4 boy was disjointed and had low comprehension. By the time he exited MULTILIT he was reading fluently and had jumped several reading levels. He used to be quiet and timid, but became much more confident.
- There were also examples where there have not been particularly good outcomes:
 - A boy in Year 6 – did well on the program last year, but still below grade level at level 22. He has an expressive language problem. MULTILIT helps keep his ego intact by achieving new levels though.
 - Aboriginal boy who has expressive and receptive language problems, as well as neurological issues. His progress has been slow and small. He has already done a number of programs however – Reading Recovery, a range of Aboriginal programs including Norta Norta, but he has regressed.

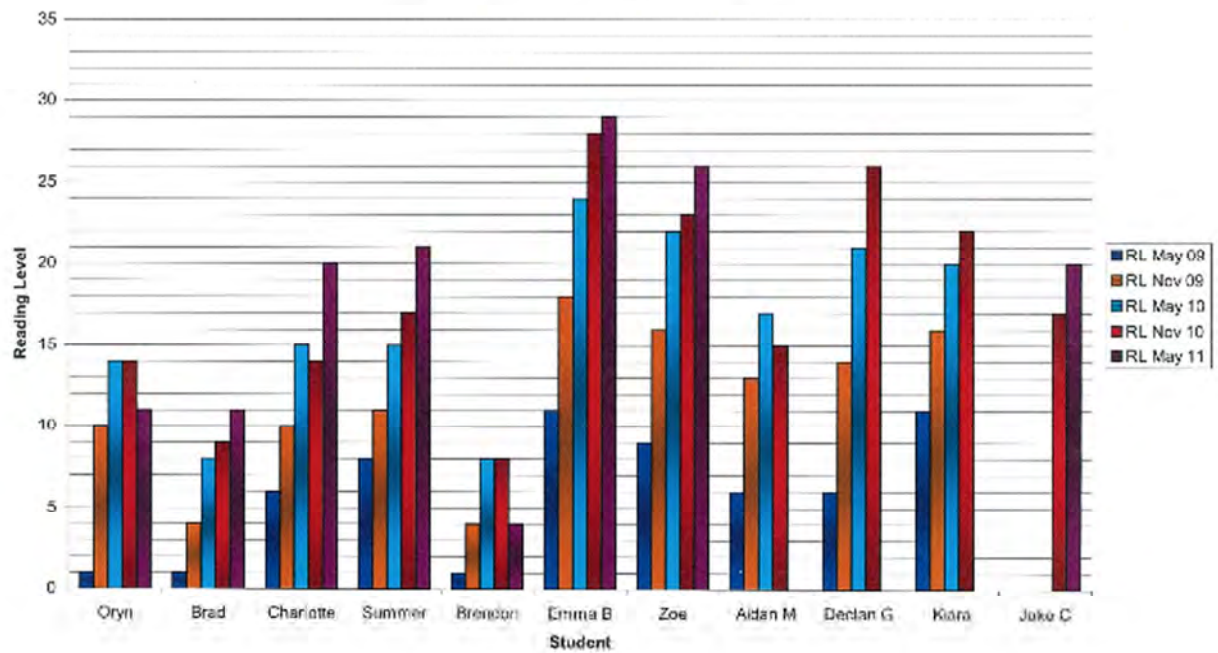
SCHOOL3 – RURAL SCHOOL

- Boy in Year 2, Term 4 2009 was at reading level 26; by Year 3, Term 4 2010 he was at reading level Green. In the NPLN benchmark tests he was band 1 in 2009, band 2 in 2010 and by September 2010 he was band 3.
- Girl in Year 2 Term 4 2009 was at reading level 25 with a Burt score of 39; by Year 3, Term 4 2010 she was at reading level Easy Green with a Burt score of 53.
- An example of someone who did not do so well on the program was a boy who in Year 1 Term 4 2009 was at reading level 8; in Year 2 Term 2 2010 he was at reading level 9; and in Year 2 Term 4 2010 he was at reading level 11. This boy did Reading Recovery and had other interventions, but progress was very slow. He has been assessed and has memory issues.

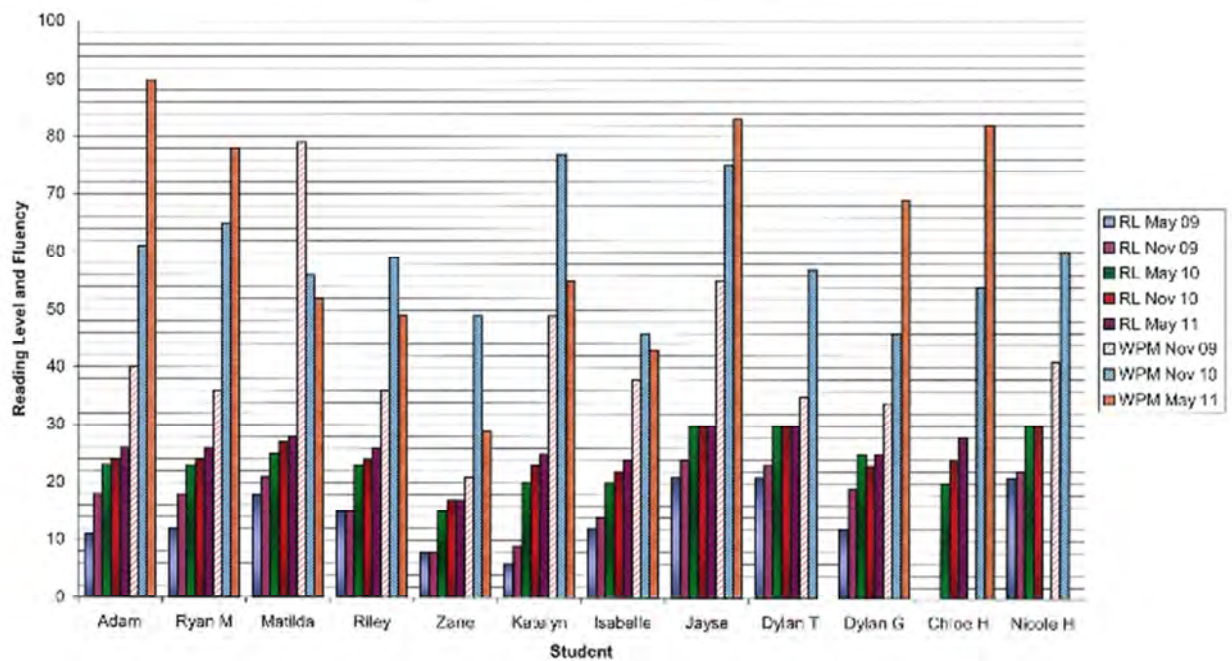
SCHOOL4 – METROPOLITAN SCHOOL

- The graphs on the following pages illustrate the growth in reading levels of children participating in MULTILIT.

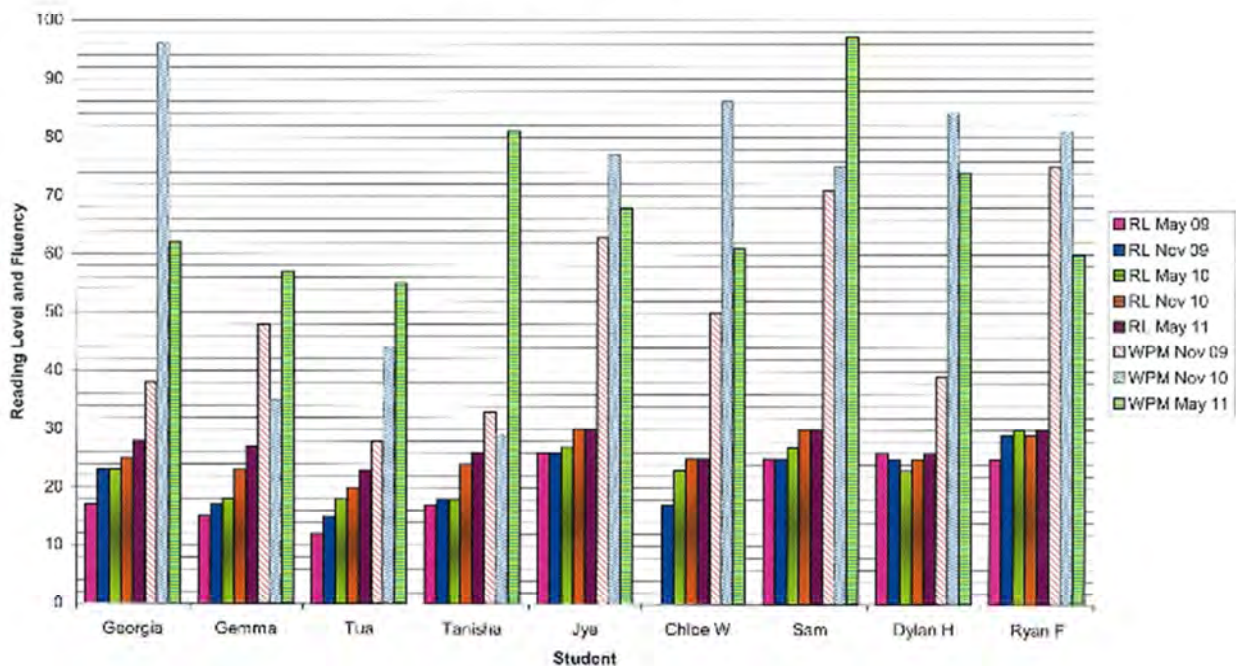
Multilit Progress Year 3 Students 2011



Multilit Progress Year 4 Students 2011



Multilit Progress Year 5 Students 2011



MULTILIT Coordinators, tutors and teachers made a number of observations that illustrated their view that MULTILIT had been effective in increasing reading levels of most children on the program. As one MULTILIT Coordinator commented:

Our experience is that all the kids on the program move a level or more. There's success from every child.

Many parents also observed improved reading levels in their children:

I'm so excited about his reading skills. I was really worried last year...From the end of last year when he started MULTILIT, I've noticed such a huge improvement. He picks up and reads the paper. He likes reading the food labels in the supermarket. He's reading signs. There's an absolutely huge difference.

(Parent of a Year 3 child with Asperger's Syndrome)

They get small rewards which motivates them too.

[Son] used to not be able to sound out words, but now he is doing that. You'll never get him to enjoy reading a book, but he is doing it now. The librarian is helping him to choose books at the right level for him.

[Son] is sounding out words much better. He did struggle on bigger words... He can be a bit lazy with reading but once he gets into a book he likes it. [This mother now does the MULTILIT exercises at home with her son using the MULTILIT student book.] It can be a struggle to get him to do it but we try and do it at night and on the weekends.

[Son] still struggles with sounding words out. He has improved... when we're out shopping he looks about and reads words and sometimes asks me about them. He's still finding it hard. We could look at strategies at home.

His report I was most proud of [last year]. It's the first time since he's been at school that he was at year level in all areas except one.

[My son Hunter] said, 'Mum, I didn't realise my name was everywhere on things in Sydney!'

(Parent of a Year 3 boy)

We live on a farm, and he's now reading all the labels on things, and he tells us 'You can't use that, or you have to do this'. Before MULTILIT he wouldn't attempt to read. He'd just say 'I can't do it'.

He just got a new watch and he's reading the manual – he wouldn't have done that before.

Many students were also able to articulate ways in which MULTILIT had improved their reading levels:

You learn words that you didn't know before.

(Boy, Year 4)

It's easier to understand questions.

(Girl, Year 4)

Before MULTILIT I didn't read chapter books and now I read chapter books.

(Girl, Year 4)

It helps with reading groups.

(Boy, Year 4)

I can read chapter books.

(Boy, Year 3)

It's easier to read the NAPLAN questions.

(Boy, Year 5)

We know how to spell words more clearly.

(Girl, Year 4)

I was just looking at look at the pictures before. Now I'm reading.

(Boy, Year 3)

I can pronounce more words better.

(Boy, Year 4)

A small minority of parents felt that MULTILIT had not had a significant impact on their child's reading levels, or felt that their child still struggled with reading:

No difference. Didn't know anything. Didn't know she was doing the program, didn't know she had a reading problem. Nothing.

[Daughter] still struggles with sounding out words. She could look at strategies at home. Once we have the strategies we could turn it into a game.

4.2.7 ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCHOOL AND LEARNING

The survey found that 75% of respondents felt that students' enthusiasm for their other schoolwork (beyond literacy) had improved (50% said there had been *some improvement*, 25% said there had been *significant improvement*).

TABLE 23 – OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' LITERACY - ENTHUSIASM FOR OTHER SCHOOLWORK
(PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVEMENT	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT	SOME IMPROVEMENT	A LITTLE IMPROVEMENT	NO IMPROVEMENT	HARD TO SAY
Students' enthusiasm for their other schoolwork (beyond literacy)	74.6	24.9	49.7	11.3	2.8	11.3

In the qualitative fieldwork the following impacts were observed:

- Improved attendance and punctuality:

My daughter now wants to get to school on time because she wants to be there.

(Parent)

It's affecting attendance and punctuality – they get to school on time.

(Teacher)

- Improved attitude to doing homework:

Homework was always a struggle. Now he just walks in, sits down and does it.

(Parent)

I can do homework in like five seconds.

(Boy, Year 4)

- Improved attitude to school in general:

If MULTILIT wasn't going smoothly I would know about it because he'd carry on about how he hates it. But he hasn't said anything.

(Parent)

4.3 OUTCOMES FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

The limitations of NAPLAN and NPLN data in identifying impacts of MULTILIT on Aboriginal students have already been discussed in section 4.1. These data found no demonstrable variation in results for Aboriginal students, and the reading gains for Aboriginal students were similar to non-Aboriginal students. However the small sample size means that caution must be used in drawing conclusions. We must therefore look to the survey data and qualitative data for further evidence on Aboriginal student outcomes.

School staff were asked in the survey to indicate the relative effectiveness of MULTILIT in improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal students compared to non-Aboriginal students. Table 24 below shows the results. The large majority of respondents indicated either that the program is *as effective* for Aboriginal students as for non-Aboriginal students (62%) or that they weren't able to compare the effectiveness (22% *not sure/hard to say*, 10% *not applicable*). A small minority reported that MULTILIT had been *more effective* for Aboriginal students than for non-Aboriginal students (4%).

TABLE 24 – EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS COMPARED TO NON-ABORIGINAL STUDENTS
(PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL
More effective than for non-Aboriginal students	4.0
As effective as for non-Aboriginal students (ie no difference)	62.1
Less effective than for non-Aboriginal students	1.7
Not sure/ hard to say	22.0
Not applicable as there are no Aboriginal students participating in MULTILIT at my school	10.2
TOTAL	100

Teachers were asked to specify why they believed this relative effectiveness had been the case. The most common reasons noted by respondents were:

- Students are targeted equally based on need/ similar profile of results for both groups:

All students chosen for the program are low level readers. All students have shown improvement. A significant increase in enthusiasm and confidence in the ability to achieve/read has made a positive impact upon all students regardless of cultural background.

We believe that children all need the same explicit, systematic instruction in reading whether they are Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. All the children on the MULTILIT Program have benefited and have become more effective and confident readers.

Improvement shown in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students show that improvement relates to things like attendance and teacher support in the classroom as opposed to cultural background.

- Positive response to one-on-one support/ relationship with MULTILIT tutor:

Aboriginal children respond well to the one-on-one tutoring especially when the tutor was also Aboriginal.

- Impact of parental support and other issues at home:

This depends on the student and the encouragement and support they receive regarding all aspects of education that they experience from their home environment.

Often Aboriginal students in our school have less support at home and a lower level of skill due to itinerancy and very low SES. They have more difficulties to contend with than many average whitefella kids. I think this extra load may lower the effectiveness of the program and skew the results.

- Impact of other learning difficulties:

MULTILIT relies heavily on sound recognition. Many Aboriginal students have experienced hearing loss at some stage and have more ground to make up.

Respondents were also asked to specify any other impacts or outcomes (positive or negative) that had been observed in Aboriginal students participating in MULTILIT. The most common additional impacts or outcomes for Aboriginal students noted by respondents included:

- Increased student confidence/ self-esteem:

The 'shame' factor of speaking in front of others has noticeably decreased for quite a few of our Aboriginal students. There has been a significant increase in most students' confidence when reading to an audience.

I have found with some of the students I have worked with this program has boosted their self-esteem and also given them some self-belief and pride about themselves. This has been gained by them successfully completing a level or even mastering some really hard unfamiliar words.

- Increased engagement/ enthusiasm for reading:

Increased confidence and involvement in other reading opportunities, ie: topic reading in class.

Aboriginal students are enjoying reading more and I have noticed that they are using the word attack skills and wanting to read more. They are enjoying reading more. They are reading more for meaning now.

- Positive response to participation in the program/ bonding with MULTILIT tutors:

One young girl of Aboriginal descent who was a reluctant reader has bonded with her tutor and voluntarily comes in early to school to receive additional tutoring.

Living in the community gives me knowledge of home life and background knowledge and knowing that this has a big impact on all learning. Students know where I live and see me daily and relate to me and the other tutors for the same reason.

- Improved attendance:

The children believe in themselves more and are willing to try new approaches to learning. There has also been a flow on to school attendance.

- Increased engagement with school:

Aboriginal students in my class have become more engaged and enjoy feeling successful.

Due to daily sessions of MULTILIT and a cultural connection, I have formed a very strong bond with my Aboriginal students and their parents. This has had a positive impact on all concerned, resulting in committed participation in the program and a positive attitude towards school.

- Focus/attention on problems with speech, hearing or other learning difficulties:

Teachers can become more aware of difficulties such as problems with phonemic awareness or hearing difficulties.

- Poor response to withdrawal from class:

The one-on-one support has helped them greatly however a couple of the children disliked being withdrawn from their class. One child found the program a little boring and showed no enthusiasm.

The survey results were consistent with the qualitative research results, where the majority of staff said that MULTILIT was equally well suited to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Many said that MULTILIT was particularly well suited to the Aboriginal students because of the individual attention/ one-on-one time that was involved:

It works for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

(Tutor)

It's so intense. They long for one-on-one, and they don't care if they have to do work.

(Tutor with a predominantly Aboriginal group)

I think it works especially well with the Aboriginal students. It gives them one-on-one time that they don't normally have, and that works really well.

(Tutor)

Every child I've done has loved it.

(Aboriginal tutor)

There's children who excel on it and others who don't excel – they're plodders.

(Tutor with a predominantly Aboriginal group)

Staff also commented on the shame factor:

There's no shame factor so they all want to come.

There is the shame factor with some kids, but MULTILIT has changed that. They now want to come to the STLA teacher.

A couple of staff said that the program could also be useful in identifying the children who need further supports or have a learning disability:

If these kids are still not improving after this program, then it indicates to us that they may have a true learning difficulty.

These children have the lowest abilities. They gain confidence and have a go.

A number of parents of Aboriginal children who participated in MULTILIT provided considerable positive feedback:

My daughter was in Reading Recovery last year and she couldn't read a letter. Then she went on MULTILIT, and now she reads books.

My son did Reading Recovery, then Royal Far West in Manly, and then this, and since he's been doing this he's shot up.

My son was always getting in trouble. He hasn't been in trouble once this year, and I put it down to the fact that he can read better, he's not getting so frustrated.

4.4 OUTCOMES FOR ESL/LBOTE STUDENTS

Only limited information was available in relation to ESL/LBOTE students' outcomes. The survey found that 54% of respondents thought that MULTILIT was *very effective* or *somewhat effective* when used with ESL/LBOTE students. Only 5% thought the program was *not very effective* or *not at all effective*, while 41% said they *did not know/couldn't tell* (presumably due to lack of experience with this group).

A few survey respondents commented on the program's lack of suitability to ESL/LBOTE students, for example:

Had trouble with some students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Just could not grasp the vowel sounds and blends.

On the other hand, a tutor in the qualitative research commented that she had not experienced significant problems in doing MULTILIT with an ESL/LBOTE child, and several staff commented that the program was suitable for all children.

4.5 SUCCESS FACTORS

4.5.1 FACTORS THAT PROMOTE SUCCESS

INTENSIVE ONE-ON-ONE LEARNING

Both the qualitative and the quantitative survey data indicated that a critical success factor for the program has been the intensive one-on-one attention the children receive through participating in MULTILIT. Some staff went so far as to suggest that the program itself was of secondary importance to the fact that students who were struggling were getting individual attention that was absent in class:

It's the one-on-one attention. In a way it doesn't matter what program you're using, the fact that you're sitting down with them and giving them that individual attention makes all the difference.

One-to-one time – probably the most important thing. They get a lot more out of one-to-one than being in a class of 30.

CLEAR AND PRESCRIPTIVE APPROACH

Many staff felt that part of the success of MULTILIT was in its high quality packaging and it's clear and prescriptive approach. Several staff commented that the approaches MULTILIT used were not new, but they were packaged and explained in a way that made it easy for teachers and tutors to implement in a school setting:

MULTILIT is explicit and systematic.

I like the consistency of it. When you go into a classroom there's lots going on and lots of interruptions. [MULTILIT] is set and has to be complied with. All the resources are there in the kit.

It's a program that's so easy to implement in school. It's so well structured – the DVDs, the website. But you also need someone who's done the training.

ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENTS

A number of aspects to the program were identified as being appealing to children and which successfully engaged them. The rapid pace, frequent successes and competitive aspect of the program was believed to appeal to many children (although it was also observed that certain children did not like the competitive/timed activities):

They like racing against the clock, they want to beat their record time.

MULTILIT works with all the kids that other programs haven't worked with. We've done ARK, Spalding, and various phonemic awareness programs. MULTILIT works because it's one-on-one and they challenge themselves. They think 'I'm going to get that word right'. They're engaged with this program.

Another feature of the program that seems to engage students is the positive reinforcement it provides to students. The program builds on student successes and this builds students' confidence in themselves:

Kids realise they can do it, they're not daunted by it. It's not scary for them.

It's self-paced, there is no rush. They can take their time until they get it. It's very positive.

The rapport that many students build with their tutor was also seen as an important factor to student engagement:

We got matched with the right people – they're more like friends, not teachers.

(Boy, Year 5)

One boy pretended he couldn't read so he could stay on MULTILIT. He loved his tutor and doing MULTILIT. It's a safe haven here – it's quiet and they can think.

(MULTILIT Tutor)

Consistency in the tutor – building rapport with the student is important. They need to trust you.

(MULTILIT Coordinator)

The flip side to the program relying on student engagement is when students do not fully engage with the program. This was reported to have occurred with some students, in particular older students (eg in Year 6) who have felt themselves to be too old or 'too cool for school'. This is discussed in further detail in Section 4.5.2.

THE PROGRAM IN THE CONTEXT OF A WHOLE-OF-SCHOOL STRATEGY

Many comments were made in the research about the need for the program to be viewed as one part of a whole-of-school strategy for improving literacy. Several staff said that MULTILIT was not a substitute for whole-of-class and whole-of-school learning, just as whole-of-class strategies could not substitute for individual interventions. There was a strong view amongst many teachers that both individual interventions and whole-of-class strategies were critical:

It can't be a standalone program. All the good things they learn have to be reinforced back in the classroom. The strategies from MULTILIT can be done in the classroom – sounding out, phonemic awareness, pause-prompt-praise...

There's got to be both. It's silly to say that these kids should just continue to struggle in class. They need individual attention.

Some felt that greater attention needed to be paid to incorporating the MULTILIT strategies into the classroom. Some teachers felt that the classroom teachers needed to have a better understanding of the program and the strategies it uses in order to bring them into the classroom and reinforce the approach:

We had hoped that we could adapt MULTILIT to use in the classroom, but we haven't done that yet.

There needs to be a plan or program to all those students who get off the MULTILIT program, there is nothing to support them once they are in the class and sometimes students don't make a link to what they have learnt in MULTILIT and how they can use it in the classroom.

I think part of MULTILIT could be adapted to a Smartboard program especially the word recognition section and used for the whole class. This could be most useful in the lower classes.

All teaching staff need to be trained in MULTILIT methodology, there may be aspects of the program which can be used with a whole class or small group.

ROLE OF THE MULTILIT COORDINATOR

The MULTILIT Coordinator in each school played a pivotal role in the implementation of the program. The survey found that the role of the MULTILIT Coordinator was the third most important source of support, after the MULTILIT handbooks and the School Executive. Critically, 90% of tutors thought the MULTILIT Coordinator was important in the implementation of the program:

MULTILIT needs a coordinator and you really need to work with it to understand.

These findings were corroborated by the qualitative research, in which most tutors said that they relied on the MULTILIT Coordinator for training, guidance and ongoing advice. Several school principals also commented on the important role the MULTILIT Coordinator played in the successful implementation of the program.

At most schools visited as part of the evaluation, the role of MULTILIT Coordinator was assigned to the specialist literacy teacher in the school – eg Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA), Learning Support Teacher. In bigger schools with more children participating in the program, the role was sometimes shared between two teachers.

SCHOOL EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

Another critical success factor identified in the research was having good Executive support. The interest and support of the Principal and the Leadership Team was seen as crucial for a number of reasons: the allocation of funds and resources to the program, generating whole-staff support for the program (particularly as it involves disruption to regular classes), allocation of a dedicated space for MULTILIT, communication with parents/carers, identifying and acting on opportunities for enhancing or expanding the program, approving training and, ultimately, deciding on the sustainability of the program for the school:

It's only as good as the support it gets.

Any program is only as good as the people you get and the professional development that goes with it.

4.5.2 FACTORS THAT MAY LIMIT SUCCESS

SUITABILITY OF THE PROGRAM TO SOME STUDENTS

The survey did not clearly identify any particular student group for whom MULTILIT had been notably ineffective. The student groups with the highest proportion of *not very effective* or *not at all effective* responses were *students above NAPLAN benchmarks* (20%) and *students with a learning disability* (15%), compared to 4% of responses for *all students*.

TABLE 25 – EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT 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
Students below NAPLAN benchmarks	91.0	59.9	31.1	3.4	-	5.6
All students	87.0	38.4	48.6	2.3	1.7	9.0
Aboriginal students	84.2	47.5	36.7	1.7	-	14.1
Students with a learning disability	76.8	29.9	46.9	13.0	1.7	8.5
ESL/LBOTE students	53.7	30.5	23.2	4.5	0.6	41.2
Students above NAPLAN benchmarks	44.6	14.1	30.5	13.6	6.8	35.0

Teachers were asked whether there were any students who were not well-suited to MULTILIT, and if so, to specify the type/s of students to whom the program was not well-suited. Just under half of all respondents indicated that there were students for whom MULTILIT was not a suitable literacy intervention, including:

- Students with learning difficulties/ well below benchmark literacy standards:

Children who have significant learning difficulties in literacy did not achieve the expected improvements. Some of these children just found the intensity and demand on concentration too difficult. Those with limited working memory also found the program too

challenging and frustrating because they had difficulty remembering the previous lesson's focus.

The program is not suited to the very low performing students as lists of words and letter/sound clusters are learnt in isolation. These students experience difficulty retaining these words and do not recognise them often when such words are embedded in texts.

Those with significant learning delays. We have found MULTILIT has suited our population of students who for some reason have 'gaps' in their learning for whatever reason. MULTILIT addresses these gaps beautifully.

Students with learning difficulties and students who are well below reading benchmark. These students require more intensive, foundational instruction of reading fundamentals rather than the next level of instruction that MULTILIT provides.

- Students with behaviour/ emotional issues/ problems with concentration:

Some attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder students find it hard to concentrate for long enough to complete a lesson.

Students with a short attention span and those that can't deal with repetitive lessons. Students that have a problem with testing and getting a mistake in the test is a negative and affects their mood for the whole session.

Behaviour issues can waste a valuable resource.

- Students with slow reading/processing capacity – problems with speed required for fluency:

Children who take a long time to think about and give an answer cannot meet the expectations for fluency in the word attack section.

Some students will never be able to meet the constraints of the timed fluency aspect. Adjustment to times or half lists are needed to help the progression to the next level - accuracy is achieved but some struggle with fluency.

Some children find the timed element of the fluency probes very stressful.

- Students who are uncomfortable with one-to-one tuition and being withdrawn from class:

Some of our older students have not felt comfortable being removed from the classroom to complete the program and have felt uncomfortable working one-to-one with a tutor.

The boys do not always respond positively - they do not always like having to leave the room as they feel a bit self-conscious. Children sometimes worry about the classroom work they will be missing out on - not that they have to make it up, but the fact that they are missing out on what everybody else is doing.

- Students with poor/inconsistent attendance at school:

Some students have been identified as having low literacy levels due to absences but because MULTILIT requires three consecutive days per week we find that these students are not attending regularly enough to reap the full benefits of the program.

- Students with speech issues/blending of sounds – problems with articulation required for fluency:

Students affected by severe speech impediment or Apraxia are not suited to this program due to the time restraint in the fluency probe...the fluency probe is quite daunting to these students and they will often confuse themselves and get tongue tied under pressure, resulting in incorrect reads and a depletion in confidence.

- Students from non-English speaking backgrounds/ESL:

Had trouble with some students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Just could not grasp the vowel sounds and blends.

- Students with poor vocabulary and comprehension:

Many of these students have already achieved a reasonable level of competency in decoding text, but their problems are in the comprehension of what they read and their vocabulary/general background knowledge. They generally have difficulty comprehending stage level text.

In the qualitative research the main group identified as being less well-suited to the program was children with significant learning difficulties, including expressive and receptive language disorders and behavioural issues. In saying that these groups were 'less well-suited' to the program, it is understood that what was meant was that the students made very slow or little progress. Some staff suggested that using MULTILIT resources on some children with learning or emotional disorders might be wasteful, when alternative strategies might suit these children better:

It is a positive for us, but is the program suited to everyone? No, but then no program is.

We have two boys who are not coming along. They need another assessment and probably some home supports are needed.

MULTILIT is not good for everyone.

MULTILIT doesn't cover very well how to deal with a child who stumbles on every word. The process is very rigid and assumes at least some progress. But what about children who just can't get it?

It's frustrating for the kids who aren't getting it. I question whether it's the program for them.

The other key group that was thought to be less receptive to the program was some older children (eg some Year 6 students) who saw themselves as being too old/too 'cool' for the program. Some staff suggested that some of the approaches MULTILIT uses (eg sight word repetition, timed activities) were well-suited to younger students but not particularly well suited to some older students that were more difficult to engage. The shortage of suitable readers for older children with low literacy levels was also seen as a problem and could have the effect of making these older students even more reluctant to participate. A number of staff commented on the challenge they experience in finding books that are both age and reading level appropriate for older learners.

FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM AS RECOMMENDED

The survey found that only 55% of schools met the frequency recommendation of four sessions or more per week. Only 16% of schools met the session length recommendation of 35-40 minutes, and nearly half of the schools ran sessions that were 20 minutes or less in length. The survey also found the three components of the program were implemented unequally, with Reinforced Reading the component most commonly left out (10% said they rarely or never implemented this component).

The survey also found a relationship between frequency of sessions and how effective the program was perceived to be. Survey respondents from schools delivering four or more weekly sessions were significantly more likely to report that the program had been very *effective* in improving student reading outcomes than those respondents that had only run three or fewer weekly sessions.

This gives rise to a number of questions. If the program had been consistently implemented as intended, would greater improvements have been seen or perceived? To what extent does the success of the program rest on the preparedness of school executives to allocate the required resources and negotiate the required withdrawal time with teachers in order to implement the program fully? And given the reality of the program being implemented in the non-laboratory setting of the school, to what extent is this achievable?

5 Impact on staff and schools

KEY FINDINGS

- MULTILIT has generally enjoyed a high level of support within the participating schools. At some schools the staff are very enthusiastic and supportive, while at others there is more muted support.
- Lack of support amongst staff at some schools was thought to relate to the disruptions that MULTILIT causes to regular classes when children are withdrawn. Some schools have put in place strategies for limiting the disruptions to classes.
- A number of teachers and tutors reported positive impacts through using MULTILIT, including greater use of data in student monitoring and planning, a greater appreciation of the difficulties some children experience in learning to read, and improved confidence in teaching reading..
- A significant level of doubt was expressed regarding the likelihood that MULTILIT would be sustained in the school. The most significant threat to sustainability was seen to be funding.
- The main success factors for sustainability of the program were capacity of the school to support a staff-intensive program, capacity to purchase the materials required, and developing training strategies for new MULTILIT tutors.

5.1 IMPACT ON STAFF

5.1.1 RESPONSE OF STAFF TO MULTILIT OVERALL

Staff who responded to the survey indicated their views on a series of statements relating to the role of MULTILIT in school, the level of support and guidance for implementing MULTILIT in the school, the perceived value of the program and its sustainability beyond the funding period. Respondents were asked to express how strongly they *agreed* or *disagreed* with each statement. The responses are presented in Table 26.

TABLE 26 – AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT IMPACT OF MULTILIT ON THE SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

STATEMENT	TOTAL AGREEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	HARD TO SAY
SCHOOL PRACTICES							
MULTILIT complements the other literacy and reading approaches in the school	89.3	50.8	38.4	5.1	2.8	1.1	1.7
MULTILIT is a very important part of this school's approach to improving literacy	88.7	53.7	35.0	6.2	3.4	1.1	0.6
There are more effective approaches to improving low progress readers' reading than MULTILIT	16.4	6.8	9.6	48.0	18.6	7.3	9.6
SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE							
MULTILIT was well planned and used in this school	94.4	57.6	36.7	5.1	0.6	-	-
There is strong leadership support for MULTILIT in my school	87.6	48.6	39.0	9.0	1.7	1.1	0.6
Support for MULTILIT in my school has grown over time	77.4	44.6	32.8	11.3	5.6	1.1	4.5
I received good support and guidance on how to use MULTILIT	70.6	45.8	24.9	17.5	3.4	1.7	6.8
VALUE AND SUSTAINABILITY							
I would recommend the use of MULTILIT in other schools	91.0	59.9	31.1	5.1	1.1	1.1	1.7
MULTILIT is well worth the investment	89.8	60.5	29.4	4.5	2.3	1.1	2.3
There is a clear path for sustaining MULTILIT in the school beyond the funding period	62.1	32.8	29.4	9.6	11.3	6.8	10.2

There was a high level of agreement with statements relating to the positive role of MULTILIT in school literacy practices, with the large majority of respondents in agreement that *MULTILIT complements the other literacy and reading approaches in the school* (89%) and that *MULTILIT is a very important part of this school's approach to improving literacy* (89%). Few respondents (16%) were in agreement with the negative statement that *there are more effective approaches to improving low progress readers' reading than MULTILIT*, with the largest proportion of respondents (48%) *neither agreeing or disagreeing* with this statement.

In terms of the level of support and guidance for implementing MULTILIT in the school, the large majority of respondents agreed with statements relating to the planning and leadership support for MULTILIT delivery in the school. The highest level of agreement expressed for any statement was that *MULTILIT was well planned and used in this school* (94% total agreement, 58% strongly agree).

There was also a high level of agreement on the value of MULTILIT, with most respondents agreeing that *I would recommend the use of MULTILIT in other schools* (91%) and that *MULTILIT is well worth the investment* (90%). The lowest level of agreement expressed for any statement was related to the

sustainability of the program, with only a third of respondents (33%) *strongly agreeing* that *there is a clear path for sustaining MULTILIT in the school beyond the funding period*.

The level of agreement with the statements was broadly consistent across school location and size; however, respondents from regional schools and large schools (with more than 400 students) were slightly less positive about the impact of MULTILIT on their school. Respondents from schools in a regional city or town were slightly less likely to agree with statements such as:

- *MULTILIT is a very important part of this school's approach to improving literacy*
- *There is strong leadership support for MULTILIT in my school*
- *Support for MULTILIT in my school has grown over time*
- *MULTILIT is well worth the investment*
- *There is a clear path for sustaining MULTILIT in the school beyond the funding period.*

Respondents from large schools were slightly less likely to agree with statements such as:

- *MULTILIT is a very important part of this school's approach to improving literacy*
- *I received good support and guidance on how to use MULTILIT*
- *I would recommend the use of MULTILIT in other schools*
- *MULTILIT is well worth the investment.*

The qualitative research found that the majority of school staff were highly supportive of the program. In a number of schools, there was reported to have been some reluctance and dissatisfaction amongst some classroom teachers, who were not happy about children being withdrawn from class. These teachers were concerned about the disruption to the class and the fact that the withdrawn children would miss out on important class work:

Organisationally it's terrible. The children are withdrawn from class for 40 minutes and they miss work we're doing in class. We've had to split up the Word Attack and Reading components so they're only out of the class for 20 minutes at a time. They're withdrawn in the literacy block. Next term we'll have to mix up the sessions so that they're not always withdrawn from the same block.

There is the issue of students coming and going from the classroom. It is disruptive for the teachers.

We find it difficult with the withdrawal part of MULTILIT and the nature of 3 times a week. We worry that children will miss other vital learning experiences so we have tried to stagger the times that kiddies go to their MULTILIT class but we still find kids coming and going from their classroom sometimes hard to juggle.

Several of the teachers interviewed said while they were reluctant at first, once they saw the gains the children were making they were more supportive. One Coordinator said that the teachers at her school became more supportive once they understood that the program was part of the National Partnership.

Some schools developed specific strategies for limiting the disruption to teachers and children. One school split the 40-minute session in two, with one 20-minute session during the literacy block in the morning, and a further 20-minute session in the afternoon for Reinforced Reading. Another school earmarked a one-hour morning block for each class in which all the MULTILIT children in the class were withdrawn at 20-minute intervals, which aimed to limit the disruption to one hour.

5.1.2 IMPACT OF MULTILIT ON TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE, AWARENESS, CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS

The issue of the impact of the program on teachers' skills and knowledge was not explored in the survey. However this issue was explored in the qualitative research, where staff were asked what they personally had gained from implementing the program. The teachers and tutors identified a number of benefits they had gained from doing MULTILIT:

- Improved the teacher's use of data in monitoring progress and planning programs:

It's forced me to evaluate what we do – I'm using spreadsheets now to assess students' progress.

It's been good because we've set up a system for monitoring student progress. We use several tests to track how they're going.

MULTILIT has made us very accountable. We've lifted our game on reporting and recording, and the teachers are now more accountable.

- Reminded the teacher/tutor of the difficulties some children experience in learning:

It reminded me how important structure is for these kids – it's step by step progress.

It gives you an appreciation for what these kids go through every day.

- Improved confidence and skills in teaching:

It's improved my confidence in teaching.

I've been able to take the approach into the classroom – I use the strategies when I'm helping in class.

- Gained an insight into planning processes:

It's given me an appreciation of what the Executive staff have to deal with all the time – things like planning and timetabling.

5.2 SUSTAINABILITY

5.2.1 VIEWS ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF MULTILIT

In the survey, the lowest level of agreement for a positive statement related to sustainability (see Table 26). To the statement, *There is a clear path for sustaining MULTILIT in the school beyond the funding period*, 33% strongly agreed and 29% agreed (62% total agreement). Some 18% disagreed and 20% neither agreed nor disagreed or did not know.

The most significant perceived threat to sustainability in both the survey and the qualitative research was funding. Many school staff expressed concern that when the funding period finished, the program would no longer be sustainable. Several staff (including school principals) commented on what they thought was the high cost of the program. This was mainly due to the ongoing costs of purchasing what were perceived to be expensive student materials (MULTILIT resources may not be photocopied):

The disappointment is the cost. It's very expensive to run and I think a lot of schools wouldn't have the funds to do it. We certainly wouldn't have been able to use it to the extent we have without the NP money.

We were very disappointed that as soon as we got the program, MULTILIT almost doubled the cost of the student books.

Allow for the student recording books to be photocopied. These books are expensive and once the National Partnership funding finishes, our school would find it very difficult to sustain the programme due to the cost of the books.

Because of the nature of needing one-on-one it is too expensive to be run by SLSOs and we cannot rely on parents to deliver the program, an alternative might be to be able to present it in a small group of children with similar needs.

We have been impressed with the early achievements of students under MULTILIT however, the challenge will be to see how many of our trained tutors we manage to retain as volunteers once the money runs out.

The money finishes this term, so we'll have to see if and how we can continue it. Budgets are very changeable and there are always competing demands.

Funding of course dictates who receives the support - it would be great to offer it to all who need it.

Aside from the resource costs, the major cost for schools has been the employment of tutors. A number of schools indicated that these had been paid for or subsidised by school funds. A few schools visited during the qualitative phase reported they planned to continue the program beyond the funding period and that the school had allocated funds to continue it. Other principals had not committed to continue allocating funds toward the program and adopted a cautious 'wait and see' approach.

5.2.2 SUCCESS FACTORS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

A number of critical factors for sustaining the program were identified through the research. These are described below.

CAPACITY OF THE SCHOOL TO SUPPORT A STAFF-INTENSIVE PROGRAM

The biggest costs for schools in implementing MULTILIT are the staff costs. The program requires a Coordinator and as many tutors as are necessary (if the program is implemented as intended, each student requires a tutor for a minimum of 2 hours and 40 minutes per week). Many schools already employ STLAS, SLSOs, Teacher's Aides and Aboriginal Education Officers who have stepped into the MULTILIT tutor and/or Coordinator role, but this too is an allocation of resources. A few schools have engaged volunteers to assist with either the main tutoring role, or as a tutor just for Reinforced Reading. However it was suggested that the volunteer solution may not be suitable if reliability of volunteers is an issue, because the children were said to benefit from the rapport established with a consistent tutor.

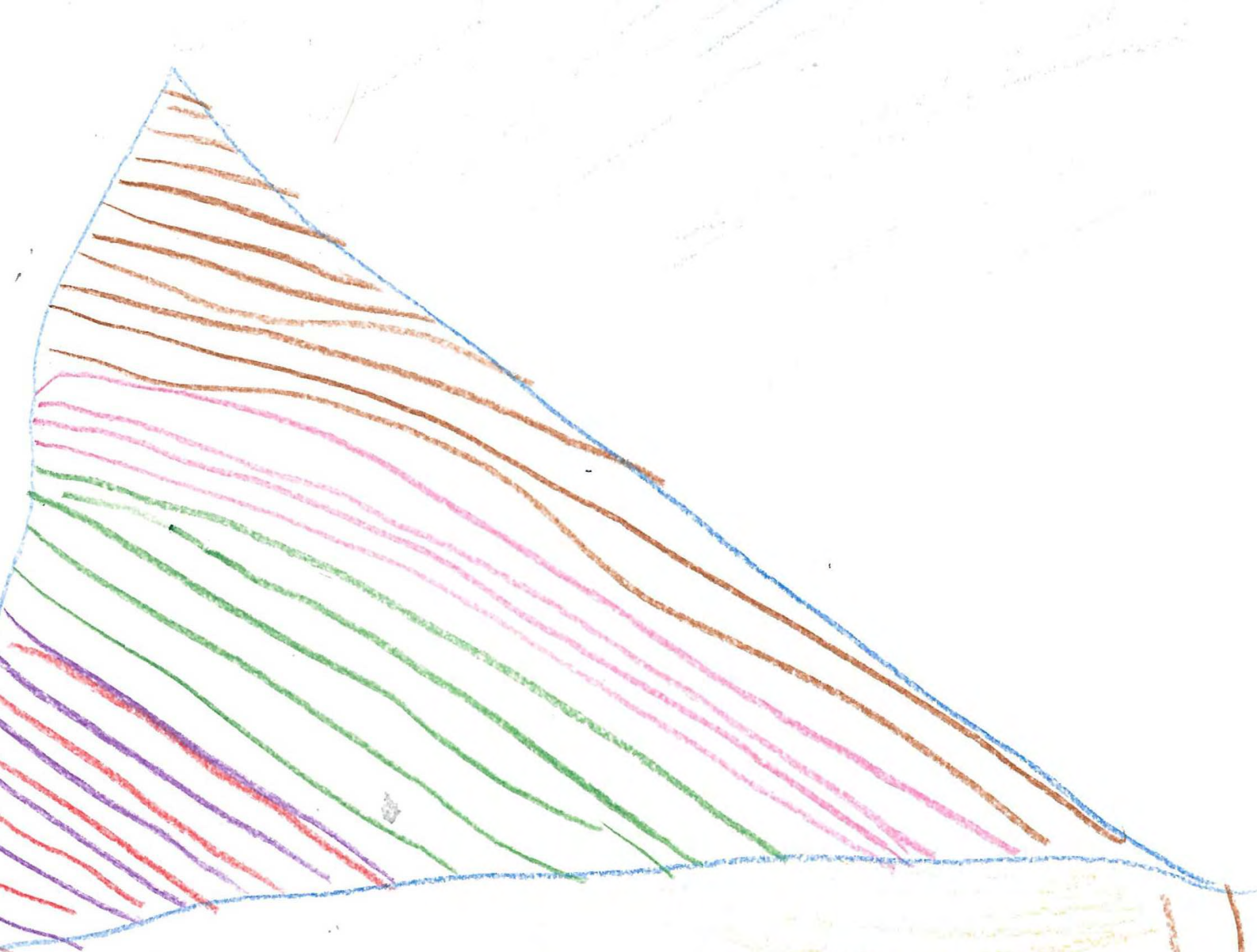
The program is by design tutor-intensive, as it is founded on the principle of one-on-one teaching. The sustainability of the program therefore rests on the willingness of schools to allocate funds to employing tutors and a Coordinator, or finding a way of engaging volunteers in a sustained way.

CAPACITY TO PURCHASE MATERIALS REQUIRED

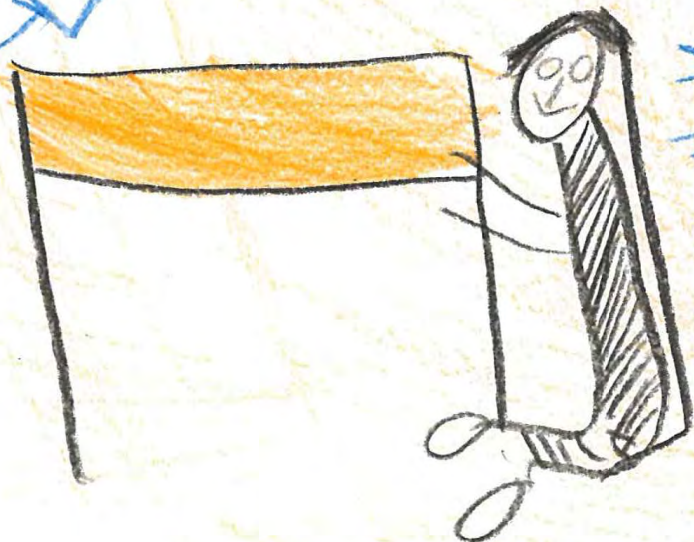
Another sustainability issue related to funding is the school's capacity to continue to purchase MULTILIT resources. MULTILIT does not permit photocopying of its resources, and aside from the initial purchase of the kit (\$365 each), a Sight Words Recording Booklet (\$15 each) and a Word Attack Skills Recording Booklet (\$18 each) must be purchased for each student doing these components (costs as at December 2011 from the MULTILIT website). A number of school staff felt that the ongoing costs of purchasing the materials may not be well-supported by their school executives in the long term.

TRAINING STRATEGIES FOR NEW MULTILIT TUTORS

Training has been identified as an issue in the implementation of MULTILIT. The program developers recommend that all MULTILIT Coordinators and tutors undertake one or more of their training courses. In reality, just over half of tutors and Coordinators undertook formal training, and the rest undertook internal training and used the handbooks. Several tutors commented on the importance of having MULTILIT sessions demonstrated for them and a number said they would like to have undertaken further training. If the program is to be sustainable, schools need to develop clear strategies for training new tutors as they come in to the program, either formally through paid MULTILIT courses, or informally through in-school training.



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6 Strengthening the impact of MULTILIT

KEY FINDINGS

The main areas identified for strengthening MULTILIT's impact were:

- Expansion of the program
- Improved links to classroom literacy program
- Modifications to the MULTILIT program/books/materials
- Incorporate broader literacy components
- Provision of more information/guidance on approaches for students with learning difficulties
- Improved timetabling to limit the impact of withdrawals
- Strengthening the training requirement.

A number of suggestions for improving the MULTILIT program were suggested in the evaluation research. These are outlined below.

6.1 EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAM

The most commonly suggested improvement was to extend funding to allow more children to participate, employ more tutors more often and purchase more resources. Funding would also assist schools to implement the program more fully and as was intended:

Funding of course dictates who receives the support - it would be great to offer it to all who need it.

We have been impressed with the early achievements of students under MULTILIT however, the challenge will be to see how many of our trained tutors we manage to retain as volunteers once the money runs out.

Allow for the student recording books to be photocopied. These books are expensive and once the National Partnership funding finishes, our school would find it very difficult to sustain the program due to the cost of the books.

6.2 IMPROVED LINKS TO CLASSROOM LITERACY PROGRAM

It was seen as important that approaches being used in MULTILIT sessions are reinforced in the classroom, and that what occurs in the classroom is consistent with what is occurring in individualised interventions. It was also thought that whole classes and whole schools could benefit from an understanding of the approaches used in MULTILIT, and that training for classroom teachers was an important step in this process:

There needs to be a plan or program to all those students who get off the MULTILIT program, there is nothing to support them once they are in the class and sometimes students don't make a link to what they have learnt in MULTILIT and how they can use it in the class room.

I think part of MULTILIT could be adapted to a Smartboard program especially the word recognition section and used for the whole class. This could be most useful in the lower classes.

All teaching staff need to be trained in MULTILIT methodology, there may be aspects of the program which can be used with a whole class or small group.

6.3 MODIFICATIONS TO THE MULTILIT PROGRAM/BOOKS/MATERIALS

Staff found a few aspects of the program problematic.

- A particular issue for a number of people was the inclusion of nonsense words in the Word Attack component, which were said to confuse a lot of learners:

For students who are experiencing severe literacy delay and difficulty the nonsense words in the WAS component of the program should be omitted as I found it was more rewarding for the student to be able to decode the word, then use it effectively, thus attaching meaning to the words being read.

The nonsense words threw the low kids every time. I understood the reason for them but they didn't.

- Another area of difficulty was identifying/finding suitable reading material for the Reinforced Reading component, particularly for older learners eg in Years 5 and 6:

It is sometimes hard to find interesting books and the levels vary so much which makes it difficult at times to assess their benchmark.

- Provision of small visuals to support the decoding Word Attack part of program to reinforce the sounds and example sentences with the sight words in them:

This would help those students to place it in context/encode it immediately and give meaning.

- Work sheets for each level, eg word search, letter boxes, jumbled letters.
- Blank pages at the back of the Word Attack or Sight Words booklets for recording the words that the students struggled with.

6.4 INCORPORATE BROADER LITERACY COMPONENTS

Some staff felt that the program could be enhanced by extending the focus by incorporating spelling, comprehension and writing:

Extending the program to incorporate a spelling component. Majority of the students are capable of reading the words but are unable spell them when tested. Word manipulation enhances the ability of the student to comprehend the text and correctly spell it.

Need to develop better means to improve comprehension of reading material for students. Being able to read is one thing, being able to understand what has been read is another matter.

There needs to be explicit teaching and prompting for reading strategies during text reading to develop strategic readers not just decoders.

6.5 PROVISION OF MORE INFORMATION/GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Some staff were concerned that either the program did not suit children with learning difficulties, or that they were not using the right approach. More information and modelling of how to deal with students who make very slow progress or get stuck on particular elements would be appreciated:

Have a variant on the program so the tutor can make adjustments for those students with very low self-esteem who don't cope with the testing at the beginning of the lesson and who have poor reading, [to ensure they] still have the opportunity to learn and improve with their reading.

Needs to be some flexibility to cater for each individual child's learning needs.

6.6 IMPROVED TIMETABLING TO LIMIT THE IMPACT OF STUDENT WITHDRAWALS

As discussed previously, the disruption caused to classes by the withdrawal of students was an issue for a number of teachers. Development of strategies that limit the impact of withdrawals is important for engendering support amongst the broader school staff and for promoting sustainability. Concerns around withdrawing children for too long and interrupting classes were one reason that a number of schools truncated the sessions:

We find it difficult with the withdrawal part of MULTILIT and the nature of three times a week. We worry that children will miss other vital learning experiences so we have tried to stagger the times that kiddies go to their MULTILIT class but we still find kids are coming and going from their classrooms, sometimes hard to juggle.

6.7 STRENGTHENING THE TRAINING REQUIREMENT

While a fairly high proportion of MULTILIT Coordinators undertook MULTILIT training, only about half of MULTILIT tutors undertook the formal training. Those who did not undertake formal training were significantly more likely to report that the training they undertook did not prepare them sufficiently for implementing the program. Staff also raised some issues that suggested they needed more instruction or guidance, eg in relation to working with students with additional needs. The issue of ongoing training – including refresher training, extension training and training for new MULTILIT tutors - was also raised by some staff.

While formal training is recommended, the training is not mandated as part of the package. Consideration should be given to mandating, or otherwise better encouraging, schools to commit their delivery staff to training.

7 Summary and conclusion

7.1 AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT

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

MULTILIT is an intensive one-on-one tutoring program for low progress readers in Years 2 to 6. The program is explicit and directive in nature. Schools that selected the program were able to purchase one or more MULTILIT kits, student recording books and other resources available from MULTILIT, purchase training in the use of the program, employ tutors and obtain teacher release time where appropriate.

The qualitative and quantitative research demonstrates that MULTILIT has delivered positive outcomes to students participating in the program.

7.1.1 EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT FOR STUDENTS

NAPLAN AND NPLN DATA

In both the NAPLAN and NPLN Assessment data sets, gains in mean reading scores were observed for all student cohorts at MULTILIT 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 both NAPLAN cohorts (students in Year 3 in 2008 and 2009), students at MULTILIT schools achieved slightly higher reading score gains than for students across the State as a whole. In all cohorts, the reading growth observed for students at MULTILIT schools was generally in line with the gains achieved across all NPLN literacy focus schools.

ONLINE SURVEY DATA AND QUALITATIVE DATA

The majority of survey respondents and staff consulted in the qualitative research believed that MULTILIT had overall been an effective program for improving reading. The main areas in which improvements were seen were in the decoding of texts and confidence in reading. Improvements were also observed in fluency, comprehension, reading levels and attitudes towards school.

Numerous examples of improved reading levels and/or NPLN Assessment scores were provided by schools that were visited in the qualitative stage. Examples were also provided of instances in which MULTILIT had been less effective, these generally involved a learning difficulty on the part of the student.

The program had reportedly been effective not only in improving reading levels, but in boosting students' confidence in themselves, which in several instances had led to achievement or improvement in other areas.

Critical success factors identified were

- the intensive one-on-one nature of the program
- the clear and prescriptive approach
- effective engagement of students
- seeing the program in the context of a whole-of-school strategy
- the role of the MULTILIT Coordinator
- School Executive support.

The main factors that may limit success of the program were the suitability of the program to some students eg students with a learning disability, older 'too cool' students, and failure to implement the program as intended, which may result in slower gains.

7.1.2 OUTCOMES FOR STAFF AND SCHOOLS

MULTILIT has generally enjoyed a high level of support within the participating schools. At some schools the staff were very enthusiastic and supportive, while at others there was more muted support. Lack of support amongst staff at some schools was thought to relate to the disruptions that MULTILIT caused to regular classes when children are withdrawn. Some schools put in place strategies for limiting the disruptions to classes.

A number of teachers and tutors reported positive impacts through using MULTILIT, including greater use of data in student monitoring and planning, a greater appreciation of the difficulties some children experience in learning to read, and improved confidence in teaching reading.

7.2 AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH MULTILIT ACHIEVES ITS GOALS IN AN EFFICIENT MANNER

7.2.1 EFFECTIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED TEACHING OF LITERACY

MULTILIT draws on a sound research base including other evidence-based literacy programs such as the Spalding Method and the Positive Teaching approach to classroom behaviour management. The program itself has undergone review since it was first released in 1998 as a commercial product, and was revised in 2007.

MUSEC has built into its approach routine assessment and evaluation using a range of widely used standardised tests. Analysis of data over a number of samples over several years has established a considerable body of evidence for the effectiveness of MULTILIT in delivering gains in reading accuracy and comprehension, reading fluency, single word recognition and spelling. The research found that the gains made in the program tended to be retained after leaving the program, and while some students continued to make progress, others made little or no further progress in follow-up. It should be noted that most of the studies undertaken to date have concerned programs delivered in 'ideal' conditions (delivered by MUSEC staff in the university setting), and there is limited research on programs delivered by school staff in the school setting.

7.2.2 STRONG SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND WHOLE-OF-SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT WITH LITERACY

MULTILIT was not intended as a strategy for improving school leadership and whole-of-school engagement with literacy. It is a program with a specific purpose, intended as an individual, intensive intervention for low progress readers.

Nevertheless, school leadership is clearly an important factor – indeed strong Executive support was identified as the second most important source of support for the program. Executive support was important in promoting wider staff support for the program, which in turn was critical in supporting student withdrawal for MULTILIT, timetabling, ensuring students were not disadvantaged from being withdrawn, managing peer responses, and reinforcing the strategies used in MULTILIT back in the classroom. Executive support was also crucial to the success of implementation by indicating priorities through resourcing of the program (eg appointing a MULTILIT Coordinator, approving release time, approving training, employing tutors). And finally, commitment of the leadership to the program will be critical to its sustainability. Thus, while MULTILIT does not appear to have impacted school leadership – and neither did it set out to do so – leadership and Executive support are critical success factors for the program.

Similarly, whole-of-school engagement with literacy was not an intended aim of the program. However, school and class engagement with literacy was an identified success factor for the program and there is clearly benefit in an individual intervention such as MULTILIT being seen as one part of a whole-of-school strategy. It was thought that the benefits of the program would be enhanced by wider familiarity of the program amongst classroom teachers and incorporation of the techniques into daily literacy teaching.

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

An identified outcome of the program for staff and schools was an increased focus on assessing and tracking student progress. Several teachers commented on the way that implementing MULTILIT made them more aware of and skilled in more formal techniques of tracking individual student progress in reading. The increased focus on literacy through the NPLN, use of data self-assessment (DASA) and other literacy programs the schools have implemented may also have impacted on teachers' engagement with student assessment and monitoring.

7.3 AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH MULTILIT HAS IMPROVED THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

Overall, the reading gains in NAPLAN and NPLN Assessments for Aboriginal students were in line with those for non-Aboriginal students. However significant limitations with the sample size mean that definitive conclusions about the reading gains of Aboriginal students in MULTILIT schools cannot be reliably made.

The majority of school staff believed that MULTILIT was as *effective* when used with Aboriginal students as with non-Aboriginal students. Some believed the program was *particularly well* suited to Aboriginal students because of the one-on-one nature of the methodology. Confirmation of the program's efficacy was provided by a number of parents/carers of Aboriginal children who observed significant improvements in their children's reading and confidence, and linked the improvements to their children's participation in MULTILIT.

7.4 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:

- stakeholder interviews (eg with program developers at MUSEC, Regional Facilitators)
- visits to nine schools that had used MULTILIT to interview the School Executive, MULTILIT Coordinators, MULTILIT tutors, teachers, parents and students.

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 of staff in all NSW NPLN schools that selected MULTILIT as the individual intervention component of the NPLN; responses were received from 177 staff across 55 schools.
- an analysis of NAPLAN and NPLN assessment data provided by NSW DEC.

Urbis worked collaboratively with NSW DEC 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 MULTILIT, 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

A significant level of doubt was expressed regarding the likelihood that MULTILIT would be sustained in the same way as under the NPLN in many of the schools consulted. The most significant threat to sustainability was seen to be lack of ongoing funding to resource the program, in terms of staff and physical resources.

The main success factors for sustainability of the program were the willingness and capacity of the school to support a staff-intensive program, capacity to purchase the materials required, and developing training strategies for new MULTILIT Tutors.

7.5 CONCLUSION

Identifying clear outcomes of any of the NPLN initiatives is complicated by the issue of attribution. There is a great deal of activity in the area of literacy currently, and even within the NPLN, each participating school has implemented both a whole-of-school and an individual intervention. In this sense, there is nothing that could proxy for a 'control group'.

The data from both NAPLAN and the NPLN Assessments do not serve to make the situation much clearer. Schools implementing MULTILIT achieved gains in NAPLAN and NPLN Assessments that were equivalent to all NPLN literacy-focused schools. The gains for Aboriginal students in the NAPLAN cohorts was higher than for non-Aboriginal students, but the reverse was true in the NPLN Assessment cohorts. In both cases, however, the sample sizes of the Aboriginal cohorts make it difficult to draw any conclusions on the basis of these results. The NPLN Assessment data suggest that greater gains were made amongst the youngest in the cohort, namely students in Year 2 in 2009.

In the absence of clear direction from the NAPLAN and NPLN Assessment data, it remains to draw conclusions from the evaluation data reported in this document. Quantitative data from a survey of NPLN participating schools that implemented MULTILIT and qualitative data from ten school visits and stakeholder interviews were analysed. Additional school and student-specific data was also provided by some schools to demonstrate impact at the local level.

While the NAPLAN and NPLN Assessment data do not indicate significant gains in literacy at the State level, our analysis concludes that gains in literacy are being made at a local level. Numerous examples were provided by school staff of students whose test scores and reading levels had improved, many of them significantly. Anecdotal evidence was also provided by students who were involved in the program, parents/carers and staff to demonstrate the gains in reading.

Gains in reading were clearly only one part of the equation. It was also clear that for many children, participation in the program and the improvements they made had led to increased levels of confidence, greater enjoyment in reading, improved attitudes to school and schoolwork, and a broadening of their world.

A number of strengths of the MULTILIT program were identified. They include the clarity and prescriptiveness of the program, which means no one is in any doubt about what to do; the positive nature of the prompt-pause-praise method; the way the approach builds on multiple student successes; the way the approach engages students, particularly younger children in Years 2 to 5; and the one-on-one approach which is not usually possible in a classroom situation. Indeed, a few people suggested that the individual approach and the one-on-one time was the most important success factor, and that the nature of the program was perhaps secondary.

Clearly, however, MULTILIT resulted in greater and faster gains for some students, and slower or minimal gains for others. This led a number of school staff to question whether the program was really suitable for particular groups of children, such as those with learning difficulties, receptive/expressive language disorders, IM students and children with memory issues. There was also a view that the program as implemented in the school setting was less well-suited to older students (particularly the 'too cool for school') who thought the program was beneath them, and who were also likely to have more entrenched issues with reading. It was suggested that perhaps other programs or other assistance might be more suitable for all these groups of children, or that specific approaches for using MULTILIT with these children be developed and modelled. This finding is consistent with other research (eg Chan & Dally 2000) that not all students benefit equally from a given literacy program.

A further consideration in evaluating the relative success of the program in improving student reading levels is the extent to which the program was implemented as intended. Our research has found that just over half of the schools met the recommended minimum of four sessions per week, only one in six met the recommended session length, and not all schools implemented all three components equally. MUSEC states that progress will be slower if the full program is not implemented or the frequency decreases. The more pertinent question may therefore be around the preparedness of school executives to allocate the necessary resources and withdrawal time to implement the program fully.

The view was put during the research that the withdrawal approach to improving students' literacy was counterproductive, as the children missed class work and were stigmatised by being singled out. The proponents of this view argued that a whole-of-class and whole-of-school approach was preferable. However, the majority of those consulted in schools felt that the disadvantages of being withdrawn were far outweighed by the benefits to children's reading abilities and wellbeing. Proponents of this view argued that while the need is still there for children to receive individualised assistance, programs such as MULTILIT will continue to be needed. As one Coordinator commented:

I'd like to continue for a few more years. Maybe in a few years the need for MULTILIT won't be there anymore. That's the hope.

8 References

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Appendix A

Discussion Guides

Making Up Lost Time in Literacy (MULTILIT) Principal/Executive School Staff Discussion Guide

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

Implementation

1. Why was Multilit selected as your preferred approach to improving students' literacy? What other approaches/programs were considered, if any? In retrospect, are you satisfied with the decision to use Multilit?
2. Can you please describe how the program has been implemented here (eg staffing, scheduling)? To what extent has the Multilit program been implemented as directed? (eg at least 4 sessions per week, recommended duration of sessions, focus on all 3 components)
3. Has the school used Multilit before? How was it used? In what way/s are you using it differently now? How does the current version compare with the previous version?
4. What other literacy programs are being implemented in the school?
5. Have any of the staff participated in training courses provided by Multilit? If yes, which course/s? What benefits did they gain from the training? If not, why did they not do the training? What difference do you think the training might have made?
6. What level of support has been provided, and by whom (eg Multilit)? How satisfactory has the level of support been? How could the provision of support be improved?
7. How well suited do you feel the Multilit program is to the school setting? Are there components of the program that are easier/harder to implement in the school setting? What barriers have there been to the program's implementation? Why is that? How have you managed these issues?

Engagement

8. What has been the response of teachers and other school staff to the program? Has it been generally well-received? Why/why not?
9. What about any others who have been involved in the program eg education assistants, parents?
10. What about the students – are you able to comment on how they have responded to the program? What evidence or examples can you provide?
11. What about Aboriginal students – has their engagement been any different to non-Aboriginal students? If so, why is that the case? What about ESL students and students with learning disabilities?

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.

12. In your view, has this program 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?
13. Are there any other benefits that have flowed to students since the introduction of the program?
14. 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?
15. What about Aboriginal students – are you able to comment on the extent to which they have benefitted from the program? How does this compare with the educational outcomes for non-Aboriginal students? Is this program appropriate for/ work well with Aboriginal students? Why/why not? What if anything has been done/might be done to improve the effectiveness of the program with Aboriginal students?
16. Are there some students who are better/less suited to the Multilit program (as implemented in the school)? Why is that?

Impact on teachers and schools

17. What impact, if any, do you think the program has had on teachers? For instance, what if any impact has the program had on teachers' beliefs or confidence in teaching literacy? Has it impacted on their knowledge and awareness – if so how?
18. Has the program's effectiveness been enhanced or hindered by other literacy initiatives operating in the school?
19. Has the program had any impacts at a broader school level? What evidence/examples can you provide of this? What factors have facilitated or hindered this?
20. What if anything might be done to enhance the effectiveness of this program?

System issues

21. Was your school provided with enough information and sufficient support and guidance to effectively implement the program? Is there any additional support you would have liked but did not get?
22. What plans are there to continue using this program in this school?
23. How is this going to occur – eg will it be embedded in school planning and budgets?
24. What factors will impact on the sustainability of this program in schools?

Final comments

25. In your experience, what is the value and effectiveness of this program in comparison with other programs and approaches to improving literacy?

26. Would you support its continual use in this school – why/why not?

27. Would you recommend it to others – on what basis? What advice would you give to another school that is thinking about using Multilit in the school setting?

Thankyou very much for your time

Making Up Lost Time in Literacy (MULTILIT) Parents Discussion Guide

Today we are going to have a brief discussion about your children's reading, and whether the literacy program, Making Up Lost Time in Literacy (Multilit), 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 to the school?
5. In the last year or so, have you noticed any change in your child's attitude to school? What sorts of things if any have changed?
6. In the last year or so, 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?
7. What sorts of things are your children reading? Are they reading *more* things than they did last year? Are they reading *different* things to what they read before? Are they reading *more difficult* things than they did last year?

8. Do you know if your child has been involved with the Multilit reading program? Do you know what this has involved? How did you feel when the school suggested your child might take part in the Multilit program?
9. Do you think the Multilit program has made a difference to your child's reading? In what ways have you seen a difference?
10. How do you know that your child has improved their reading? What feedback have you got from the school regarding their reading? Have you been happy with the level of feedback in regard to this program?
11. 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?
12. Do your children talk any more about what goes on in class now than they did last year?
13. 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? From what you have seen, compared to before they started in the Multilit program, have any specific problems your child had in relation to reading been more effectively targeted and addressed or not?
14. If there has been no significant improvement, why do you think that is the case?
15. [for Aboriginal parents] Are you able to make any comment on whether the Multilit program and the teaching of literacy is suitable for Aboriginal students? Does the teaching of literacy need to be better supported or enhanced to better meet the needs of Aboriginal students?

Thank you

Making Up Lost Time in Literacy (MULTILIT)

School Staff Discussion Guide

For use with school staff implementing the Multilit Program.

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 Multilit?

Implementation

2. [If not already answered by Principal] Can you please describe how the program has been implemented here (eg staffing, scheduling)? To what extent has the Multilit program been implemented as directed? (eg at least 4 sessions per week, recommended duration of sessions, focus on all 3 components)
3. Has the school used Multilit before? How was it used? In what way/s are you using it differently now? How does the current version compare with the previous version?
4. Have you or other staff members participated in training courses provided by Multilit? If yes, which course/s? What benefits did you gain from the training? If not, why did you not do the training? What difference do you think the training might have made?
5. What level of support has been provided in relation to Multilit, and by whom? How satisfactory has the level of support been? How could the provision of support be improved?
6. How well suited do you feel the Multilit program is to the school setting? Are there components of the program that are easier/harder to implement in the school setting? What barriers have there been to the program's implementation? Why is that? How have you managed these issues?

Engagement

7. What has been the response of teachers and other school staff to the program? Has it been generally well-received? Why/why not?
8. What about any others who have been involved in the program eg education assistants, parents?
9. What about the students – are you able to comment on how they have responded to the program? What evidence or examples can you provide?
10. What about Aboriginal students – has their engagement been any different to non-Aboriginal students? If so, why is that the case? What about ESL students and students with learning difficulties?

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.

11. In your view, has this program 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?
12. Are there any other benefits that have flowed to students since the introduction of the program?
13. 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?
14. What about Aboriginal students – are you able to comment on the extent to which they have benefitted from the program? How does this compare with the educational outcomes for non-Aboriginal students? Is this program appropriate for/ work well with Aboriginal students? Why/why not? What if anything has been done/might be done to improve the effectiveness of the program with Aboriginal students?
15. Are there some students who are better/less suited to the Multilit program (as implemented in the school)? Why is that?

Impact on teachers and schools

16. What impact, if any, do you think the program has had on teachers? For instance, what if any impact has the program had on teachers' beliefs or their confidence in teaching literacy? Has it impacted on their knowledge and awareness – if so how?
17. What about you personally – what has the program meant for you? (If relevant) How has this program impacted on teaching literacy in your class? How does this program compare to other programs you have been involved in? Why is that?
18. Has the program's effectiveness been enhanced or hindered by any other literacy initiatives operating in the school?
19. Has the program had any impacts at a broader school level? What evidence/examples can you provide of this? What factors have facilitated or hindered this?
20. What if anything might be done to enhance the effectiveness of this program?

Final comments

21. In your experience, what is the value and effectiveness of this program in comparison with other programs and approaches to improving literacy?
22. Would you support its continued use in this school – why/why not?
23. Would you recommend it to others – on what basis? What advice would you give to another school that is thinking about using Multilit in the school setting?

Thankyou very much for your time

Making Up Lost Time in Literacy (MULTILIT) 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 liked 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 did 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 altogether 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 sort of reading activities do you not enjoy?
5. What sorts of things are you reading in school? 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 than 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 more with you on the specific things you find the most difficult with reading? Does your teacher do this with you on your own, in a small group or as part of a class discussion? Is there anything else that you'd like to see that would help you even more with your reading?
9. 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

Appendix B

On-line Survey

MAKING UP LOST TIME IN LITERACY (MULTILIT)

Draft School Survey

This survey is to be completed by all staff that have been or are currently involved in managing, coordinating or using MULTILIT 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 MULTILIT, 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 MULTILIT.

All responses will remain confidential.

About your school

1. What school do you work at (please specify)?

.....

2. What *educational jurisdiction* is your school based in?

- ☐₁ Government
- ☐₂ Catholic
- ☐₃ Independent

3. In what *location* is your school based?

- ☐₁ Metropolitan (Sydney)
- ☐₂ Regional city (say a city of over 100,000 people)
- ☐₃ Regional town (say a town of over 30,000 people)
- ☐₄ A smaller rural/remote area

4. How many students attend your school?

- ☐₁ Less than 100
- ☐₂ 100 – 199
- ☐₃ 200 – 299
- ☐₄ 300 – 399
- ☐₅ 400 or more

About you

5. What is your gender?

- ☐₁ Male
☐₂ Female

6. What age group are you in?

- ☐₁ Under 25 years
☐₂ 25 – 29
☐₃ 30 – 39
☐₄ 40 – 49
☐₅ 50 – 59
☐₆ 60 – 64
☐₇ 65 years or over

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

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

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

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

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

- ☐₁ No
- ☐₂ Yes, Aboriginal
- ☐₃ Yes, Torres Strait Islander
- ☐₄ Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

10. Which of the following best describes your employment?

- ☐₁ Permanent – full-time
- ☐₂ Permanent – part-time
- ☐₃ Fixed term/contract – full-time
- ☐₄ Fixed term/contract – part-time
- ☐₅ Casual/relief
- ☐₆ Volunteer
- ☐₇ Other (please specify)

11. Which one of the following best describes your *main* role in using MULTILIT in your school?

- ☐₁ MULTILIT Coordinator
- ☐₂ MULTILIT Tutor
- ☐₃ Executive support
- ☐₄ Other (please specify)

12. Which of the following best describes your *main* role in the school?

- ☐₁ Principal
- ☐₂ Assistant/Deputy Principal
- ☐₃ Teacher – K to 2
- ☐₄ Teacher – Year 3
- ☐₅ Teacher – Year 4
- ☐₆ Teacher – Year 5
- ☐₇ Teacher – Year 6
- ☐₈ Special Education/Needs Teacher
- ☐₉ School Learning Support Officer/Teacher's Aide
- ☐₁₀ Aboriginal Education Officer
- ☐₁₁ Employed tutor
- ☐₁₂ Volunteer tutor
- ☐₁₃ Literacy Specialist Teacher
- ☐₁₄ ESL Specialist
- ☐₁₅ Regional support
- ☐₁₆ Other (please specify)

Use of MULTILIT in the school

(Q13 – 24 only for those who answered 1 to Q11. Otherwise skip to Q25 – only MULTILIT coordinators to answer Q13-24)

13. Were you at your *current* school at the start of the use of MULTILIT?

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No
☐₃ Not sure

14. a. *Prior to the National Partnership*, did your school use MULTILIT?

- ☐₁ Yes (Go to Q14b)
☐₂ No (Go to Q15)

b. *Prior to the National Partnership*, for how long did your school use MULTILIT?

- ☐₁ Less than 1 year
☐₂ 1-2 years
☐₃ 3-4 years
☐₄ 5-6 years
☐₅ More than 6 years

c. *Prior to the National Partnership*, how frequently was MULTILIT used?

- ☐₁ We used MULTILIT extensively
☐₂ We used MULTILIT sometimes
☐₃ We used MULTILIT rarely

15. *Under the National Partnership*, in which terms has MULTILIT been used in this school? (tick all that apply)

- ☐₁ Term 1 2010
☐₂ Term 2 2010
☐₃ Term 3 2010
☐₄ Term 4 2010
☐₅ Term 1 2011
☐₆ Term 2 2011
☐₇ Term 3 2011

16. How many students are currently using MULTILIT?

17. How many students have used MULTILIT since the National Partnership commenced?

18. Which, if any, year level have you specifically targeted with MULTILIT? (select all that apply)

- ☐ ₁ Kindergarten
- ☐ ₂ Year 1
- ☐ ₃ Year 2
- ☐ ₄ Year 3
- ☐ ₅ Year 4
- ☐ ₆ Year 5
- ☐ ₇ Year 6
- ☐ ₈ Not applicable/my school did not target any specific year level

19. Which students have you specifically targeted with MULTILIT (select all that apply)

- ☐ ₁ Students whose literacy levels fell *well* below NAPLAN benchmarks
- ☐ ₂ Students whose literacy levels fell *just* below NAPLAN benchmarks
- ☐ ₃ Students assessed in another way (other than NAPLAN) as having low literacy levels
- ☐ ₄ Students referred by class teachers
- ☐ ₅ Other (Please specify)

20. On average, how many sessions a week does each student attend?

- ☐ ₁ 1
- ☐ ₂ 2
- ☐ ₃ 3
- ☐ ₄ 4
- ☐ ₅ 5
- ☐ ₆ 6
- ☐ ₇ 7
- ☐ ₈ 8
- ☐ ₉ 9
- ☐ ₁₀ 10
- ☐ ₁₁ More than 10

21. On average, what is the usual length of a student's MULTILIT session?

- ☐₁ 5-10 minutes
☐₂ 10-15 minutes
☐₃ 15-20 minutes
☐₄ 20-25 minutes
☐₅ 25-30 minutes
☐₆ 30-35 minutes
☐₇ 35-40 minutes
☐₈ 40-45 minutes
☐₉ 45-50 minutes
☐₁₀ 50-55 minutes
☐₁₁ 55-60 minutes
☐₁₂ More than 60 minutes

22. a. Within each MULTILIT session, how frequently is each of the following components used?

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a) MULTILIT Word Attack	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
b) MULTILIT Sight Words	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
c) MULTILIT Reinforced Reading	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

23. Have you used the MULTILIT Extension Program?

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No
☐₃ Not sure

24. How many tutors are currently delivering MULTILIT in your school?

Training and support

25. a) What training have *you* undertaken in relation to MULTILIT?

- ☐₁ MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program Training (1 day) (go to Q25b)
☐₂ MULTILIT Reading Tutor Advanced Program Training (3 days) (go to Q25b)

- ☐ ₃ MULTILIT Extension Program Training (1 day) (go to Q25b)
☐ ₄ Internal training by teacher/coordinator (go to Q26)
☐ ₅ No training (Go to Q26)
☐ ₆ Other (Please specify) (Go to Q26).....

b) Overall, how satisfied have you been with the following aspects of the MULTILIT training workshops?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
a) The <i>content</i> of the MULTILIT training workshop/s?	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
b) The <i>quality</i> of the MULTILIT training workshop/s?	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
c) The <i>relevance/ usefulness</i> of the accompanying resources?	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
d) The extent to which the MULTILIT training workshop/s prepared you to deliver the program?	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

26. a. Has the training you have undertaken been sufficient to allow you to effectively deliver the MULTILIT program?

- ☐ ₁ Yes (Go to Q27)
☐ ₂ No (Go to Q26b)
☐ ₃ Not sure (Go to 26b)

b. What additional training would have been useful?

.....

27. How important were each of the following in delivering MULTILIT?

	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Hard to say	Not applicable
d) Formal MULTILIT training workshops	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆

	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Hard to say	Not applicable
e) Support from the school executive	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
f) Support from MULTILIT (Macquarie University)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
g) Internal school training/ mentoring on MULTILIT	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
h) In-school support from the school MULTILIT coordinator	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
i) The written MULTILIT handbooks	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
j) Access to online forums/blogs etc	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
k) Access to research/ professional development resources	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆

Student outcomes

28. Since the introduction of MULTILIT 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' ability to decode texts	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
b) Students' word attack skills	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
c) Students' recognition of sight words	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
d) Students' reading fluency	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
e) Students' comprehension of texts	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
f) The <i>volume</i> of reading undertaken	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
g) The <i>complexity</i> of texts read	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

	Significant improvement	Some improvement	A little improvement	No improvement	Hard to say
h) The <i>variety</i> of texts read	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
i) Students' enthusiasm for reading	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
j) Students' confidence in reading	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
k) Students' use of effective strategies to assist them understand and read text	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
l) Students' ability to read for meaning	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
m) Students' willingness to discuss what they have read	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
n) Students' enthusiasm for their other schoolwork (beyond literacy)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

29.a) Compared to non-Aboriginal students, how effective do you think MULTILIT has been in improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal students?

- ☐₁ More effective than for non-Aboriginal students (go to Q29b)
- ☐₂ As effective as for non-Aboriginal students (ie no difference) (go to Q29b)
- ☐₃ Less effective than for non-Aboriginal students (go to Q29b)
- ☐₄ Not sure/hard to say (go to Q29b)
- ☐₅ Not applicable as there are no Aboriginal students participating in MULTILIT at my school (go to Q31)

b) Why is this (please specify)?

.....

.....

.....

30. Are there other impacts or outcomes (either positive or negative) that you have observed in Aboriginal students participating in MULTILIT (please specify)?

.....

.....

.....

31. a. Are there any students who you feel are not well suited to the MULTILIT program?

☐₁ Yes – go to Q31b

☐₂ No – go to Q32

b. To whom is the program not well suited, and why?

.....

.....

.....

32. How effective is MULTILIT 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	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
b) Students above NAPLAN benchmarks	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
c) Students below NAPLAN benchmarks	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
d) Aboriginal students	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
e) ESL/LBOTE students	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
f) Student with a learning disability	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

33. 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) MULTILIT is a very important part of this school's approach to improving literacy.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
b) MULTILIT complements the other literacy and reading approaches in the school	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
c) There are more effective approaches to improving low progress readers' reading than MULTILIT	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
d) There is strong leadership support for MULTILIT in my school	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
e) MULTILIT was well planned and used in this school	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
f) I received good support and guidance on how to use MULTILIT	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
g) There is a clear pathway for sustaining MULTILIT in the school beyond the funding period	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
h) MULTILIT is well worth the investment.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
i) I would recommend the use of MULTILIT in other schools	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆
j) Support for MULTILIT at my school has grown over time	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆

34. Overall, how effective do you think MULTILIT has been in improving the reading outcomes for students?

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

35. a) Can you think of any way that MULTILIT (or the use of MULTILIT) could be improved?

☐₁ Yes (go to Q35b)

☐₂ No (finish survey)

b) What suggestions do you have about how MULTILIT or the use of MULTILIT could be improved?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for completing this survey

Appendix C

Full Findings of the Survey



$$5 + 6 = 11$$

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

Evaluation of MULTILIT

ONLINE SURVEY REPORT

Prepared for NSW Department of Education and Communities
2011

urbis

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Key Findings

IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTILIT

- Most schools (84%) had not previously used MULTILIT prior to the National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy (NPLN). Those schools that had used MULTILIT prior to the NPLN had done so for less than two years.
- Over two-thirds of schools represented in the survey (68%) had delivered MULTILIT in all seven terms in the NPLN funding period.
- The majority of schools (74%) had had between 25 and 59 students participate in the program under the NPLN, and 13% had 60 or more students on the program.
- Most schools primarily targeted Years 3 and 4; slightly fewer targeted Year 5 and fewer still targeted Year 6. A small minority of schools also targeted Year 1 students with MULTILIT. Most schools reported that the main criteria by which they selected students for the program were students whose literacy levels fell *well below* NAPLAN benchmarks as well as students with low literacy levels assessed in another way (other than NAPLAN). More than half also used MULTILIT to target literacy levels in students whose literacy levels fell *just below* NAPLAN benchmarks.
- There was considerable variation in the implementation approach across the schools:
 - Most schools were doing MULTILIT 3-4 times a week with each student, however only 42% were implementing the program the minimum recommended by MULTILIT of *four times* per week.
 - Schools were most commonly running 20-25 minute sessions for each student (26%). Close to a quarter of schools (23%) were delivering sessions of 20 minutes or less, and over a third (36%) were providing longer sessions of 30-40 minutes.
 - The majority of schools (84%) were regularly implementing all three components of the program, although a small minority (10%) indicated that MULTILIT Reinforced Reading was *rarely or never* used in the students' MULTILIT sessions.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- About half of tutors undertook the formal MULTILIT training, while the other half did informal training within the school or used the MULTILIT manual.
- There was a high level of satisfaction for the formal MULTILIT training programs amongst the tutors delivering the program. Those who did the formal training were more likely to say that the training had been sufficient (95%) than those who did not undertake the formal training (79%).
- The resources and supports seen as most important were the MULTILIT books, support from the School Executive and in-school support from the MULTILIT Coordinator. The resources least frequently nominated by respondents as an important source of support were access to online forums/blogs and support from MULTILIT (Macquarie University).

EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT

- The majority of staff felt that MULTILIT was an overall effective approach to improving reading outcomes for students. A total of 91% of staff reported that MULTILIT was *effective or very effective*. Those with a direct role delivering the program (MULTILIT Coordinators and tutors) were most likely to report positive change in students' literacy across the majority of areas.
- Possible influences on staff perceptions of effectiveness include the number of sessions per week (more effective if done three or more times per week, less effective if done fewer than three times per week); remoteness (thought to be more effective by staff in rural/remote schools); and school size

(staff in smaller schools were more positive about the program's effectiveness than staff in larger schools).

- The critical areas in which staff observed significant improvements in student achievement were:
 - Students' recognition of sight words
 - Students' confidence in reading
 - Students' word attack skills
- Other main areas in which improvement was observed were:
 - Students' ability to decode texts
 - Students' use of effective strategies to assist them understand and read text
 - Students' reading fluency
 - Students' enthusiasm for reading
 - Students' willingness to discuss what they have read
 - Students' comprehension of texts
 - The complexity of texts read.
- MULTILIT was generally thought to be an effective resource to use with all students, including students below NAPLAN benchmarks and Aboriginal students. A small proportion of respondents indicated that the program was not very effective with students with a learning disability, students with behavioural/emotional issues or problems with concentration, students with slow processing capacity, students above the NAPLAN benchmarks, students who are uncomfortable with one-to-one tuition or being withdrawn from class, and students with poor attendance.
- The majority of respondents felt MULTILIT was as effective when used with Aboriginal students as with non-Aboriginal students, or were unable to compare the effectiveness. A small minority reported that MULTILIT had been *more effective* for Aboriginal students than for non-Aboriginal students. Other outcomes for Aboriginal students included improved self esteem/confidence, increased enthusiasm for reading, bonding with the tutor, improved attendance, increased engagement with school and focus on students' learning or other difficulties. A few mentions were made of negative impacts from withdrawal from class.
- There was a high level of agreement with statements relating to the positive role of MULTILIT in school literacy practices, and a low level of agreement with negative statements such as *there are more effective approaches to improving low progress readers' reading than MULTILIT*. While there was a broadly positive view about the role of MULTILIT in the school program, respondents from regional schools and large schools (with more than 400 students) were slightly *less* positive about the impact of MULTILIT on their school.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

The most common suggestions for improving MULTILIT included:

- Extended or increased funding to sustain/expand the program – employment of tutors, purchasing of resources
- Improved links to classroom literacy curriculum/ training of classroom teachers in MULTILIT
- Extending the focus of MULTILIT to incorporate broader literacy components – spelling, comprehension, writing

- Modifications or additions to the MULTILIT books/materials
- Modification of the program approach to suit individual student needs/particular learning difficulties
- Removing nonsense words from the Word Attack component

Other issues included improving timetabling to limit the impact of student withdrawals, modifying the delivery method to allow sessions for small groups of students with similar needs, and refresher training for MULTILIT tutors.

1 The respondents

1.1 SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

A total of 177 teachers completed the survey, of which 171 identified the school at which they worked. In total, the respondents represented 55 of the 72 NSW schools (76%) that elected to implement MULTILIT as an individual literacy intervention under the National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy. The 55 schools identified by respondents included 49 Government schools and six Catholic schools.

As shown in Table 1 below, the survey respondents represented MULTILIT schools across metropolitan, regional and rural/remote NSW. The largest proportion of respondents worked in schools in rural/remote areas (38%), followed by approximately one quarter of respondents in each schools in a regional town (28%) and metropolitan Sydney (25%). A small group of respondents were based in a regional city (9%).

TABLE 1 – SCHOOL LOCATION (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

LOCATION	TOTAL
Metropolitan (Sydney)	24.9
Regional city (100,000+ people)	9.0
Regional town (30,000+ people)	27.7
Smaller rural/remote area	38.4
TOTAL	100

Table 2 shows that the size of school at which the respondents worked varied by location, with larger schools more concentrated in metropolitan Sydney. In total, close to half (46%) the respondents worked in mid-sized schools with between 200 and 400 students.

TABLE 2 – SCHOOL SIZE BY LOCATION (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

SCHOOL SIZE	TOTAL	METROPOLITAN	REGIONAL CITY	REGIONAL TOWN	RURAL/ REMOTE
Less than 200 students	31.6	40.9	25.0	18.4	36.8
200 – 400 students	46.3	22.7	62.5	73.5	38.2
More than 400 students	22.0	36.4	12.5	8.2	25.0
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100

1.2 PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Of the 177 teachers who completed the survey, 90% were female and 10% were male. As shown in Table 3 below, respondents were generally older, with 72% of respondents aged 40 years or over.

TABLE 3 – AGE BY GENDER (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AGE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Under 30 years	7.3	11.8	6.9
30 – 39 years	20.9	23.5	20.6
40 – 49 years	28.8	5.9	31.3
50 years and over	42.9	58.8	41.3
TOTAL	100	100	100

A small proportion of respondents identified themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (10%, 18 individuals).

1.3 RESPONDENT ROLE AND EXPERIENCE

1.3.1 EXPERIENCE

Respondents had fairly high levels of experience teaching in primary schools. As shown in Table 4 below, the majority of respondents (56%) had been working in primary schools for over 10 years, and one third (33%) had been teaching for over 20 years.

TABLE 4 – YEARS TEACHING/WORKING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

YEARS	TOTAL
2 years or less	11.3
3 – 5 years	13.0
6 – 10 years	19.8
11 – 20 years	22.6
Over 20 years	33.3
TOTAL	100

Respondents were also asked to specify how long they had been working at their current school. As can be seen in Table 5, approximately half the respondents (51%) had been working at their current school for over five years, and over one quarter of respondents (27%) had been based at their current school for over 10 years.

TABLE 5 – YEARS TEACHING/WORKING AT CURRENT SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

YEARS	TOTAL
Less than a year	5.6
1 – 2 years	16.9
3 – 5 years	26.0
6 – 10 years	24.3
11 – 20 years	18.1
Over 20 years	9.0
TOTAL	100

1.3.2 MAIN ROLE IN SCHOOL

Respondents were asked to indicate their *main* role at their school. The results in Table 6 below show that the largest proportion of respondents were either employed as support teachers/aides/tutors (35%) or Executive staff (29%). Approximately one fifth (19%) of respondents were working as classroom teachers (K-6), and 15% had a specialist teaching role.

Male respondents were considerably more likely than female respondents to work as a member of the Executive (71%), whilst female respondents were most likely to work as a support teacher/aide/tutor in their school (39%).

TABLE 6 – MAIN ROLE IN THE SCHOOL BY GENDER (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

ROLE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Executive (Principal/ Deputy Principal)	28.8	70.6	24.4
Specialist Teacher*	14.7	-	16.3
Support Teacher/ Aide/ Tutor	35.0	-	38.8
Classroom Teacher K-2	4.0	5.9	3.8
Classroom Teacher Stage 2 (3/4)	10.7	17.6	10.0
Classroom Teacher Stage 3 (5/6)	4.5	5.9	4.4
Aboriginal Education Officer	2.3	-	2.5
TOTAL	100	100	100

*Specialist Teacher includes: Literacy Specialist Teacher, ESL Specialist, and Special Education/Needs Teacher

With respect to employment type, over half (53%) of teachers were employed as permanent full-time staff. The remainder of staff were split fairly evenly between fixed term/contract part-time (12%), permanent part-time (12%), casual/relief (12%) and fixed term/contract full-time (11%) employment.

1.3.3 MAIN ROLE USING MULTILIT

Respondents were also asked to indicate their *main* role in using MULTILIT in their school. As shown in Table 7 below, the largest proportion of survey respondents (37%) were MULTILIT tutors delivering the program to students in the school. Approximately a fifth of respondents were working as a MULTILIT Coordinator (21%) or as a member of the Executive (21%). Another 22% of survey respondents indicated that were working as a classroom teacher or other teaching staff with students who were or had participated in MULTILIT; however, these respondents did not report having a direct role in either overseeing or delivering MULTILIT in the school.

TABLE 7 – MAIN ROLE USING MULTILIT IN THE SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

ROLE	TOTAL
Executive (Principal/ Deputy Principal)	20.9
MULTILIT Coordinator	20.9
MULTILIT Tutor	36.7
Classroom Teacher/ other staff	21.5
TOTAL	100

Table 8 below presents the profile of main school roles for MULTILIT Coordinators and MULTILIT tutors completing the survey. The largest proportion of MULTILIT Coordinators (43%) were employed as a specialist teacher in their school, whilst approximately another third of the Coordinators (35%) were members of the School Executive. As might be expected, the large majority of MULTILIT tutors (83%) were employed as support teachers/aides/tutors in the school.

TABLE 8 – MULTILIT COORDINATORS AND TUTORS BY ROLE IN THE SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

ROLE	MULTILIT COORDINATOR	MULTILIT TUTOR
Executive (Principal/ Deputy Principal)	35.1	1.5
Specialist Teacher*	43.2	4.6
Support Teacher/ Aide/ Tutor	18.9	83.1
Classroom Teacher K-2	-	6.2
Classroom Teacher Stage 2 (3/4)	-	-
Classroom Teacher Stage 3 (5/6)	2.7	-
Aboriginal Education Officer	-	4.6
TOTAL	100	100

*Specialist Teacher includes: Literacy Specialist Teacher, ESL Specialist, and Special Education/Needs Teacher

2 Use of MULTILIT in the school

2.1 TIME PERIOD USING MULTILIT

Survey respondents who indicated that they were the MULTILIT Coordinator at their school were asked a series of questions relating to the use of MULTILIT in the school. The MULTILIT Coordinator respondents to the survey represented 31 of the schools that implemented MULTILIT under the National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy (NPLN), and the data has been analysed according to percentage of schools (not percentage of respondents).

MULTILIT Coordinators were firstly asked whether they had been working at their current school at the start of the use of MULTILIT. The large majority of respondents (92%) reported that they had been working at their current school when MULTILIT was implemented.

MULTILIT Coordinators were asked whether their school had used MULTILIT prior to the NPLN, and if so, to specify the period and frequency of use. As shown in Table 9, most schools (84%) had not used MULTILIT prior to the NPLN. Of the small proportion of schools that had previously used MULTILIT, the majority had been using the program for less than two years before the start of the NPLN. Similarly, as shown in Table 10, only a very small minority of schools (3%) had used MULTILIT *extensively* prior to the NPLN.

TABLE 9 – PRIOR USE OF MULTILIT IN SCHOOLS AND PERIOD OF USE (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

PRIOR USE OF MULTILIT	TOTAL
No	83.9
Yes: less than 1 year	3.2
Yes: 1-2 years	6.5
Yes: 3-4 years	3.2
Yes: 5-6 years	-
Yes: more than 6 years	3.2
<i>Yes subtotal</i>	<i>16.1</i>
TOTAL	100

* Base = 31 schools

TABLE 10 – PRIOR USE OF MULTILIT IN SCHOOLS AND FREQUENCY OF USE (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

PRIOR USE OF MULTILIT	TOTAL
No	83.9
Yes: We used MULTILIT rarely	3.2
Yes: We used MULTILIT sometimes	9.7
Yes: We used MULTILIT extensively	3.2
<i>Yes subtotal</i>	<i>16.1</i>
TOTAL	100

* Base = 31 schools

The survey questionnaire then asked the MULTILIT Coordinators to indicate the school terms in 2010 and 2011 in which MULTILIT had been used at their school (under the NPLN). As shown in Table 11, in all terms of 2010 and 2011 the majority of schools were delivering MULTILIT to students. The year from Term 3 2010 to Term 2 2011 had the highest proportion of schools actively participating in the program (over 90% of schools), with some drop-off then occurring in Term 3 2011 (84% of schools).

TABLE 11 – TERMS IN WHICH MULTILIT WAS USED IN THE SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

TERM	TOTAL
Term 1 2010	80.6
Term 2 2010	80.6
Term 3 2010	90.3
Term 4 2010	93.5
Term 1 2011	90.3
Term 2 2011	90.3
Term 3 2011	83.9

* Base = 31 schools

The data was also analysed to determine the total number of terms in which each school had actively participated in MULTILIT. As shown in Table 12, over two-thirds of schools represented in the survey (68%) had delivered MULTILIT in all seven terms in the NPLN funding period.

TABLE 12 – NUMBER OF TERMS IN WHICH MULTILIT WAS USED IN THE SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

NUMBER OF TERMS	TOTAL
1	6.5
2	-
3	3.2
4	3.2
5	9.7
6	9.7
7	67.7
TOTAL	100

* Base = 31 schools

2.2 MULTILIT TUTORS

MULTILIT Coordinators were asked to specify the number of tutors that were currently delivering MULTILIT in the school. As shown in Table 13, schools most commonly had four (25%) or three (22%) tutors delivering MULTILIT in the school. Just under a third of schools (31%) had five or more tutors delivering MULTILIT to students, and a small minority (9%) had no tutors delivering MULTILIT at the time of the survey (Term 3 2011). Large schools (more than 400 students) were most likely to have five or more MULTILIT tutors working in the school.

TABLE 13 – NUMBER OF TUTORS CURRENTLY DELIVERING MULTILIT IN THE SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

NUMBER OF TUTORS	TOTAL	SCHOOL SIZE (TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS)		
		LESS THAN 200	200 – 400	MORE THAN 400
0	9.7	11.1	7.1	12.5
1	3.2	-	7.1	-
2	9.7	22.2	7.1	-
3	22.6	22.2	21.4	25.0
4	22.6	22.2	28.6	12.5
5	9.7	11.1	7.1	12.5
6	9.7	11.1	7.1	12.5
7	6.5	-	7.1	12.5
8	3.2	-	-	12.5
9	-	-	-	-
10	3.2	-	7.1	-
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

* Base = 31 schools

2.3 STUDENTS USING MULTILIT

2.3.1 NUMBER OF STUDENTS

MULTILIT Coordinators were asked to specify the total number of students who had participated in MULTILIT at their school since the commencement of the NPLN. The results are presented in Table 14, including an analysis according to school size.

The majority of schools (74%) had had between 25 and 59 students participate in the program under the NPLN. A small proportion of schools (13%) had had 60 or more students on MULTILIT, with one school reporting that a total of 181 students had participated in the program since early 2010. The minimum participation reported in the survey was 14 students.

As might be expected, most small schools (less than 200 students) had fewer than 40 students participate in the program over the funding period. Interestingly, mid-size schools were more likely than large schools to have had 40 or more students use the program (71% of mid-size schools compared to 50% of large schools).

TABLE 14 – TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE USED MULTILIT BY SCHOOL SIZE (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS	TOTAL	SCHOOL SIZE (TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS)		
		LESS THAN 200	200 – 400	MORE THAN 400
Less than 15	3.2	11.1	-	-
15 – 19	6.5	22.2	-	-
20 – 24	3.2	-	-	12.5
25 – 29	12.9	22.2	14.3	0.0
30 – 39	25.8	33.3	14.3	37.5
40 – 49	19.4	-	28.6	25.0
50 – 59	16.1	11.1	21.4	12.5
60 – 80	6.5	-	14.3	-
More than 80	6.5	-	7.1	12.5
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

* Base = 31 schools

These respondents were also asked to specify the number of students that were currently using MULTILIT at their school. As shown in Table 15, the majority of schools represented in the survey (52%) currently had between five and fourteen students participating in the program. A quarter or more of mid-size schools (29%) and large schools (25%) had over 30 students participating in MULTILIT at the time of the survey, with one school reporting a current enrolment of 54 students. Three schools reported that no students were currently using MULTILIT at their school.

TABLE 15 – TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS CURRENTLY USING MULTILIT (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS	TOTAL	SCHOOL SIZE (TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS)		
		LESS THAN 200	200 – 400	MORE THAN 400
Less than 5	9.7	11.1	7.1	12.5
5 – 9	25.8	33.3	21.4	25.0
10 – 14	25.8	33.3	21.4	25.0
15 – 19	6.5	11.1	7.1	-
20 – 24	9.7	11.1	14.3	-
25 – 29	3.2	-	-	12.5
30 – 39	6.5	-	14.3	-
40 – 50	9.7	-	14.3	12.5
More than 50	3.2	-	-	12.5
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

* Base = 31 schools

2.3.2 TARGET STUDENTS

The survey questionnaire asked MULTILIT Coordinators to identify which groups of students the school had specifically targeted with MULTILIT.

MULTILIT Coordinators were asked to select which (if any) year levels had been specifically targeted with MULTILIT at their school. As shown in Table 16, the majority of schools had targeted Year 3 (88%), Year 4 (78%) and Year 5 (69%) with MULTILIT. A slightly smaller proportion of schools had specifically targeted Year 6 students (44%), and over one third of schools (38%) had extended MULTILIT participation to Year 2 students. A small minority of schools (6%) also targeted Year 1 students with MULTILIT.

TABLE 16 – YEAR LEVELS TARGETED WITH MULTILIT (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

YEAR LEVEL	TOTAL
Kindergarten	-
Year 1	6.5
Year 2	35.5
Year 3	87.1
Year 4	77.4
Year 5	67.7
Year 6	45.2
Not applicable/ my school did not target any specific year level	3.2

* Base = 31 schools

MULTILIT Coordinators were also asked to indicate the method or criteria by which students had been selected to participate in MULTILIT (refer to Table 17). The large majority of schools (84%) had targeted *students whose literacy levels fell well below NAPLAN benchmarks*. Nearly three quarters of schools (71%) had also selected students with low literacy levels assessed *in another way (other than NAPLAN)*. A considerable proportion of schools (55%) had used MULTILIT to target improved literacy levels in students *whose literacy levels fell just below NAPLAN benchmarks*. Other selection criteria nominated by respondents included *testing all students on MULTILIT to determine starting levels*, and *feedback from the previous school of a new student*.

TABLE 17 – CRITERIA FOR SELECTING TARGET STUDENTS FOR MULTILIT (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

YEAR LEVEL	TOTAL
Students whose literacy levels fell <i>well</i> below NAPLAN benchmarks	83.9
Students assessed in another way (other than NAPLAN) as having low literacy levels	71.0
Students whose literacy levels fell <i>just</i> below NAPLAN benchmarks	54.8
Students referred by class teachers	54.8
Other	6.5

* Base = 31 schools

2.4 MULTILIT SESSIONS

2.4.1 SESSION FREQUENCY AND LENGTH

The survey questionnaire asked MULTILIT Coordinators to indicate the average frequency and length of MULTILIT sessions for students at their school (refer to Table 18 and Table 19).

More than half the schools represented in the survey (55%) were delivering the recommended four or more MULTILIT sessions to each student every week. Approximately two fifths of schools (42%) were only managing to deliver three sessions per week, and a very small minority of schools (3%) were only providing two sessions per week to students. Schools were most commonly running 20-25 minute sessions for each student (26%). Close to a quarter of schools (23%) were only delivering sessions of 20 minutes or less, and over a third (36%) were providing longer sessions of 30-40 minutes.

TABLE 18 – AVERAGE NUMBER OF SESSIONS PER STUDENT PER WEEK (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

NUMBER OF SESSIONS	TOTAL
2	3.2
3	41.9
4	41.9
5	12.9
TOTAL	100

* Base = 31 schools

TABLE 19 – AVERAGE SESSION LENGTH (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

SESSION LENGTH	TOTAL
5-10 minutes	3.2
10-15 minutes	-
15-20 minutes	19.4
20-25 minutes	25.8
25-30 minutes	16.1
30-35 minutes	19.4
35-40 minutes	16.1
TOTAL	100

* Base = 31 schools

2.4.2 SESSION COMPONENTS

MULTILIT Coordinators were asked to indicate the frequency with which each of the three program components were used in the students' MULTILIT sessions at their school. The results are presented in Table 20 below, including a calculation of *total usage* which comprises *always* and *usually* responses (ie *regular usage* of the component).

All schools reported regular use of MULTILIT Word Attack (100% *total usage*), and the large majority indicated regular delivery of MULTILIT Sight Words (90% *total usage*) and MULTILIT Reinforced Reading (90% *total usage*). A small minority of schools represented in the survey (10%) indicated that MULTILIT Reinforced Reading was *rarely* or *never* used in the students' MULTILIT sessions. In total, 84% of schools were using all three components of the program *always* or *usually*.

TABLE 20 – FREQUENCY OF USE OF MULTILIT COMPONENTS (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

COMPONENT	TOTAL USAGE	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
MULTILIT Word Attack	100.0	93.6	6.4	-	-	-
MULTILIT Sight Words	90.3	67.7	22.6	6.4	-	3.2
MULTILIT Reinforced Reading	90.3	71.0	19.4	-	6.4	3.2

* Base = 31 schools

These respondents were also asked to specify whether their school had used the MULTILIT Extension Program. As shown in Table 21, over one third of schools (38%) had used the Extension Program with students. Those schools that were regularly using all three components of the main MULTILIT program (Sight Words, Word Attack and Reinforced Reading) were more likely to have used the Extension Program than those schools that were not (42% of schools compared to 20% of schools not using the three components regularly).

TABLE 21 – USE OF THE MULTILIT EXTENSION PROGRAM (PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS*)

RESPONSE	TOTAL
Yes	38.7
No	58.1
Not sure	3.2
TOTAL	100

* Base = 31 schools

3 Training and support

3.1 TRAINING UNDERTAKEN

All respondents were asked to indicate what training they had undertaken in relation to MULTILIT. These results are presented in Table 22 below, including an analysis of training undertaken by the respondents' role delivering MULTILIT.

The most common training undertaken was the *MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program Training* (38% of all respondents). More than half of the MULTILIT Coordinators (57%) and MULTILIT tutors (55%) completing the survey had undertaken this one-day training course. Around one in five (22%) of MULTILIT Coordinators had undertaken the three-day *MULTILIT Reading Tutor Advanced Program*.

Close to one third of all respondents (30%) had undertaken *internal training by teacher/coordinator*, including nearly half of the MULTILIT tutors (48%). Whilst a considerable proportion of respondents had undertaken *no training* in MULTILIT (27%), this was largely concentrated amongst survey respondents that did not have a direct role in delivering MULTILIT (60% of Executive staff and 58% of classroom teachers/other staff).

Other training specified by a small number of respondents included *visiting other schools to observe MULTILIT*, *previously working for MULTILIT at Macquarie*, and *post graduate training at Macquarie University as part of an education degree*.

TABLE 22 – TRAINING UNDERTAKEN IN RELATION TO MULTILIT BY ROLE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

TRAINING	TOTAL	EXECUTIVE	MULTILIT COORDINATOR	MULTILIT TUTOR	CLASSROOM TEACHER/ OTHER STAFF*
MULTILIT Reading Tutor Program Training	37.9	8.1	56.8	55.4	18.4
Internal training by teacher/coordinator	29.9	24.3	18.9	47.7	15.8
No training	27.1	59.5	5.4	3.1	57.9
MULTILIT Reading Tutor Advanced Program Training	6.2	2.7	21.6	1.5	2.6
MULTILIT Extension Program Training	3.4	-	5.4	6.2	-
Other	3.4	5.4	5.4	-	5.3

* Not involved in delivery of MULTILIT

3.2 SATISFACTION WITH TRAINING

Those respondents who reported having undertaken formal external training in relation to MULTILIT (ie the *Reading Tutor Program* or *Extension Program* training) were asked about their satisfaction with the MULTILIT training workshops. These respondents were asked to indicate their level of *satisfaction* with the content and quality of the workshops, the relevance of the accompanying resources, and the extent to which the training prepared them to deliver MULTILIT in their school. As shown in Table 23 below, the large majority of respondents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with each aspect of the MULTILIT training workshops.

TABLE 23 – SATISFACTION WITH THE MULTILIT TRAINING WORKSHOPS (PERCENTAGE OF THOSE WHO HAVE ATTENDED THE WORKSHOPS)

ASPECTS OF THE WORKSHOP	TOTAL SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED
The <i>content</i> of the workshop	97.4	61.5	35.9
The <i>relevance/ usefulness</i> of the accompanying resources	97.4	59.0	38.5
The <i>quality</i> of the workshop	96.2	60.3	35.9
The extent to which the MULTILIT training workshop/s prepared you to deliver the program	93.6	55.1	38.5

All respondents were asked whether the training they had undertaken had been sufficient to allow them to effectively deliver the MULTILIT program. The results are presented in Table 24 below, including an analysis according to the type of training undertaken by respondents.

Consistent with the findings above, the large majority of respondents who reported that they had completed formal external training in MULTILIT indicated that the training had been sufficient (95% of respondents). Close to four-fifths of respondents who had undertaken internal training by a teacher/coordinator (79%) reported that this training has been sufficient for them to deliver the program effectively. As discussed previously, the large majority of respondents that had not completed any training did not have a direct role in delivering MULTILIT, and as such the majority of these respondents (86%) were not sufficiently prepared to deliver the program.

Considering the responses for those respondents with direct delivery roles (MULTILIT Coordinators and tutors) demonstrates that the large majority of these respondents felt the training had been sufficient (refer to Table 25).

TABLE 24 – SUFFICIENCY OF TRAINING UNDERTAKEN BY TYPE OF TRAINING (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

SUFFICIENT	TOTAL	FORMAL TRAINING*	INTERNAL TRAINING ONLY	NO TRAINING
Yes	67.8	95.0	78.7	14.0
No	16.4	1.3	4.3	52.0
Not sure	15.8	3.8	17.0	34.0
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

* Includes MULTILIT Reading Tutor, Reading Tutor Advanced or Extension Program Training

TABLE 25 – SUFFICIENCY OF TRAINING UNDERTAKEN BY MULTILIT COORDINATORS AND TUTORS (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

SUFFICIENT	TOTAL (COORDINATORS AND TUTORS ONLY)	MULTILIT COORDINATOR	MULTILIT TUTOR
Yes	92.2	94.6	90.8
No	2.0	2.7	1.5
Not sure	5.9	2.7	7.7
TOTAL	100	100	100

* Includes MULTILIT Reading Tutor, Reading Tutor Advanced or Extension Program Training

Those respondents who felt that the training they had undertaken had *not* been sufficient to enable them to effectively deliver the program were asked to specify what additional training would have been useful. Only a very small proportion of these respondents had a direct role in delivering MULTILIT (ie were either a MULTILIT Coordinator or tutor). Several of these respondents indicated that some ongoing/refresher

training would be helpful, including further training on different approaches to address common student difficulties and specific rule reinforcement. The remainder of these respondents with a direct delivery role reported that they had not undertaken any formal training, and would find it valuable to do so.

The bulk of respondents who indicated that their MULTILIT training had been insufficient did not report having a direct role in delivering MULTILIT (ie were a member of the School Executive or classroom teacher/other staff). Consequently, most of these respondents noted that they did not require any specific training in MULTILIT. Several classroom teachers indicated that they would have liked some training to further understand the intervention being delivered to their students, and a number of Executives reported that training on program implementation and use of data to monitor results would be helpful.

3.3 SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

All respondents were presented with a set of eight different types of support and resources and were asked to rate how *important* each had been in delivering the MULTILIT program. These responses are presented in Table 26 below, including a calculation of *total importance*, which comprises the combined set of *very important* and *important* responses.

The types of resources and support deemed important in delivering MULTILIT by the highest proportion of teachers were (in terms of *total importance*):

- *The written MULTILIT books (89%)*
- *Support from the School Executive (88%)*
- *In-school support from the MULTILIT Coordinator (86%)*

The *written MULTILIT books* were also nominated as *very important* by the highest proportion of respondents (64%).

The resources least frequently nominated by respondents as an important source of support were *access to online forums/blogs (24%)* and *support from MULTILIT (Macquarie University) (40%)*.

TABLE 26 – IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT AND RESOURCES IN DELIVERING MULTILIT (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

RESOURCE/SUPPORT	TOTAL IMPORTANCE	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	HARD TO SAY	NOT APPLICABLE
The written MULTILIT books	88.7	64.4	24.3	1.7	-	2.3	7.3
Support from the school Executive	88.1	54.8	33.3	3.4	0.6	1.1	6.8
In-school support from the MULTILIT Coordinator	85.9	58.2	27.7	2.8	1.1	1.1	9.0
Internal school training/ mentoring on MULTILIT	81.4	50.3	31.1	4.0	1.7	1.7	11.3
Formal MULTILIT training workshops	78.0	46.3	31.7	4.0	1.1	1.1	15.8
Access to research/ professional development resources	59.9	20.3	39.6	16.4	4.0	4.5	15.3
Support from MULTILIT (Macquarie University)	39.5	14.1	25.4	22.6	6.8	7.3	23.7
Access to online forums/ blogs etc	24.3	6.8	17.5	31.1	12.4	9.0	23.2

Table 27 below provides an analysis of the responses according to the respondents' main role with respect to MULTILIT in the school. Those respondents with a direct role in delivering or overseeing MULTILIT (Executives, MULTILIT Coordinators and tutors) were more likely than classroom teachers/other teaching staff to highlight the importance of resources and support including the MULTILIT books, in-school support from the Executive and Coordinator, and formal and internal training.

TABLE 27 – IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT AND RESOURCES BY ROLE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

RESOURCE/SUPPORT	TOTAL IMPORTANCE	EXECUTIVE	MULTILIT COORDINATOR	MULTILIT TUTOR	CLASSROOM TEACHER/ OTHER STAFF*
The written MULTILIT books	88.7	83.8	100.0	96.9	68.4
Support from the school Executive	88.1	86.5	86.5	96.9	76.3
In-school support from the MULTILIT Coordinator	85.9	86.5	83.8	90.8	78.9
Internal school training/ mentoring on MULTILIT	81.4	83.8	83.8	83.1	73.7
Formal MULTILIT training workshops	78.0	81.1	81.1	80.0	68.4
Access to research/ professional development resources	59.9	64.9	43.2	66.2	60.5
Support from MULTILIT (Macquarie University)	39.5	43.2	29.7	46.2	34.2
Access to online forums/ blogs etc	24.3	29.7	2.7	35.4	21.1

* Not involved in delivery of MULTILIT

4 Outcomes for students

4.1 OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

The questionnaire sought respondents' views on the impact of MULTILIT on students at their school. Teachers were asked to rate the *overall effectiveness* of MULTILIT in improving reading outcomes for students. The responses are summarised in Table 28 below, including an analysis of these results by role.

Overall, the large majority of respondents (91%) reported that MULTILIT had been *effective* or *very effective* in improving reading outcomes for students. This view was largely consistent across respondent roles, with respondents working as a MULTILIT tutor most likely to report that the program had been effective (95% *total effective*, 49% *very effective*). Considering the responses according to respondents' level of teaching experience revealed only minor variation, with teachers with more than 20 years teaching experience slightly less likely to report that the program had been effective (85% *total effectiveness*).

TABLE 28 – OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT IN IMPROVING READING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS BY ROLE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL	EXECUTIVE	MULTILIT COORDINATOR	MULTILIT TUTOR	CLASSROOM TEACHER/ OTHER STAFF
Very effective	44.6	40.5	43.2	49.2	42.1
Effective	46.3	51.4	45.9	46.2	42.1
Neither effective nor ineffective	2.3	2.7	2.7	1.5	2.6
Not very effective	1.7	2.7	2.7	-	2.6
Not at all effective	0.6	-	2.7	-	-
Too soon to say	3.4	2.7	2.7	1.5	7.9
Hard to say	1.1	-	-	1.5	2.6
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total effective</i>	<i>91.0</i>	<i>91.9</i>	<i>89.2</i>	<i>95.4</i>	<i>84.2</i>

Table 29 shows the variation in responses according to how the program had been delivered in the school. Information relating to the average number of sessions per week, and the frequency of use of the three components of MULTILIT (Sight Words, Word Attack, Reinforced Reading) in each school was provided by MULTILIT Coordinators completing the survey (discussed in Section 2 of this report). Note that for respondents from schools whose MULTILIT Coordinator did not complete the survey, or who did not identify the school at which they worked, this information was not available (24 schools, 50 respondents).

In terms of *total effectiveness*, there was no notable variation in responses according to whether schools had delivered the recommended number of sessions per week (four or more), or had regularly used all three components of MULTILIT in students' sessions. However, considering the results for *very effective* responses, respondents from schools delivering four or more weekly sessions were significantly more likely to report that the program had been *very effective* in improving student reading outcomes than those respondents that had only run three or fewer weekly sessions (48% compared to 28%).

TABLE 29 – OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT IN IMPROVING READING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS BY IMPLEMENTATION MODEL (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL	NUMBER SESSIONS PER WEEK			USE OF ALL 3 COMPONENTS**		
		4 or more	1-3	Unknown*	Yes	No	Unknown*
Very effective	44.6	47.9	28.1	59.2	37.0	39.6	59.2
Effective	46.3	42.3	59.6	36.7	51.9	49.5	36.7
Neither effective nor ineffective	2.3	2.8	1.8	2.0	3.7	2.0	2.0
Not very effective	1.7	2.8	1.8	-	3.7	2.0	-
Not at all effective	0.6	-	1.8	-	3.7	-	-
Too soon to say	3.4	4.2	3.5	2.0	-	5.0	2.0
Hard to say	1.1	-	3.5	-	-	2.0	-
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total effective</i>	<i>91.0</i>	<i>90.1</i>	<i>87.7</i>	<i>95.9</i>	<i>88.9</i>	<i>89.1</i>	<i>95.9</i>

* Information for school unavailable as survey not completed by the school's MULTILIT Coordinator or respondent did not identify their school

** Always or usually use Sight Words, Word Attack and Reinforced Reading in student sessions

As shown in Table 30, considering the responses according to the location and size of the school at which respondents worked showed some variation in views on the effectiveness of MULTILIT. Respondents from schools in rural/remote (94%) and regional areas (91%) were slightly more likely to report finding MULTILIT effective in improving student reading outcomes than respondents from metropolitan schools (86%). Likewise, a higher proportion of teachers working in small (95%) and medium-size schools (94%) reported that MULTILIT had been effective for students compared to teachers in large schools (80%).

TABLE 30 – OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT IN IMPROVING READING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS BY SCHOOL SIZE AND LOCATION (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL	SCHOOL LOCATION			SCHOOL SIZE (NO. STUDENTS)		
		METRO	REGIONAL CITY OR TOWN	RURAL/ REMOTE	LESS THAN 200	200 – 400	MORE THAN 400
Very effective	44.6	45.5	43.1	45.6	53.6	53.7	12.8
Effective	46.3	40.9	47.7	48.5	41.1	40.2	66.7
Neither effective nor ineffective	2.3	6.8	-	1.5	-	-	10.3
Not very effective	1.7	2.3	3.1	-	3.6	-	2.6
Not at all effective	0.6	-	1.5	-	-	1.2	-
Too soon to say	3.4	2.3	3.1	4.4	1.8	3.7	5.1
Hard to say	1.1	2.3	1.5	-	-	1.2	2.6
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total effective</i>	<i>91.0</i>	<i>86.4</i>	<i>90.8</i>	<i>91.0</i>	<i>94.6</i>	<i>93.9</i>	<i>79.5</i>

4.2 OBSERVED IMPROVEMENTS

Teachers were asked to indicate the extent of *improvement* observed in 14 areas relating to students' engagement with and capability in literacy since the introduction of MULTILIT. These responses are presented in Table 31 below, including a calculation of *total improvement* which comprises the combined set of *significant improvement* and *some improvement* responses.

In all 14 areas, the majority of respondents reported having observed *some improvement* or *significant improvement* in the students since the implementation of MULTILIT. The most frequently reported improvements were (in terms of *total improvement*):

- *Students' recognition of sight words* (95%)
- *Students' confidence in reading* (94%)
- *Students' word attack skills* (94%)
- *Students' ability to decode texts* (92%)
- *Students' use of effective strategies to assist them to understand and read text* (92%).

Approximately two thirds of respondents reported having observed *significant improvement* in *students' confidence in reading* (68%) and *students' recognition of sight words* (66%) since the introduction of MULTILIT.

TABLE 31 – OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' LITERACY (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVEMENT	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT	SOME IMPROVEMENT	A LITTLE IMPROVEMENT	NO IMPROVEMENT	HARD TO SAY
Students' recognition of sight words	94.9	65.5	29.4	2.3	-	2.8
Students' confidence in reading	94.4	67.8	26.6	4.0	-	1.7
Students' word attack skills	93.8	60.5	33.3	3.4	-	2.8
Students' ability to decode texts	91.5	44.6	46.9	6.2	0.6	1.7
Students' use of effective strategies to assist them to understand and read text	91.5	44.1	47.5	4.0	1.7	2.8
Students' reading fluency	88.1	44.1	44.1	8.5		3.4
Students' enthusiasm for reading	87.6	49.7	37.9	6.8	1.1	4.5
Students' willingness to discuss what they have read	87.6	46.9	40.7	7.9	1.1	3.4
Students' comprehension of texts	86.4	31.1	55.4	6.8	2.3	4.5
The complexity of texts read	85.3	29.4	55.9	8.5	1.1	5.1
Students' ability to read for meaning	84.7	30.5	54.2	9.0	1.7	4.5
The volume of reading undertaken	83.1	33.9	49.2	10.2	2.3	4.5
The variety of texts read	79.1	32.8	46.3	13.6	1.1	6.2
Students' enthusiasm for their other schoolwork (beyond literacy)	74.6	24.9	49.7	11.3	2.8	11.3

Considering the responses according to role, respondents with a direct role delivering the program (MULTILIT Coordinators and tutors) were most likely to report positive change in students' literacy across the majority of areas (see Table 32). In particular, MULTILIT tutors were notably more likely than other respondents to report *significant improvement* in the following areas:

- Students' recognition of sight words (80% significant improvement)
- Students' confidence in reading (75% significant improvement)
- Students' word attack skills (71% significant improvement)

TABLE 32 – OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' LITERACY BY ROLE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVEMENT	EXECUTIVE	MULTILIT COORDINATOR	MULTILIT TUTOR	CLASSROOM TEACHER/ OTHER STAFF
Students' recognition of sight words	94.9	89.2	97.3	98.5	92.1
Students' confidence in reading	94.4	91.9	94.6	98.5	89.5
Students' word attack skills	93.8	89.2	97.3	96.9	89.5
Students' ability to decode texts	91.5	89.2	94.6	95.4	84.2
Students' use of effective strategies to assist them understand to and read text	91.5	86.5	94.6	95.4	86.8
Students' reading fluency	88.1	78.4	94.6	89.2	89.5
Students' enthusiasm for reading	87.6	86.5	94.6	86.2	84.2
Students' willingness to discuss what they have read	87.6	81.1	89.2	92.3	84.2
Students' comprehension of texts	86.4	83.8	83.8	90.8	84.2
The complexity of texts read	85.3	83.8	89.2	90.8	73.7
Students' ability to read for meaning	84.7	78.4	86.5	86.2	86.8
The volume of reading undertaken	83.1	83.8	83.8	84.6	78.9
The variety of texts read	79.1	78.4	78.4	78.5	81.6
Students' enthusiasm for their other schoolwork (beyond literacy)	74.6	75.7	78.4	69.2	78.9

Table 33 below shows the variation in responses according to the average number of weekly sessions delivered to students in schools. The results are presented for both *significant improvement* and for *total improvement* (the combined set of *significant improvement* and *some improvement* responses). Whilst the variation in reported *total improvement* was not notably different for respondents from schools delivering the recommended four or more sessions than for respondents from schools delivering three or fewer sessions, there was considerable variation in reported *significant improvement* in many areas. Respondents from schools delivering the recommended number of weekly sessions were notably more likely to report *significant improvement* in the following areas:

- *Students' confidence in reading (72% significant improvement)*
- *Students' word attack skills (61% significant improvement)*
- *Students' willingness to discuss what they have read (55% significant improvement)*
- *Students' enthusiasm for reading (54% significant improvement)*
- *Students' use of effective strategies to assist them to understand and read text (47% significant improvement)*

TABLE 33 – OBSERVED IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' LITERACY BY NUMBER OF SESSIONS PER WEEK (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

AREA	TOTAL IMPROVE -MENT	NUMBER SESSIONS PER WEEK					
		Total Improvement			Significant Improvement		
		4 or more	1-3	Unknown*	4 or more	1-3	Unknown*
Students' recognition of sight words	94.9	94.4	94.7	95.9	60.6	63.2	75.5
Students' confidence in reading	94.4	94.4	94.7	93.9	71.8	54.4	77.6
Students' word attack skills	93.8	94.4	93.0	93.9	60.6	50.9	71.4
Students' ability to decode texts	91.5	93.0	91.2	89.8	39.4	42.1	55.1
Students' use of effective strategies to assist them to understand and read text	91.5	90.1	91.2	93.9	46.5	31.6	55.1
Students' reading fluency	88.1	93.0	84.2	85.7	43.7	38.6	51.0
Students' enthusiasm for reading	87.6	91.5	86.0	83.7	53.5	42.1	53.1
Students' willingness to discuss what they have read	87.6	85.9	89.5	87.8	54.9	35.1	49.0
Students' comprehension of texts	86.4	87.3	84.2	87.8	36.6	19.3	36.7
The complexity of texts read	85.3	85.9	82.5	87.8	25.4	24.6	40.8
Students' ability to read for meaning	84.7	87.3	78.9	87.8	29.6	21.1	42.9
The volume of reading undertaken	83.1	84.5	82.5	81.6	36.6	22.8	42.9
The variety of texts read	79.1	77.5	78.9	81.6	38.0	21.1	38.8
Students' enthusiasm for their other schoolwork (beyond literacy)	74.6	76.1	68.4	79.6	19.7	17.5	40.8

* Information for school unavailable as survey not completed by the school's MULTILIT Coordinator or respondent did not identify their school

4.3 STUDENT GROUPS

4.3.1 EFFECTIVENESS FOR DIFFERENT STUDENT GROUPS

Teachers were asked to rate the effectiveness of MULTILIT in improving the educational outcomes for a number of different student groups. These responses are presented in Table 34 below, including a calculation of *total effectiveness*, which comprises the combined set of *very effective* and *somewhat effective* responses.

Taking into consideration the proportion of responses reported as *not applicable/hard to say*, respondents did not highlight any particular student group for which MULTILIT had been notably ineffective. The student groups with the highest proportion of *not very effective* or *not at all effective* responses were *students above NAPLAN benchmarks* (20%) and *students with a learning disability* (15%), compared to 4% of responses for *all students*.

TABLE 34 – EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT 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
Students below NAPLAN benchmarks	91.0	59.9	31.1	3.4	-	5.6
All students	87.0	38.4	48.6	2.3	1.7	9.0
Aboriginal students	84.2	47.5	36.7	1.7	-	14.1
Students with a learning disability	76.8	29.9	46.9	13.0	1.7	8.5
ESL/LBOTE students	53.7	30.5	23.2	4.5	0.6	41.2
Students above NAPLAN benchmarks	44.6	14.1	30.5	13.6	6.8	35.0

Teachers were asked whether there were any students who were not well-suited to MULTILIT, and if so, to specify the type/s of students to whom the program was not well-suited.

Of the 177 teachers completing the survey, 81 indicated that there were students for whom MULTILIT was not a suitable literacy intervention. The most common types of students specified by respondents included:

- Students with learning difficulties/ well below benchmark literacy standards (38 mentions):

'Children who have significant learning difficulties in literacy did not achieve the expected improvements. Some of these children just found the intensity and demand on concentration too difficult. Those with limited working memory also found the program too challenging and frustrating because they had difficulty remembering the previous lesson's focus.'

'The program is not suited to the very low performing students as lists of words and letter/sound clusters are learnt in isolation. These students experience difficulty retaining these words and do not recognise them often when such words are embedded in texts.'

'Those with significant learning delays. We have found MULTILIT has suited our population of students who for some reason have 'gaps' in their learning for whatever reason. MULTILIT addresses these gaps beautifully.'

'Students with learning difficulties and students who are well below reading benchmark. These students require more intensive, foundational instruction of reading fundamentals rather than the next level of instruction that MULTILIT provides.'

- Students with behaviour/ emotional issues/ problems with concentration (22 mentions):

'Some attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder students find it hard to concentrate for long enough to complete a lesson.'

'Students with a short attention span and those that can't deal with repetitive lessons. Students that have a problem with testing and getting a mistake in the test is a negative and affects their mood for the whole session.'

'Behaviour issues can waste a valuable resource.'

- Students with slow reading/processing capacity – problems with speed required for fluency (10 mentions):

'Children who take a long time to think about and give an answer cannot meet the expectations for fluency in the word attack section.'

'Some students will never be able to meet the constraints of the timed fluency aspect. Adjustment to times or half lists are needed to help the progression to the next level - accuracy is achieved but some struggle with fluency.'

'Some children find the timed element of the fluency probes very stressful.'

- Students who are uncomfortable with one-to-one tuition and being withdrawn from class (8 mentions):

'Some of our older students have not felt comfortable being removed from the classroom to complete the program and have felt uncomfortable working one-to-one with a tutor.'

'The boys do not always respond positively - they do not always like having to leave the room as they feel a bit self-conscious. Children sometimes worry about the classroom work they will be missing out on - not that they have to make it up, but the fact that they are missing out on what everybody else is doing.'

- Students with poor/inconsistent attendance at school (7 mentions):

'Some students have been identified as having low literacy levels due to absences but because MULTILIT requires three consecutive days per week we find that these students are not attending regularly enough to reap the full benefits of the program.'

- Students with speech issues/blending of sounds – problems with articulation required for fluency (6 mentions):

'Students affected by severe speech impediment or Apraxia are not suited to this program due to the time restraint in the fluency probe...the fluency probe is quite daunting to these students and they will often confuse themselves and get tongue tied under pressure, resulting in incorrect reads and a depletion in confidence.'

- Students from non-English speaking backgrounds/ESL (5 mentions):

'Had trouble with some students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Just could not grasp the vowel sounds and blends.'

- Students with poor vocabulary and comprehension (3 mentions):

'Many of these students have already achieved a reasonable level of competency in decoding text, but their problems are in the comprehension of what they read and their vocabulary/general background knowledge. They generally have difficulty comprehending stage level text.'

4.3.2 EFFECTIVENESS FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

Teachers were also asked to report their view on the relative effectiveness of MULTILIT in improving educational outcomes for *Aboriginal* students compared to *non-Aboriginal* students. Table 35 below shows the results. The large majority of respondents indicated either that the program is as effective for Aboriginal students as for non-Aboriginal students (62%) or that they weren't able to compare the effectiveness (22% *not sure/hard to say*, 10% *not applicable*). A small minority reported that MULTILIT had been *more effective* for Aboriginal students than for non-Aboriginal students (4%).

TABLE 35 – EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTILIT FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS COMPARED TO NON-ABORIGINAL STUDENTS
(PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

EFFECTIVENESS	TOTAL
More effective than for non-Aboriginal students	4.0
As effective as for non-Aboriginal students (ie no difference)	62.1
Less effective than for non-Aboriginal students	1.7
Not sure/ hard to say	22.0
Not applicable as there are no Aboriginal students participating in MULTILIT at my school	10.2
TOTAL	100

Teachers were asked to specify why they believed this relative effectiveness had been the case. The most common reasons noted by respondents included:

- Students are targeted equally based on need/ similar profile of results for both groups (94 mentions):

'All students chosen for the program are low level readers. All students have shown improvement. A significant increase in enthusiasm and confidence in the ability to achieve/read, has made a positive impact upon all students regardless of cultural background.'

'We believe that children all need the same explicit, systematic instruction in reading whether they are Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. All the children on the MULTILIT Program have benefited and have become more effective and confident readers.'

'Improvement shown in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students show that improvement relates to things like attendance and teacher support in the classroom as opposed to cultural background.'

- Positive response to one-to-one support/ relationship with MULTILIT Tutor (5 mentions):

'Aboriginal children respond well to the one-on-one tutoring especially when the tutor was also Aboriginal.'

- Impact of parental support and other issues at home (5 mentions):

'This depends on the student and the encouragement and support they receive regarding all aspects of education that they experience from their home environment.'

'Often Aboriginal students in our school have less support at home and a lower level of skill due to itinerancy and very low SES. They have more difficulties to contend with than many average whitefella kids. I think this extra load may lower the effectiveness of the program and skew the results.'

- Impact of other learning difficulties (4 mentions):

'MULTILIT relies heavily on sound recognition. Many Aboriginal students have experienced hearing loss at some stage and have more ground to make up.'

- Small cohort of Aboriginal students – unable to comment on relative effectiveness (24 mentions)
- Not sure/ data not available to compare results (17 mentions).

Respondents were also asked to specify any other impacts or outcomes (positive or negative) that had been observed in Aboriginal students participating in MULTILIT. Of the 177 teachers completing the

survey, 95 respondents provided a specific response to this question. The most common additional impacts or outcomes for Aboriginal students noted by respondents included:

- Increased student confidence/ self-esteem (36 mentions):

'The 'shame' factor of speaking in front of others has noticeably decreased for quite a few of our Aboriginal students. There has been a significant increase in most students' confidence when reading to an audience.'

'I have found with some of the students i have worked with this program has boosted their self-esteem and also given them some self-belief and pride about themselves. This has been gained by them successfully completing a level or even mastering some really hard unfamiliar words.'

- Increased engagement/ enthusiasm for reading (19 mentions):

'Increased confidence and involvement in other reading opportunities, ie: topic reading in class.'

'Aboriginal students are enjoying reading more and I have noticed that they are using the word attack skills and wanting to read more. They are enjoying reading more. They are reading more for meaning now.'

- Positive response to participation in the program/ bonding with MULTILIT tutors (18 mentions):

'One young girl of Aboriginal descent who was a reluctant reader has bonded with her tutor and voluntarily comes in early to school to receive additional tutoring.'

'Living in the community gives me knowledge of home life and background knowledge and knowing that this has a big impact on all learning. Students know where I live and see me daily and relate to me and the other Tutors for the same reason.'

- Improved attendance (9 mentions):

'The children believe in themselves more and are willing to try new approaches to learning. There has also been a flow on to school attendance.'

- Increased engagement with school (5 mentions):

'Aboriginal students in my class have become more engaged and enjoy feeling successful.'

'Due to daily sessions of MULTILIT and a Cultural connection, I have formed a very strong bond with my Aboriginal students and their parents. This has had a positive impact on all concerned, resulting in committed participation in the program and a positive attitude towards school.'

- Focus/attention on problems with speech, hearing or other learning difficulties (5 mentions):

'Teachers can become more aware of difficulties such as problems with phonemic awareness or hearing difficulties.'

- Poor response to withdrawal from class (3 mentions)

'The one-on-one support has helped them greatly however a couple of the children disliked being withdrawn from their class. One child found the program a little boring and showed no enthusiasm.'

5 Impact on the school

Teachers were presented with a series of statements relating to the role of MULTILIT in school literacy practices, the level of support and guidance for implementing MULTILIT in the school, the perceived value of the program and its sustainability beyond the funding period. Respondents were asked to express how strongly they *agreed* or *disagreed* with each statement. The responses are presented in Table 36 below.

TABLE 36 – AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT IMPACT OF MULTILIT ON THE SCHOOL (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

STATEMENT	TOTAL AGREE- MENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	HARD TO SAY
School practices							
MULTILIT complements the other literacy and reading approaches in the school	89.3	50.8	38.4	5.1	2.8	1.1	1.7
MULTILIT is a very important part of this school's approach to improving literacy	88.7	53.7	35.0	6.2	3.4	1.1	0.6
There are more effective approaches to improving low progress readers' reading than MULTILIT	16.4	6.8	9.6	48.0	18.6	7.3	9.6
Support and guidance							
MULTILIT was well planned and used in this school	94.4	57.6	36.7	5.1	0.6	-	-
There is strong leadership support for MULTILIT in my school	87.6	48.6	39.0	9.0	1.7	1.1	0.6
Support for MULTILIT in my school has grown over time	77.4	44.6	32.8	11.3	5.6	1.1	4.5
I received good support and guidance on how to use MULTILIT	70.6	45.8	24.9	17.5	3.4	1.7	6.8
Value and sustainability							
I would recommend the use of MULTILIT in other schools	91.0	59.9	31.1	5.1	1.1	1.1	1.7
MULTILIT is well worth the investment	89.8	60.5	29.4	4.5	2.3	1.1	2.3
There is a clear path for sustaining MULTILIT in the school beyond the funding period	62.1	32.8	29.4	9.6	11.3	6.8	10.2

There was a high level of agreement with statements relating to the positive role of MULTILIT in school literacy practices, with the large majority of respondents in agreement that *MULTILIT complements the other literacy and reading approaches in the school* (89%) and that *MULTILIT is a very important part of this school's approach to improving literacy* (89%). Few respondents (16%) were in agreement with the negative statement that *there are more effective approaches to improving low progress readers' reading than MULTILIT*, with the largest proportion of respondents (48%) *neither agreeing or disagreeing* with this statement.

In terms of the level of support and guidance for implementing MULTILIT in the school, the large majority of respondents agreed with statements relating to the planning and leadership support for MULTILIT delivery in the school. The highest level of agreement expressed for any statement was that *MULTILIT was well planned and used in this school* (94% total agreement, 58% strongly agree).

There was also a high level of agreement on the value of MULTILIT, with most respondents agreeing that *I would recommend the use of MULTILIT in other schools* (91%) and that *MULTILIT is well worth the investment* (90%). The lowest level of agreement expressed for any statement was related to the sustainability of the program, with only a third of respondents (33%) *strongly agreeing* that *there is a clear path for sustaining MULTILIT in the school beyond the funding period*.

In Table 37, the responses are presented by the location and school size of respondents. The level of agreement with statements was broadly consistent across school location and size; however, respondents from regional schools and large schools (with more than 400 students) were slightly *less* positive about the impact of MULTILIT on their school.

Respondents from schools in a regional city or town were slightly *less* likely to agree with statements such as:

- *MULTILIT is a very important part of this schools' approach to improving literacy*
- *There is strong leadership support for MULTILIT in my school*
- *Support for MULTILIT in my school has grown over time*
- *MULTILIT is well worth the investment*
- *There is a clear path for sustaining MULTILIT in the school beyond the funding period*

Respondents from large schools were slightly *less* likely to agree with statements such as:

- *MULTILIT is a very important part of this schools' approach to improving literacy*
- *I received good support and guidance on how to use MULTILIT*
- *I would recommend the use of MULTILIT in other schools*
- *MULTILIT is well worth the investment*

TABLE 37 – AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT IMPACT OF MULTILIT ON THE SCHOOL BY SCHOOL LOCATION AND SIZE (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

STATEMENT	TOTAL AGREE- MENT	SCHOOL LOCATION			SCHOOL SIZE (NO. STUDENTS)		
		METRO	REGIONAL CITY OR TOWN	RURAL/ REMOTE	LESS THAN 200	200 – 400	MORE THAN 400
School practices							
MULTILIT complements the other literacy and reading approaches in the school	89.3	90.9	87.7	89.7	89.3	90.2	87.2
MULTILIT is a very important part of this school's approach to improving literacy	88.7	88.6	83.1	94.1	91.1	90.2	82.1
There are more effective approaches to improving low progress readers' reading than MULTILIT	16.4	15.9	18.5	14.7	17.9	19.5	7.7
Support and guidance							
MULTILIT was well planned and used in this school	94.4	95.5	92.3	95.6	94.6	93.9	94.9
There is strong leadership support for MULTILIT in my school	87.6	86.4	81.5	94.1	89.3	87.8	84.6
Support for MULTILIT in my school has grown over time	77.4	81.8	67.7	83.8	80.4	76.8	74.4
I received good support and guidance on how to use MULTILIT	70.6	75.0	69.2	69.1	78.6	70.7	59.0
Value and sustainability							
I would recommend the use of MULTILIT in other schools	91.0	93.2	89.2	91.2	92.9	92.7	84.6
MULTILIT is well worth the investment	89.8	93.2	86.2	91.2	92.9	90.2	84.6
There is a clear path for sustaining MULTILIT in the school beyond the funding period	62.1	68.2	52.3	67.6	66.1	57.3	66.7

6 Suggested improvements

Teachers were asked whether they could think of any improvements to the MULTILIT program or its use in the school. Of the 177 teachers completing the survey, 70 respondents put forward suggestions for improving the program.

The most common suggestions for improving MULTILIT included:

- Extended or increased funding to sustain/expand the program – employment of tutors, purchasing of resources (22 mentions)

'Funding of course dictates who receives the support - it would be great to offer it to all who need it.'

'We have been impressed with the early achievements of students under MULTILIT however, the challenge will be to see how many of our trained tutors we manage to retain as volunteers once the money runs out.'

'Allow for the student recording books to be photocopied. These books are expensive and once the National Partnership funding finishes, our school would find it very difficult to sustain the programme due to the cost of the books.'

- Improved links to classroom literacy curriculum/ training of classroom teachers in MULTILIT (13 mentions)

'There needs to be a plan or program to all those students who get off the MULTILIT program, there is nothing to support them once they are in the class and sometimes students don't make a link to what they have learnt in MULTILIT and how they can use it in the class room.'

'I think part of MULTILIT could be adapted to a Smartboard program especially the word recognition section and used for the whole class. This could be most useful in the lower classes.'

'All teaching staff need to be trained in MULTILIT methodology, there may be aspects of the program which can be used with a whole class or small group.'

- Extending the focus of MULTILIT to incorporate broader literacy components – spelling, comprehension, writing (11 mentions)

'Extending the program to incorporate a spelling component. Majority of the students are capable of reading the words but are unable spell them when tested. Word manipulation enhances the ability of the student to comprehend the text and correctly spell it.'

'Need to develop better means to improve comprehension of reading material for students. Being able to read is one thing, being able to understand what is being read is another matter.'

'There needs to be explicit teaching and prompting for reading strategies during text reading to develop strategic readers not just decoders.'

- Modifications or additions to the MULTILIT books/materials (11 mentions)

'Provide small visuals to support the decoding word attack part of program to reinforce the sounds. Provide an example/s of sentences with the sight words in them. This would help those students to place it in context/encode it immediately and give meaning.'

'By implementing activity work sheets for each level. ie; word search, letter boxes, unjumble words etc.'

'I think there should be pages at the back of the word attack or sight words booklets that you can write down the words that the students really struggled with. These are the words that took a

while to understand so you can turn at the end of the word attack or sight word booklet retest these words and see how they are going with them.'

'Books for Reinforced Reading, it is sometimes hard to find interesting books and the levels vary so much which makes it difficult at times to assess their benchmark.'

- Modification of the program approach to suit individual student needs/particular learning difficulties (6 mentions)

'Have a variant on the program so the tutor can make adjustments for those students with very low self-esteem who don't cope with the testing at the beginning of the lesson and who have poor reading, [to ensure they] still have the opportunity to learn and improve with their reading.'

'Needs to be some flexibility to cater for each individual child's learning needs.'

- Removing nonsense words from the Word Attack component (4 mentions)

'For students who are experiencing severe literacy delay and difficulty the nonsense words in the WAS component of the program should be omitted as I found it was more rewarding for the student to be able to decode the word, then use it effectively, thus attaching meaning to the words being read.'

'The nonsense words threw the low kids every time. I understood the reason for them but they didn't.'

- Improved timetabling to limit the impact of student withdrawals (4 mentions)

'We find it difficult with the withdrawal part of MULTILIT and the nature of 3 times a week. We worry that children will miss other vital learning experiences so we have tried to stagger the times that kiddies go to their MULTILIT class but we still find kids are coming and going from their classrooms, sometimes hard to juggle.'

- Modification of the delivery method to allow sessions for small groups of students with similar needs (3 mentions)

'Because of the nature of needing one-on-one it is too expensive to be run by SLSO's and we cannot rely on parents to deliver the program, an alternative might be to be able to present it in a small group of children with similar needs.'

- Conducting refresher training for MULTILIT tutors (3 mentions)

'More training I find that you always have questions after you use a programme for a while.'

