

Online learning course participation and feedback

State wide data as at 9 May 2011

Participation

Total course registrations state wide (total across the 4 available courses): **6123**

Total individual participants state wide (some people have taken several courses): **4384**

This includes over 400 participants in a school learning support teacher / school learning support coordinator role state-wide. Other participants include classroom teachers, school principals and other executive staff, school learning support officers and teachers in regional support positions.

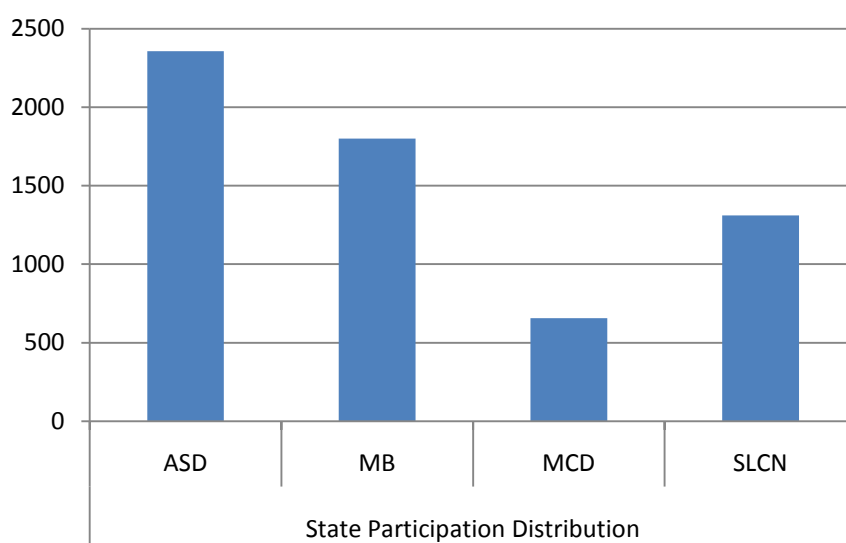
All school learning support teachers (SLST) involved in the trial of the School Learning Support Program in Illawarra and South East Region have taken part in one or more online learning courses. Those who were in an SLST role during 2010 have taken at least 2 courses, some have taken 3 or 4 courses.

Total training cohorts that have taken place state wide: **603**

Total tutors trained state wide: **300**

Course participant distribution (shown in graph below):

- Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD): **2357**
- Understanding and Managing Behaviour (MB): **1800**
- Motor Coordination Difficulties (MCD): **656**
- Inclusion of learners with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN): **1310**



Feedback and Evaluation

The department collects and analyses a range of feedback and evaluative data about the online learning courses to inform planning and support for their implementation.

This data includes:

- Pre and post course survey of the participants about their confidence, knowledge and skills in the topic area collected directly by the department.
- Written forum contributions from every course participant's describing the impact of the course on their learning.
- Quantitative data generated through the online learning system including course completion statistics, an online evaluation survey at completion of the course and a follow up survey 90 days after completion.

Overall, the data continues to be positive in terms of the participants' rating of the relevance of course content, the satisfaction felt by course participants and the ongoing use of course materials following course completion. (Participant returns in the pre and post surveys and the online surveys are voluntary.)

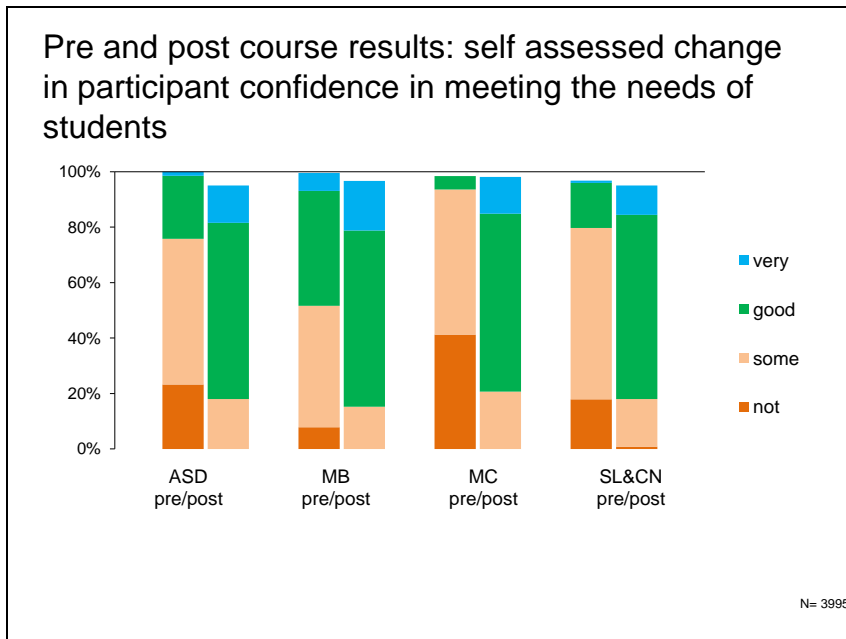
Course completion rate

Course completion rate across all 4 available courses is **96%** (percentage of course registrations where participants have started and completed a course). This completion rate has been sustained across the courses from commencement in 2009 to date.

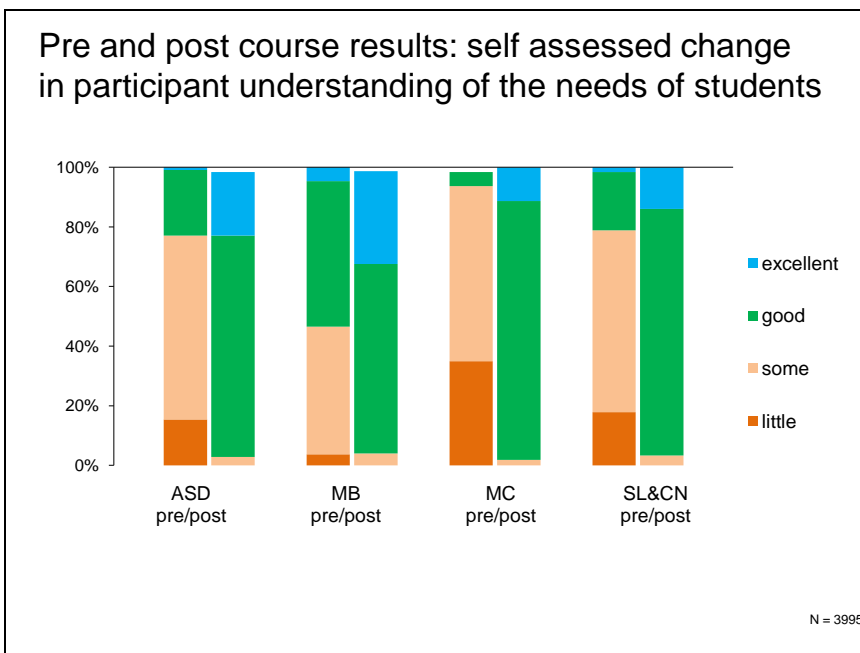
Pre and post course survey data

Participants are asked to rate their **confidence, knowledge/understanding and skills** in meeting the needs of students with the particular disability or need that the course is focused on, before and after the course. Complete data is currently available for **3995** participants across all 4 available courses (see below).

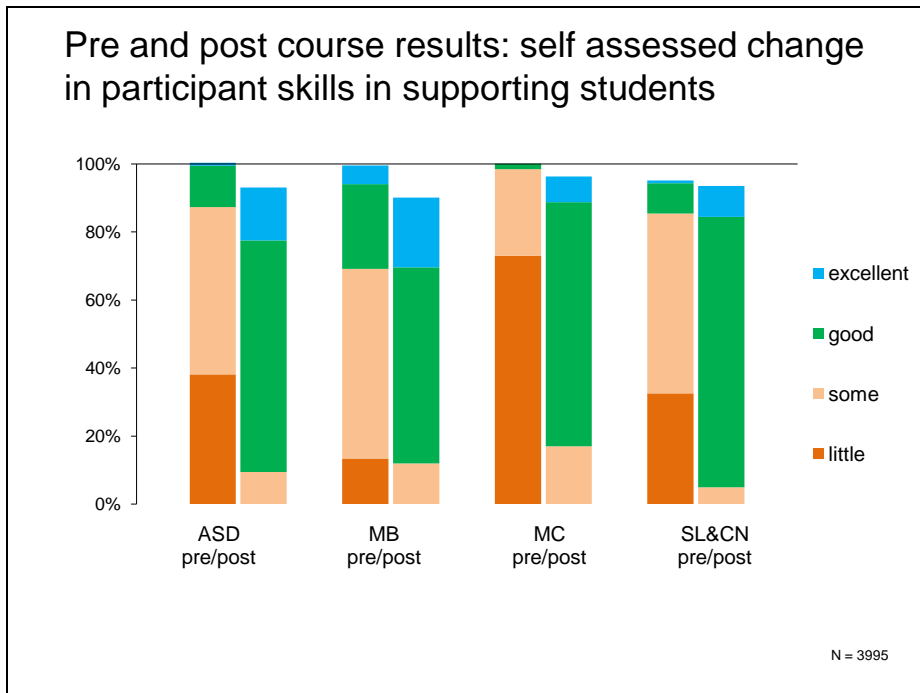
- a. Participant's self-rated level of **confidence** (from 'not confident' to 'very confident'):



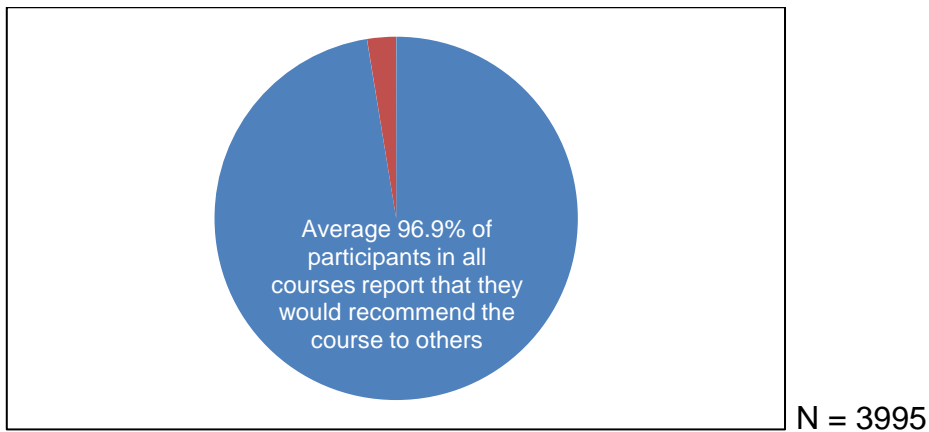
- b. Participant's self-rated level of **understanding** of the needs of students (from 'little' to 'excellent'):



c. participant's self-rated level of **skills** in supporting students (from 'little' to 'excellent'):



The post course survey also asks whether participants would recommend the course to others:



Online evaluation

Averaged ratings for each of the 4 courses are provided in the following table, based on **4,724** completed online feedback surveys state wide. When averaged across all 15 questions, state wide feedback rates the courses between **1.3** to **1.7** (where 1.0 is the highest possible rating and 4.0 is lowest). The 15 survey questions are listed below.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
ASD	1.5	1.4	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.3
MB	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.4
MCD	1.4	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.6	1.3
SLCN	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.4

Q1	The online training was accessible and user-friendly.
Q2	The online training gave me an improved understanding of the subject.
Q3	I like contributing to the forums and felt they were helpful in making me think about what I had learnt on the course.
Q4	The goal setting was useful and relevant to my practice.
Q5	The training has had an impact on my practice at the school.
Q6	Understanding section...
Q7	Assessment for learning section...
Q8	Interventions section ...
Q9	Case studies ...
Q10	Resources ...
Q11	I had enough time to finish the course.
Q11a	Did you have any face to face training in addition to the initial induction session?
Q12	I felt the group sessions were invaluable.
Q13	The tutor-led sessions contributed to my overall learning.
Q14	I felt there were the right amount of tutor sessions
Q15	I would recommend this training to others.
Q16	How has this training impacted on any outcomes or practice in your setting, e.g. school, college and home?
Q17	How have you benefited from this training?
	Any other comments?

90 day follow up

Course participants receive an email survey 90 days after completion asking if are still referring back to/ using the course materials. Feedback data shows **92%** of participants are still referring back to the course content and/ or using the course material 90 days after they have completed a course.

Participants also comment on the extent to which the SMART goals they set for their focus student have or have not been achieved/ exceeded and outline their future plans.

Qualitative data from participants course contributions

Each course participant is asked to reflect on their personal learning as they complete the course in their final online forum. A sample of comments from more than 6,000 participants' final forum contributions is provided below. The sample has been selected to illustrate comments from high school and primary classroom teachers.

Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders

The online course has reinforced that I am on the right track and really need to remember that consistency, calm classrooms and visuals by just writing on the board the lesson plan for the hour, helps not only our students with ASD but the whole class.

I have learnt that a student with ASD needs a lot of structure, tasks that are broken down into manageable steps and constant praise that they are on the right track. Some of these students prefer to work alone and that needs to be managed as well.

The course has taught me that planning is extremely important but sometimes no matter how organised I am that many factors will contribute to how successful or unsuccessful the lesson maybe. (High School Teacher, Riverina Region)

I have to say I was concerned about doing an online course as I don't feel my technology skills are as good as they should be. That said I thoroughly enjoyed doing the course and it was not at all intimidating. I found the course to be very user friendly and intuitive. The ability to be able to work at your own pace and stop and reflect on different aspects was very helpful. The information gleaned has been most helpful. (Primary School Teacher, Western NSW Region)

I admit to approaching the course with a little trepidation. I knew little about online learning. I have found it to be an excellent resource and am very glad to have been involved. I have certainly improved my skill base and my thanks go to the tutor, P..., for an excellent job. I believe the course would be of significant benefit to other staff at my unit. (High School Teacher, Illawarra South East Region)

I enjoyed, this my first online learning experience. Teaching staff at my school would find this course extremely useful and relevant, particularly the mainstream teachers in a high school setting, who are at times a little daunted by the student with ASD. Would definitely recommend it to parents! (Support Teacher, Sydney Region)

Understanding and managing behaviour:

The most significant thing that I have taken on board from this course dates right back to our first session, where it was put to us that positive behaviours are generally only rewarded 2% of the time. I remember thinking "hmm.... GUILTY!" and over the past nine weeks I have really tried to improve upon this aspect of my behaviour management. It hasn't always been easy, there were days when I felt frazzled and was more inclined to notice the unwanted behaviours, but complimenting students for their positive attitudes and habits (both with verbal praise and tangible rewards) really has worked wonders with certain class members. One child who initially showed little interest in completing class work now finishes all activities and brings them to me with a big smile on his face. Not only do the students feel better for having their efforts recognised, I also find it easier to remain positive when I have spent the day giving compliments rather than nagging!

Another aspect of the course that I have really taken on board is to do with giving directions. As well as keeping the language simple, direct and positive, time needs to be given for students to process and carry out the direction. Some students will jump into action right away; others want to finish what they are doing first. I know that I am guilty of this - if I am in the middle of reading or writing something, I will make others wait whilst I finish the sentence etc. It would be unfair of me not to accept that some students are the same! What I can do is to give warning when it's close to finishing time, and to stop the class earlier if I feel they may need a longer time to pack up. This ensures that those children who aren't as quick don't constantly feel that they are always the last one ready.

The third key thing that I will take away from this course is in relation to the curriculum and whether or not it allows for individual differences. Hearing that 95% of unwanted behaviours are due to the curriculum has really made me re-think the activities and learning experiences that I give my students. Students who would "switch off" and not even attempt the first question of an activity when confronted with a whole page will happily work on the same activity if it is broken down into smaller parts, or if they know that they are only required to do a certain amount. (Beginning teacher, Illawarra South East Region)

I have been made more aware of how challenging behaviour is the result of special needs, how negative thinking can limit and effect actions and the need to improve my range of communication strategies. Learning more about these things and their impact has made me stop to think a little more about how I could be more effective in my role as a teacher and has given me some insight as to how I might be able to implement strategies and ideas into the day to day routine in a positive way for the students and staff. (High School Teacher, Riverina Region)

I have learnt that challenging behaviour can be a result of special needs. Now, when observing or interacting with a student I take this into account and if I do not know the student well then I seek out colleagues such as the school counsellor to understand more about the student. (High School Teacher, South Western Sydney Region)

The course has been a good reminder for many positive behaviour intervention practices that I have come across whilst working with the behaviour team.

The course reinforced the need to get to know your students on a personal level - get to know them and bridge the gap between staff and student. A personal connection makes all the difference when setting boundaries for class behaviour.

The art of compromise is also crucial to classroom management. Give the student/class a choice between two positive choices instead of one positive and one negative. Let the students have some control over their choices and they will be more willing to make a positive choice. This attitude makes all the difference when dealing with my high school students. (Behaviour Support Teacher, North Coast Region)

Understanding Motor Coordination Difficulties:

My attitude towards some students has become more positive as I have a greater understanding of their needs and how to effectively cater for them when creating modifications and adjustments.

I guess by doing the course I can also help alleviate some popular misconceptions that some parents/teacher/young people sometimes say about particular students and their actions. (Primary School Teacher, Hunter Central Coast Region)

The course has really changed my understanding and practice of students with motor coordination difficulties and helped with different ideas in which to make interventions and help these children. This course has given me a greater understanding of the student and the frustrations of the student with these coordination difficulties. In some ways throughout my career I have had probably little tolerance or understanding of these children and a lack of knowledge around 'why can't they do it when others can from the same set of instructions or teaching.' (Primary School Teacher, New England Region)

As a first year graduate teacher I am going to focus my awareness on the motor coordination skills of struggling students. I will seek advice from experienced teachers in order to expand my repertoire of methods for assisting motor co-ordination development. In my studies to become a teacher, this was an area of which I had no consciousnessbut I now feel that it may provide powerful solutions for struggling students. I used to believe that teaching handwriting was a waste of my time - now I understand why it isn't. (Primary School Teacher, Illawarra South East Region)

Inclusion of students with speech, language and communication disorders:

Make it simple. Make it clear. Make it visible.

This course has reminded me of many aspects of good teaching. To try to create a positive atmosphere so that students feel comfortable enough to use the opportunities given to practise their talking.

To teach directly and relentlessly, to remember to always to tell students the purpose of the activity.

I've found the term 'communication disability' helpful and will be useful in explaining to other teachers the difficulties these students have with the type of talking needed in a High school. (High School Teacher, Northern Sydney Region)

I think this course makes us think about what it must be like for the students in our schools, surrounded by so much talk. I think we must reduce our talk, take the time to think of ways to encourage these kids and allow them to respond in a variety of ways. We are getting better at supporting students with receptive language needs our challenge now is to support students with expressive language needs.

I also think we should perhaps turn around the way we do excursions. I think they should be at the start of a unit to provide the rich experiences and then we can have much more meaningful discussions. So often it is at the end and, apart from the recount of the excursion, all the talk is over.

By encouraging and supporting our students, hopefully they will grow in confidence and achieve. (Primary school teacher, Illawarra South East Region)

I understand that I can support students and staff in this area. I have explored strategies that will assist all stakeholders to achieve maximum outcomes. My belief that we are unique has been strengthened through exploring this course. We are unique and we all have the right to the same education and life experience. Accessing the curriculum should not be impossible. Accommodations and adjustments for those with SLCN can be implemented. (High School Teacher, Western NSW Region)

It may be easy to presume that as a Support Teacher Behaviour, with Behaviour as the emphasise, language and communication would not necessarily play as large a role as they do. I think perhaps that completing this course has made me re-visit the strong connection that communication and behaviour have when assessing the needs of students in general. I have enjoyed brushing up on my strategies and skills within this area and have already begun to implement this into my thinking & planning when assessing the needs of students in my care. (Primary School Teacher, North Coast Region)