The impact of a teacher education course in ADHD on perceived teacher knowledge and confidence, and improved teaching practices: some preliminary findings

Porter, M.A., Briscoe, L., Blackwell, H., Sach, L., Tsoumbris, S., Hoang, A., Tice, M., & Cheng, S.

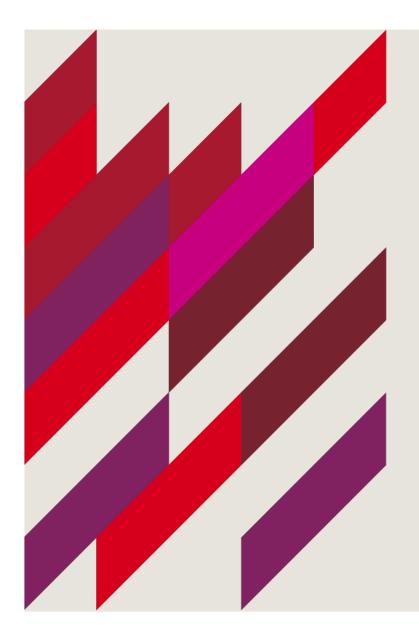
Global ADHD Conference, 6 October 2023

MACQUARIE University Sydney-Australia



EPS Partnership





Presentation Outline:



Study Aims and Methodology Results Conclusion

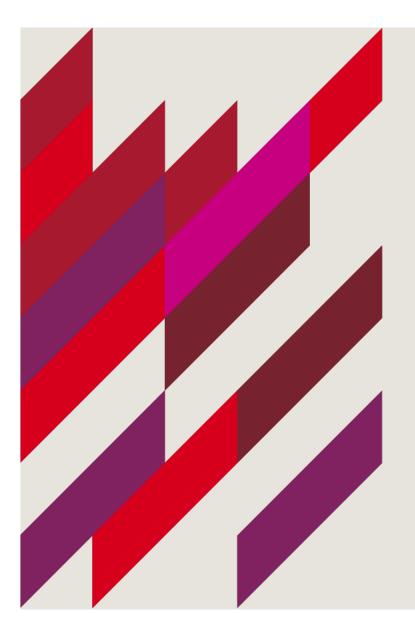
Where to from here?

Q&A Session



MACQUARIE University

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SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA













SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA





January, 2018

MULTIPLE ROLES







MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH ADHD IN SCHOOLS



- School 1 Mainstream Kindergarten
 - 1 suspension
- School 2 Mainstream Year 1-Year 3
 - 2 suspensions
- School 3 Special Unit Year 4 to Year 6
- Plans for Special Unit / Integrated Mainstream Setting High School

"He is an absolute angel one-on-one"

"He is a beautiful kid.....School just brings out the worst in him"

"I have absolutely no idea where his skills lie academically"

Some of the negative experiences



ACTUAL QUOTES



Of course, most teachers are amazing!! Some teachers are just lost when it comes to ADHD

Some of the positive experiences



ACTUAL QUOTES



"I now understand [that] the reason she cannot concentrate is because her brain works differently"



"Giving him accommodations will help him to reach his full potential and will protect his mental health too"



"Whatever strategies you think will help her. I'm happy to give anything a go"



"He is a valued class member"



"When she is struggling, we work things out together"



A REAL NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL COURSES IN ADHD

- Lack of pre-service and in-service teacher education in ADHD represents a major and pressing problem.
- On average, one student in every Australian Kindergarten to Year 12 classroom has an ADHD diagnosis.
- ADHD students are **predominantly occupying mainstream settings** and are expected to engage in undifferentiated regular classroom learning.
- Despite this, Australian pre-service teachers receive, on average, as little as 1 to 5 hours of training at university on children with special needs and **many receive no training at all on ADHD**.
- Moreover, **93% of Australian in-service teachers report that they would benefit from further professional learning in ADHD** and 92% report they were not adequately trained at university to identify and support ADHD students (ADHDA Education Survey Report, 2021).
- Lack of teacher knowledge of ADHD has major impacts on teachers, students and families.
- Also, while some professional education courses exist, there is a lack of research on impact of teacher education in ADHD, especially beyond improvements in teacher knowledge.



THE IMPACT ON ADHD STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

- ADHD Australia (ADHDA)'s Critical Gaps Report on ADHD in Australian schools reported that "95% of parents believed teachers and school staff need specific ADHD training" (Parents for ADHD Advocacy, 2019).
- Without appropriate teacher knowledge and evidence-based accommodations for their needs, **ADHD students experience major issues at school,** including difficulty engaging in the learning process, stigmatisation, compromised relationships with teachers and peers, academic underachievement, suspensions, and early school drop-outs (Smit et al., 2020).
- Many issues for children with ADHD start in primary school, with serious, cascading effects extending into adolescence and adulthood, and having lifelong implications.
- ADHDA's Critical Gaps Report also highlights that 1 in 3 children changed schools as a result of ADHD-related issues in 2019, 24% were suspended, 30% expelled and 56% of ADHD students received at least one detention.
- It is estimated that **between 31 and 45 percent of ADHD students have a co-existing Specific Learning Disorder** (SLD) **in literacy/numeracy**, which is 5 to 10 times the rate of SLD in the general population (Francés, et al., 2022).
- Due to social and academic struggles, **60-100% of those with ADHD have a secondary mental health condition** such as depression or anxiety (Farone et al., 2015).
- We urgently need to engage teachers in effective ADHD education programs, to reduce the negative outcomes associated with ADHD.
- It is widely accepted that developing the expertise and knowledge of teachers is one of the most fundamental measures to increase student achievement and facilitate more positive outcomes for those with ADHD (Smit et al., 2020).

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- Lack of teacher education/training in ADHD is recognised internationally:
 - In South Africa, "inclusion principles have not been adequately transferred into mainstream classrooms" (Francés, , et al. , 20220);
 - In the UK "teachers are often uncertain about how to respond to the challenges of students with ADHD" (Florian & Linklater, 2010);
 - In the middle east, teacher knowledge on ADHD is described as "sub-optimal" (Al-Moghamsi, et al., 2018)
- Similar sentiments are reflected in the USA and Australia. The literature indicates: "teacher's understanding of ADHD appears to be limited" and "teachers are not adopting basic evidence-based strategies when it comes to students with ADHD" (Braude, & Dwarika, 2020).







UNKNOWN REAL WORLD IMPACTS OF TEACHER TRAINING IN ADHD

- Professional education programs are now mandatory for Australian teachers, but training programs need to be properly evaluated and their evidence-base clearly documented.
- A recent systematic review was conducted on the effectiveness of teacher education programs (incorporating general knowledge about ADHD and/or behavioural techniques) for improving teacher knowledge of ADHD (Ward et al, 2022). This review and meta-analysis included 29 studies in total (and only one Australian study), and the conclusions drawn were that there was a strong evidence-base (large effect-sizes) for improving teacher knowledge, with inconsistent/limited evidence for their effectiveness to improve teacher's use of classroom strategies. As Ward et al. point out, "Given the average child spends 13,000 hr in compulsory school education... it is critical to find effective interventions in schools to support children with ADHD".



UNKNOWN REAL WORLD IMPACTS OF TEACHER TRAINING IN ADHD

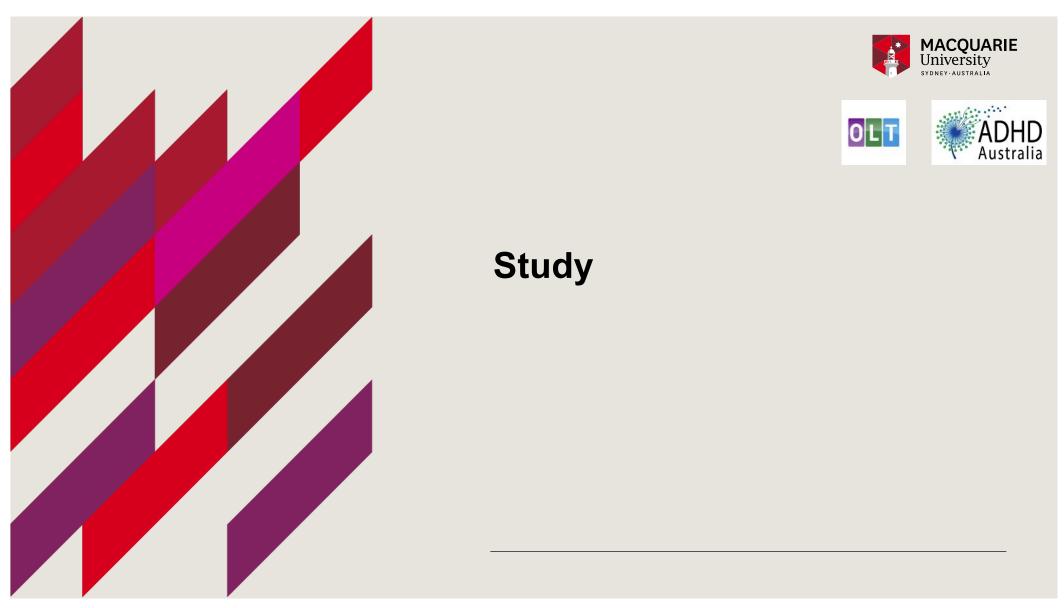
- Understanding the effectiveness of ADHD professional training is compromised by:
 - the varying quality of the training programs offered (e.g., with only some training including evidence-based strategies and delivery by experts);
 - a variety of outcome measures and methodologies being utilised;
 - and outcomes are often limited to teacher knowledge (not teacher confidence/self-efficacy, implementation of learned strategies or change in teachers' perspectives and /or practices).
- Moreover:
 - studies span across medical, educational and psychological sectors;
 - there are very few randomised control studies,
 - and many studies include single arm cohorts (e.g., single education jurisdictions).

BACKGROUND



LOTS HAPPENING IN AUSTRALIA AND GLOBALLY IN THE ADHD SPACE

C	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec		
National																	
Disability Royal				-										_			
Commission		Final report due 29 September 2023										A	G respo				
NDIS Review	[To I	have re	gard to	DRC a	nd Nat	Autism	Strategy	. Final r	eport du	e Oct 2	023]		
																,	
Senate Inq on school refusal		170 submissions - 67 re autism						Report published 10 Aug				Response]		
Senate Inq on disruptive classrooms			82 subs published by 23 Aug					9	Final report moved to 16 N				16 Nove	ember		Response	
								Г	319 5	ubs - 23							
Senate Inq on ADHD support										Aug		port du	e 18 O	ctober	R	Response	
WA Inquiry into support for	r								Γ	90 sub	s by 23						
autistic										A	-			Final re	eport due	e 21 March	n 2024







Aims and Methodology

THE IMPACT OF A BLENDED LEARNING COURSE IN ADHD ON TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE, AND IMPROVED TEACHING PRACTICES: SOME PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

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Aims



- The aim of the current study was to provide a preliminary evaluation of (and preliminary insights into) the impact of a blended learning course : OnlineTraining (OLT)'s 'Understanding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder' ('Understanding ADHD') on teachers' perceived knowledge, perceived confidence and skills, and any changes in teaching practice.
- Findings may inform other teacher training programs, but the ultimate aim initially is for this preliminary work to inform the enhancement of OLT's '*Understanding ADHD*' program, and to design a prospective (future) study looking at the real-world short- and long-term impacts of the course for teachers, students and families.

Blended learning = self-paced learning on-line + class-led sessions



STUDY DESIGN AND OLT'S 'UNDERSTANDING ADHD' COURSE

- The current study utilised a mixed methods, retrospective study design.
- Pre- and post- course data included categorical ratings, answers to yes/no and open-ended questions, and other descriptives, which were analysed using a range of statistical approaches, including multi-level ordinal logistic regression, non-parametric tests and reflexive thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006 & 2019).





STUDY DESIGN AND OLT'S 'UNDERSTANDING ADHD' COURSE

- The 'Understanding ADHD' course content and learning objectives are described in detail on OLT's website: <u>https://aus.oltinternational.net/understanding-attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder</u>
- The course is designed for those who work in schools with students, particularly teachers, school executives and support staff. The target age range is compulsory education.
- The course is offered in a learning cohort of up to 12 participants led by a tutor. The course runs over 8 to 10 weeks through a blended learning approach with individual online study supported by three tutor led group sessions, which altogether totals 20 hours. Tutor led sessions may be in person or online via a virtual platform.



PRE- AND POST- COURSE QUESTIONS

Pre-(before) and post- (after) course completion, all participants were asked to rate the following questions using four categorical options:

- Pre1, then Post1: How do you rate your current level of knowledge and understanding of ADHD? (None, Limited, Sound or Comprehensive);
- **Pre2, then Post2**: *How would you rate your current skills in assessing the needs of students with ADHD?* (None, Limited, Sound or Comprehensive);
- **Pre3, then Post3**: *How would you rate your current skills in planning and implementing interventions for students with ADHD*?

(None, Limited, Sound or Comprehensive);

- **Pre4, then Post4:** *How confident do you feel in meeting the needs of students with ADHD?* (Not at all Confident, Somewhat Confident, Fairly Confident, Very Confident); and
- **Pre5 then Post5**: *Please indicate your current level of confidence in using a computer to study an online learning course?*

(Not at all Confident, Somewhat Confident, Fairly Confident, Very Confident);





Post (i.e., after) course completion, the following questions were also asked of participants:

- Post6: How would you rate the online course content? (categorical response) (Poor, Acceptable, Good or Excellent/High);
- Post7: How many tutor led sessions did you have? (numerical response required);
- Post8: How did you access the tutor led sessions? (categorical response) (Face-to-face, Online, Combination, Did not attend);
- Post9: How did the tutor led sessions contribute to your learning? (open-ended question);
- Post10: Would you recommend this course to others? (yes /no response obtained); and
- **Post11:** Do you refer back to the course or make use of what you learned? (yes/no response obtained).





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PRE- AND POST- COURSE QUESTIONS

The following open-ended questions were answered at the beginning of the first tutorial session (Intro 1 and 2) or at the end of the last tutorial session (Conc 1 and 2):

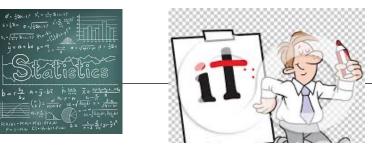
- Intro1: What has influenced you to do this course?;
- Intro2: (a) Share with the group what you hope to learn as a result of taking this OLT course on understanding ADHD. (b) How do you feel about blended learning with tutor group sessions and using the computer to learn?
 (c) What advantages do you think this method of learning may provide for you?;
- Conc1: We have all started this course from different starting points. Some may be very experienced and others new to working with students with ADHD. (a) <u>Please share with the group three key things that you have</u> <u>learned</u> (b) and explain what difference this has made to your attitudes, understanding and practice with the students you teach or support; and
- **Conc2**: (a) *List three things you will take away from this course and implement in your classroom/ school/ practice.* (c) *Additionally, what will you share with your colleagues and school leaders?*

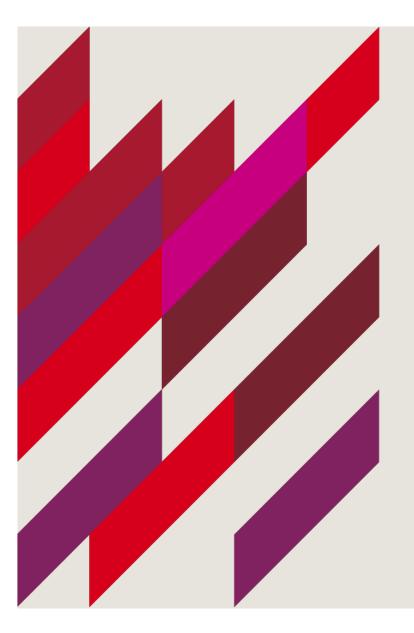


Methodology GOLD-STANDARD APPROACH TO ANALYSIS



- Quantitative data was analysed using StataIC, Version 17. For all inferential test statistics (e.g. regressions), the significance level (p-value) was set to an adjusted level of .01 for main effects, given the large number of comparisons, to control for Type-I and Type-II error (Rothman, 1990). **Bonferroni adjustments** were automatically made for pairwise comparisons, so here the significance level was set to .05.
- The total sample size was 2,111 participants. For qualitative data/thematic analyses, a random sample of 100 participants were chosen from the full data set using a computer generated algorithm (CalculatorSoup®). Descriptive statistics on the full study sample and on the random sub-sample did not differ.
- All qualitative **data was categorised independently by at least two researchers** (co-authors: HB, LS, ST, AH, & LB), and any disagreements were resolved by a third party (co-authors MP or LB) until a consensus was reached.
- All data was cross-checked and a reflective thematic analysis was then undertaken by the first author (MP) (Braun & Clarke, 2006, & 2019), with the themes then cross-checked with the online software program ChatGPT.









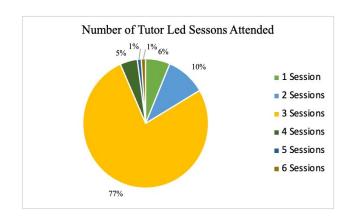
Results

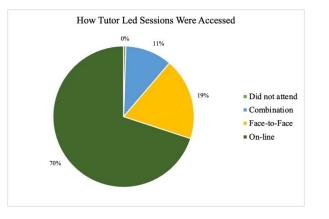
THE IMPACT OF A BLENDED LEARNING COURSE IN ADHD ON TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE, AND IMPROVED TEACHING PRACTICES: SOME PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

STUDY SAMPLE



• Data included 2,111 participants across Australia in total across 17 education jurisdictions, 23 geographical regions, 535 schools, and 667 learning cohorts.

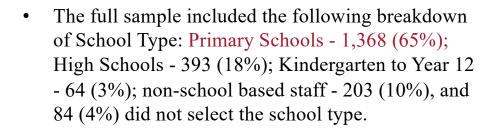


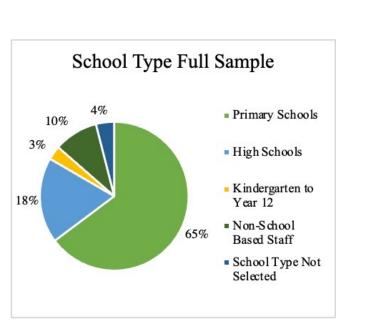


a) Post7 Responses How many tutor led sessions did you have? b) Post8 Responses

How did you access the tutor led sessions?

STUDY SAMPLE





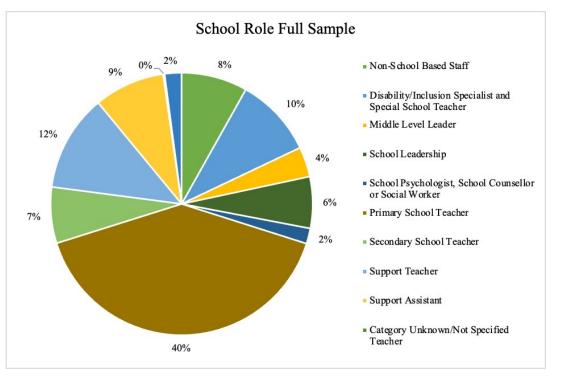
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STUDY SAMPLE

The breakdown of Roles for those that completed the course included: 172 (8%) non-school based staff; 207 (10%) disability/inclusion specialist and special school teachers; 78 (4%) middle level leader in school; 134 (6%) school leadership; 40 (2%) school psychologist, school counsellor or social worker; 850 (40%) primary school teacher; 146 (7%) secondary school teacher; 252 (12%) support teacher; 184 (9%) support assistant; 4 (0%) teacher with category unknown/not specified, and 44 (3%) other/role not specified.





Pre and Post Question comparisons



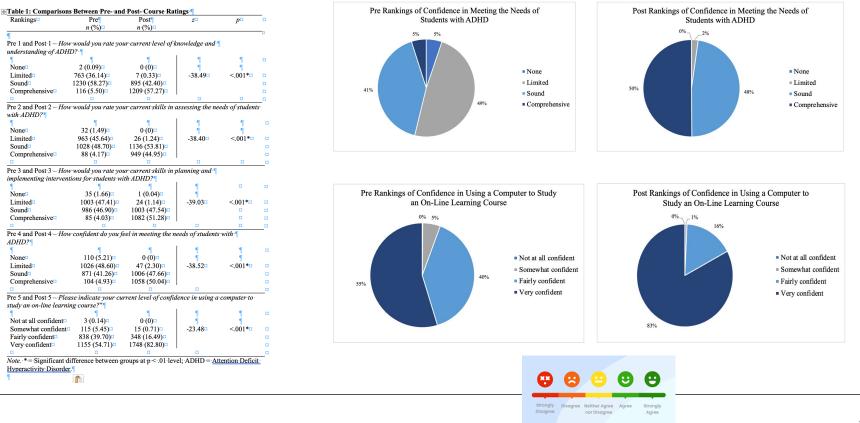
PRE/POST1 TO PRE/POST 5 DESCRIPTIVES

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Comprehensive	116 (5.50)	1209 (57.27)			38%						
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	ow would you rate yo entions for students w		bianning and								
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Limited	1003 (47.41)	24 (1.14)	-39.03	<.001*¤	46%	= Limited			45%		= Limited
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Comprehensive	85 (4.03)	1082 (51.28)		ä	49%				54	4%	Sound
	05 (4.05)	1002 (31.20)		ä		 Comprehe 	nsive				 Comprehensive
Pre 4 and Post 4 – He	ow confident do you	feel in meeting the n	eeds of student	s with ¶							
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Limited	1026 (48.60)	47 (2.30)	-38.52	<.001*							
Sound	871 (41.26)	1006 (47.66)							Post Rankings of Current Skill	ls in Plann	ing and
Comprehensive	104 (4.93)	1058 (50.04)			Pre Rankings of Current Skills in F	lanning and		I	mplementing Interventions for S		
¤	¤	¤	¤		Implementing Interventions for Studen	nts with ADHD				studento w	
	ease indicate your ci	rrent level of confid	lence in using a	a computer to	4% 2%				0%1%		
study an on-line lear	ning course?"				470 270						
1			1	1							
Not at all confident		0 (0)	22.40								
Somewhat confiden		15 (0.71)	-23.48	<.001*		None					None
Fairly confident	838 (39.70)	348 (16.49)				= Limited				48%	= Limited
Very confident	1155 (54.71)	1748 (82.80)	l 🛛		47%	Sound		519	*	.370	Sound
**	difference between			ttention Deficit	47%	Comprehen	eive				 Comprehensive
Hyperactivity Disord		soups at p < .01 lev	, ADID-A	auchiton Denett		- Comprehen	15140				
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Pre and Post Question comparisons

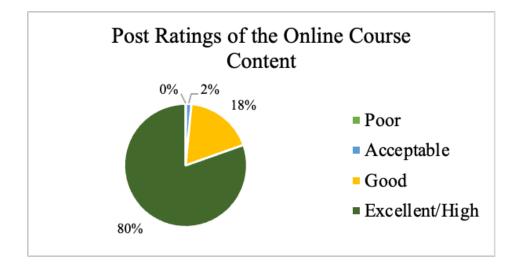


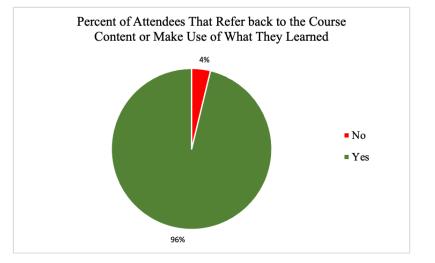
PRE/POST1 TO PRE/POST 5 DESCRIPTIVES



POST 6 & 11





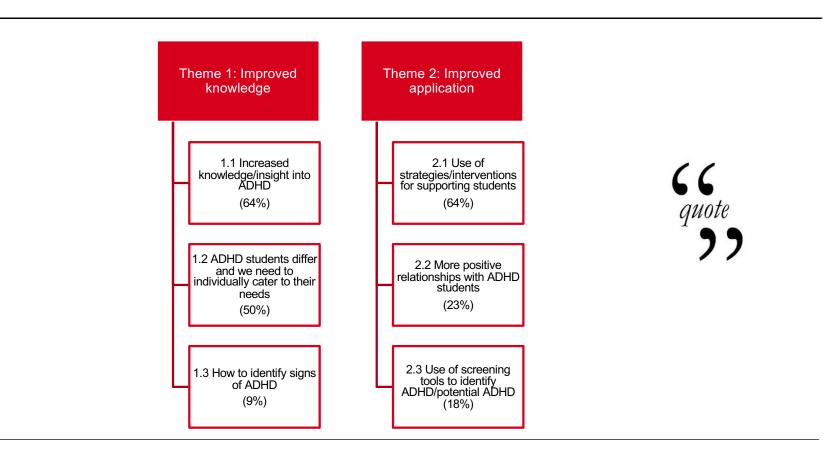


Example thematic map:

Thematic map and percent endorsement for the question Conc1:

(a) Please share with the group three key things that you have learned.





Conc1: (a) Please share with the group three key things that you have learned?

SAMPLE QUOTE

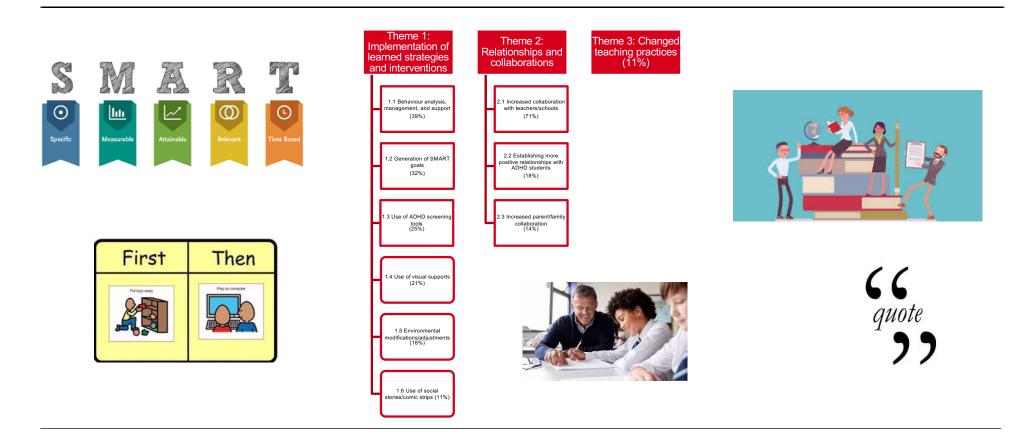


"I have found this course very insightful and feel I have completed it with a much deeper understanding of what ADHD is and entails. The following are some key learnings I have discovered along the way;-ABC analysis and other forms of testing for ADHD for rich data on student behaviours -Effective strategies to assist students with ADHD in terms of learning and behaviour management -That what may work for one student with ADHD may not work at all for another student. Students with ADHD all function differently and as educators, we need to cater for their individual needs"



Thematic map and percent endorsement for the question: Conc2: (a) List three things you will take away from this course and implement in your classroom/ school/ practice.



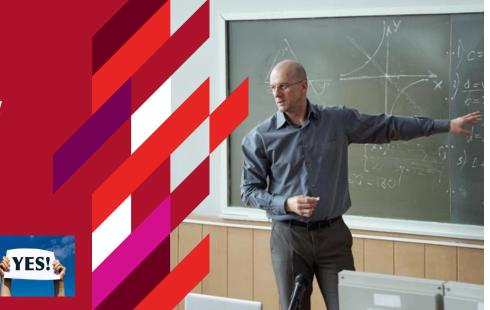


Conc2: (a) List three things you will take away from this course and implement in your classroom/ school/ practice.?

SAMPLE QUOTE



"Teachers should ensure positive approaches are used and should keep setting targets and trialling different ways of teaching the student. There are many strategies and interventions that can be utilised with children with ADHD. It is a matter of determining the function and trialling the most suitable strategies. I always believe in building into the whole class teaching instead of segregating the student. The teacher needs to accommodate for the student as opposed to segregation and separate learning."



Select Results



REGRESSION ANALYSES

- Multilevel ordinal logistic regressions were undertaken to determine which variables predicted Pre and Post rating scores.
- To control for any confounding influences of sampling characteristics, relevant variables including School and Region were nested, and controlling for these variables significantly changed the model for some, but not all, dependent variables.
- Regressions were run on all Pre and Post ordinal variables, with relevant Pre and Post rankings, Post7 and Post8 responses (number and mode of tutor-led sessions), and participant variables (Role, School Type), set as independent variables.



REGRESSION ANALYSES

• **Pre4:** Pre rated ADHD knowledge (Pre1), pre rated skills in assessing the needs of ADHD students (Pre2), and pre rated skills in implementing intervention (Pre3), and participants' Role, but not School Type, significantly predicted their **pre rated confidence in meeting the needs** of students with ADHD (Pre4; with an increase in Pre1-3 ratings significantly associated with an increase in Pre4 ratings). However, despite a significant main effect of Role, no pairwise comparisons were significant



Rated ADHD knowledge

Rated skills in assessing the needs of ADHD students

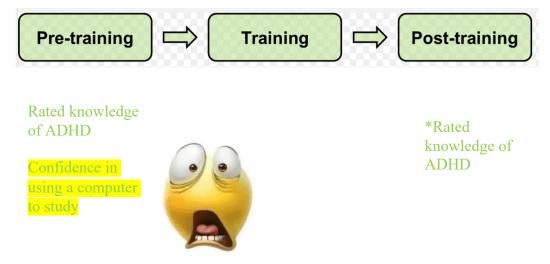
Rated skills in implementing intervention

Confidence in meeting the needs of ADHD students



REGRESSION ANALYSES

• **Post1:** Results revealed that participants pre rated ADHD knowledge (Pre1) and their pre rated confidence using a computer to study (Pre5) predicted their **post-rated knowledge of ADHD** (Post1), with increased confidence and increased pre knowledge significantly associated with increased post knowledge. Their pre rated skills in accessing needs of ADHD students (Pre2), pre rated skills in implementing intervention (Pre3), pre rated confidence in meeting the needs of ADHD students (Pre4), Role, School Type, and amount or method of tutor led sessions attended did not significantly predict Post1.

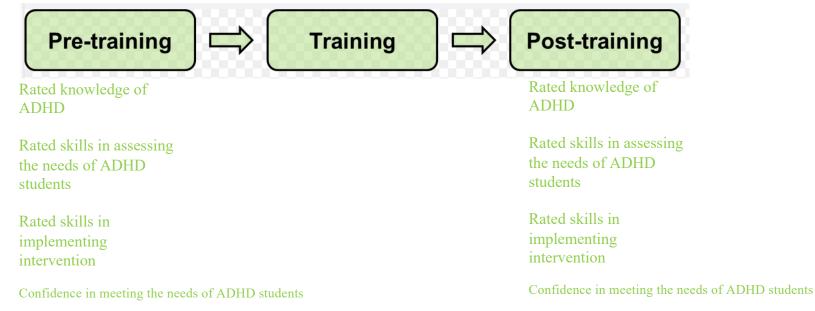




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REGRESSION ANALYSES

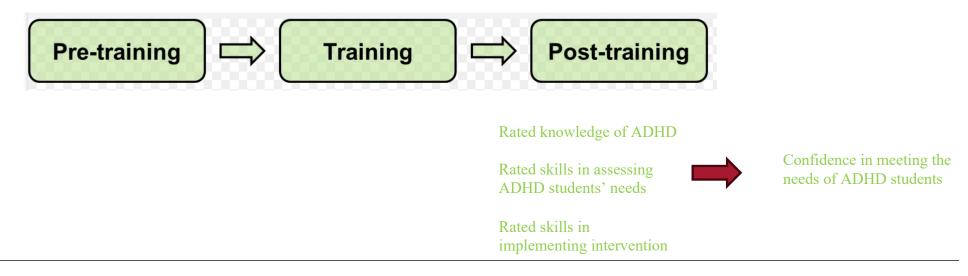
- **Post1:** Participants pre rated ADHD knowledge((Pre1) significantly predicted their **post-rated** rated ADHD knowledge (Post1). Again, with higher pre ratings predicting higher post ratings.
- Post2: Participants pre rated skills in assessing the needs of ADHD students (Pre2) significantly predicted their post-rated skills in assessing the needs of ADHD students (Post2), with greater pre ratings significantly associated with greater post ratings.
- Post3: Participants pre rated skills in implementing intervention significantly predicted their post-rated skills in planning and implementing intervention for students with ADHD (Post3). Again, with higher pre ratings predicting higher post ratings.
- Post4: Participants pre rated confidence in meeting the needs of ADHD students (Pre4) significantly predicted their post-rated confidence in meeting the needs of ADHD students (Post3). Again, with higher pre ratings predicting higher post ratings.





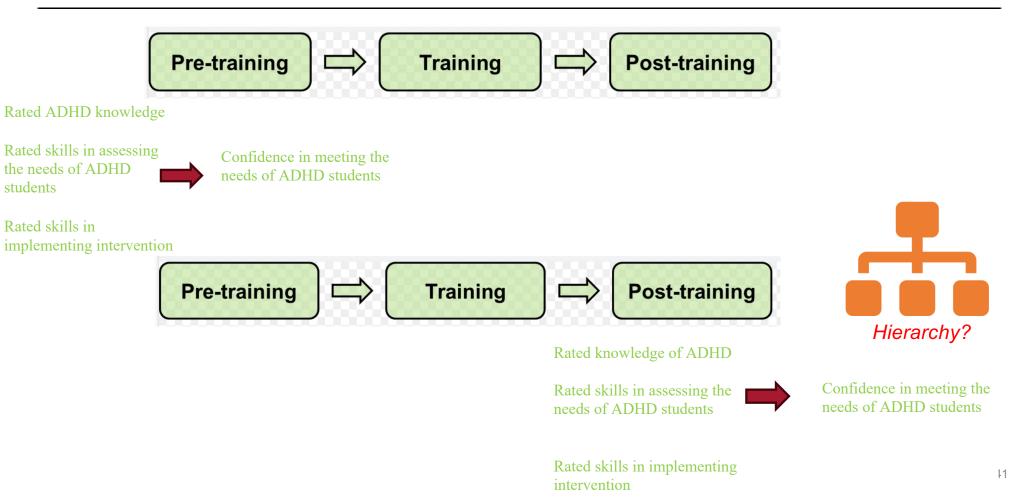
REGRESSION ANALYSES

• Post4: Post-rated ADHD knowledge (Post1), post-rated skills in assessing ADHD students' needs (Post2), and post-rated skills in implementing intervention (Post3) significantly predicted one's post-rated confidence in meeting the needs of ADHD students (Post4), with higher post ratings significantly associated with higher post confidence. The only Pre score that significantly predicted Post4 was pre rated confidence (Pre4; with increased pre confidence significantly associated with increased post confidence). Confidence with computers, Role, School Type, and amount/number of tutor led sessions attended were not significant predictors.





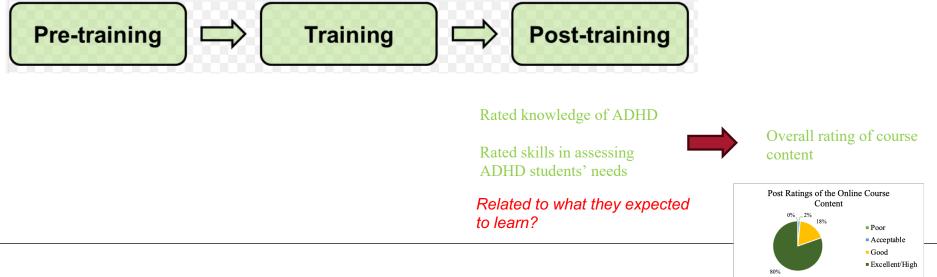
REGRESSION ANALYSES

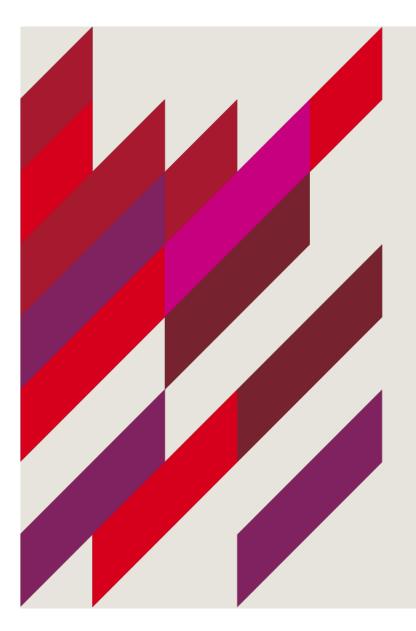




REGRESSION ANALYSES

• **Post6:** Post-rated ADHD knowledge (Post1) and post-rated skills in assessing ADHD students' needs (Post2), but not post-rated skills in implementing intervention (Post3) or post confidence in meeting ADHD students' needs (Post4), significantly predicted participant's rating of the course content (Post6). Specifically, higher Post1 and Post2 scores were associated with significantly higher course ratings. The only Pre rating that significantly predicted course ratings (Post6) was pre rated skills in planning and implementing intervention for ADHD students (Pre3; with increased Pre3 scores significantly associated with decreased course ratings). No other participant characteristic (Role, School Type, or amount/method of attendance of tutor led sessions significantly predicted Post6).











- Significant improvements were noted in perceived knowledge, skills and confidence following completion of the course.
- Overall, educators seemed to rate the course highly and seemed tom refer back to the learned material/course content.
- Role was not significantly related to overall satisfaction with the course content or with post-course perceived knowledge or confidence, suggesting that all educators, regardless of their role or level of expertise in ADHD, tended to benefit from the course.



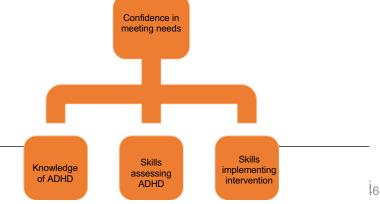
- Perceived improvements were noted in teacher attitudes, their levels of understanding and compassion towards ADHD students, their perceived implementation of learned strategies and supports, and perceived outcomes for ADHD students (e.g., having their needs met) after completing the ADHD course.
- Perceived improvements were also noted in relationships/collaborations and in teaching practices after completing the ADHD course
- Of note, while school type did not have a significant impact on findings, **primary school teachers were substantially more likely to partake in the course** than high school teachers, and most participants reported working in a Mainstream setting; **the reasons for this could be explored in future studies.**

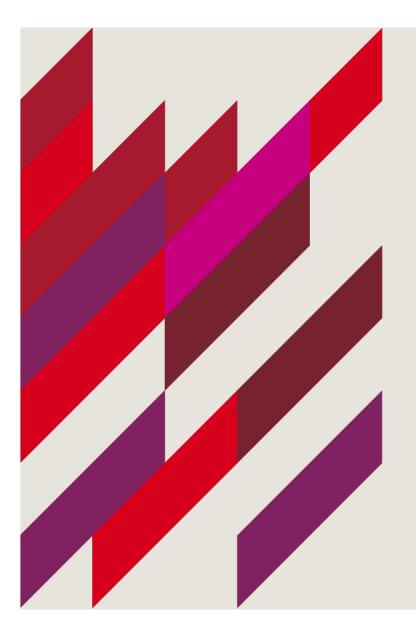






- Somewhat surprisingly, pre-rated confidence in using a computer for study was significantly related to postcourse knowledge, but not other post-course ratings. This may be because knowledge (as opposed to application of skills and meeting ADHD student needs) requires a lot of reading, and access to resources on the computer.
- Also of note, Post1-3 ratings (reflecting perceived knowledge and also perceived skills in assessing the needs of ADHD students and planning and implementing interventions) related significantly to Post4 (perceived confidence in meeting the needs of ADHD students), suggesting a hierarchy in that all three of Post1-3 must be met (and indeed included in a training course), before educators believe that they can confidently and competently meet student needs.









Where to from here?



Research Partnership



TRANSLATIONAL IMPACT OF TEACHER TRAINING IN ADHD

Multi-disciplinary collaboration:

- Current 'Understanding ADHD' Course Evaluation
- Focus Group 1



- Focus Group 2
- Develop Teacher Guidelines
- Add some content to the ADHD teacher training course, such as how ADHD students can better access the literacy and numeracy curricula and better engage in learning, more generally

- Evaluate short- and long- term outcomes for teachers, children and parents
-Extend beyond NSW in the future
-Feed knowledge back into pre-service training across Australian Universities
-Extend to international collaborations in the future



Focus Groups



- To create a list of the top evidence-based pieces of knowledge/advice, skills/strategies, teaching practices, and tools/resources when it comes to successfully teaching ADHD students generally, and in terms of literacy, and numeracy/mathematics
- To develop key guidelines on what pre-service (and in-service) teachers need to learn in order to successfully teach ADHD students (aim spanning across Focus Groups 1 and 2)
- To compare both of the above to OLT's "Understanding ADHD' program and to other teacher education programs to assist with their enhancement



Research Partnership



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Multi-disciplinary collaboration:

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- Finalise Teacher Guidelines
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We're up to here!

- Evaluate short- and long- term outcomes for teachers, children and parents
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Evidence Based Outcomes = The Missing Piece



Translational Outcomes

TEACHERS

- Has their confidence increased?
- Has their knowledge/awareness increased?
- Has their well-being improved?
- Are there improvements in their teaching practice?



CHILDREN

- Improved academic outcomes?
- Improved social outcomes?
- More desirable behaviours?
- Improved emotional well being?
- Lower drop out rates?



PARENTS

- Has their level of parenting stress reduced?
- Has their confidence increased?
- Has their well-being improved?







Research Partnership



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Multi-disciplinary collaboration:

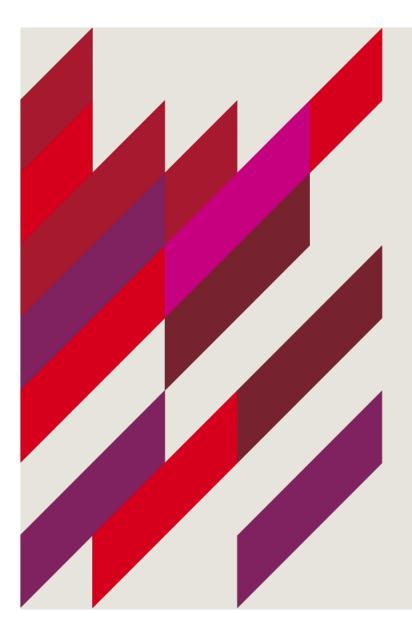
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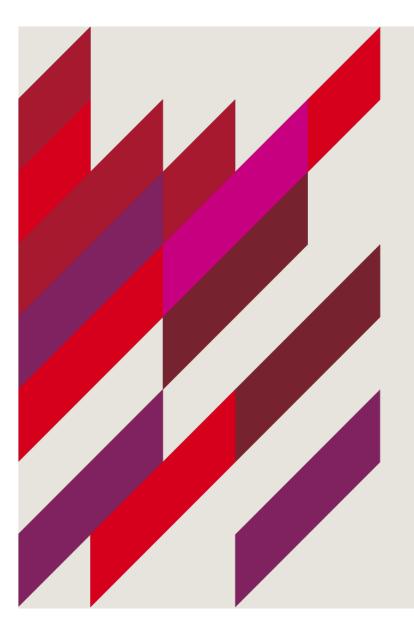






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Q & A Session

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