Bringing the best evidence into education policy: The MiniLit Trial

GEIS Conference
24 October 2018

Dr Pauline Ho & Dr Jon Quach

"You can't tinker and expect social mobility to happen. You need concentrated effort to build the right alliances of people – beyond schools and in schools."

Sir Kevan Collins
Chief Executive, Education Endowment Foundation

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What is the MiniLit Trial?

- A randomised controlled trial conducted with 9 nine schools, 237 students (119 intervention, 118 control) and 67 teachers/paraprofessionals in NSW

- Testing a small-group reading intervention for struggling Year 1 students, focusing on five key skills: (1) phonemic awareness; (2) phonics; (3) fluency; (4) vocabulary; and (5) comprehension

- Primary aim was to determine the impact of MiniLit on students' reading Accuracy, Rate and Comprehension after MiniLit delivery (80 lessons over 20 weeks, across three school terms) as compared to the control group at 12 months after randomisation.

- Mixed-method trial focused on statistical causal evidence but also supported by strong process evaluation

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Learning Impact Fund

We lift academic outcomes of all children through building and sharing a strong evidence base to inform education practices in Australia

4	200	7,690	410
Projects	Schools involved	Students involved	Teachers involved

Evidence for Learning supporters

Different roles, integrated efforts

System

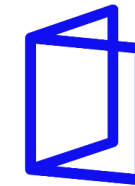NSW GOVERNMENT | Education

MultiLit

Program developer

murdoch children's research institute

Aim
Help schools identify the effectiveness of a reading intervention

EVIDENCE FOR LEARNING

Independent evaluators

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
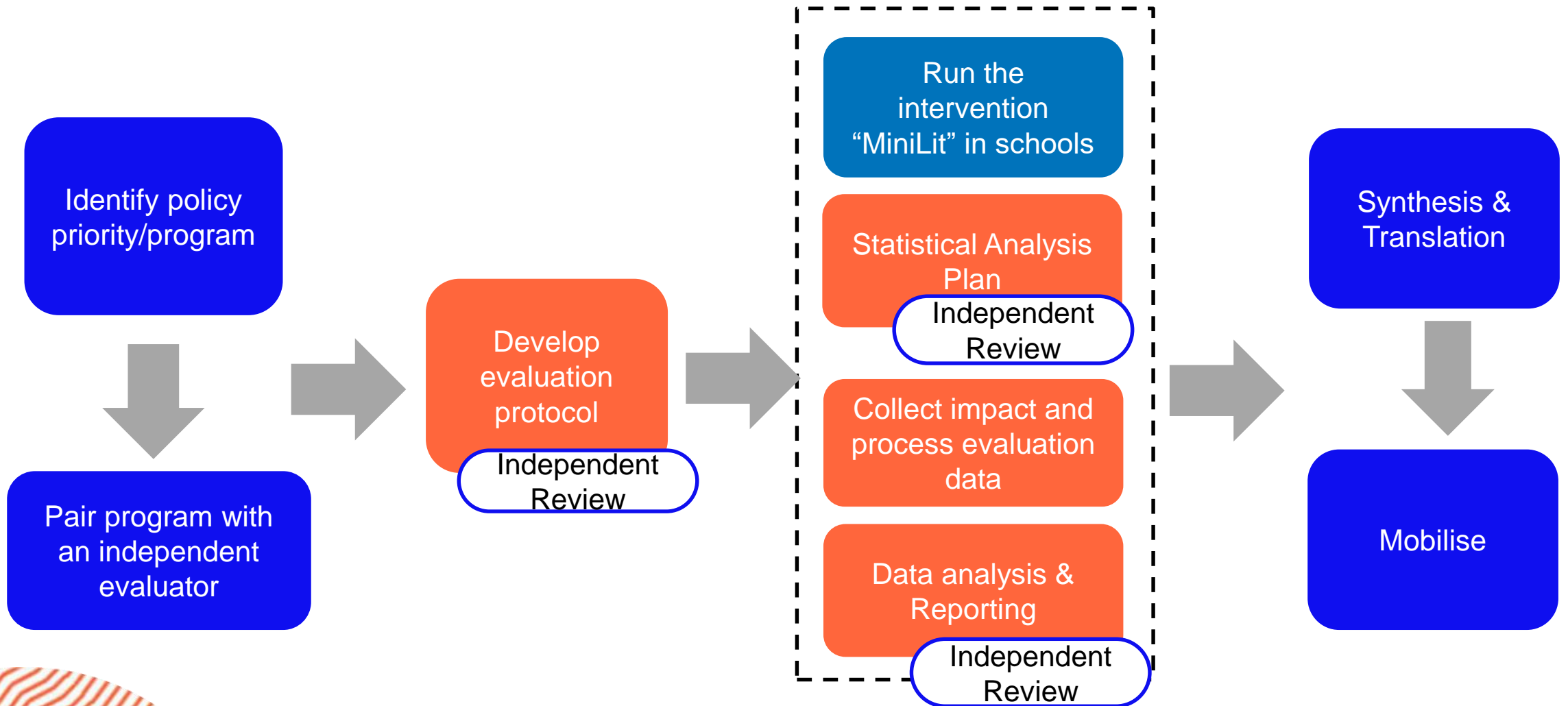POSTERA CRESCAM LAUDE

Evidence Broker / funder

Schools

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Informing policy with strong evidence

- Program and evaluation design are equally important

- Methodology matters

- Transparency and independence can be crucial

- Synthesising, translating and mobilising evidence into meaningful ways

- Importance of brokering building trust and collaboration

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Our key steps

```
Identify policy
priority/program
```

```
Pair program with
an independent
evaluator
```

```
Develop
evaluation
protocol
```
Independent Review

```
Run the
intervention
"MiniLit" in schools
```

```
Statistical Analysis
Plan
```
Independent Review

```
Collect impact and
process evaluation
data
```

```
Data analysis &
Reporting
```
Independent Review

```
Synthesis &
Translation
```

```
Mobilise
```

Evidence for Learning's Evaluation Protocols & Guidelines

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Our Projects

Generating evidence: We fund independent, rigorous evaluations of high-potential programs to test their impact in improving the learning outcomes of children in Australia. The Learning Impact Fund aims to generate new evidence

MiniLit `Active`

Small-group reading intervention for struggling Year 1 students.

Developer
Multilit

Type of trial
Efficacy

Project progress

QuickSmart Numeracy `Active`

Small-group student tutoring intervention to increase fluency and automaticity in maths.

Developer
SiMERR National Research Centre at the University of New England

Type of trial
Effectiveness

Project progress

Resilient Families `Active`

School-based social-emotional learning program involving parental engagement.

Developer
Deakin University

Type of trial
Developmental

Project progress

Thinking Maths `Completed`

Teacher professional learning for middle school maths teachers (Years 6-9).

Developer
South Australian Department for Education
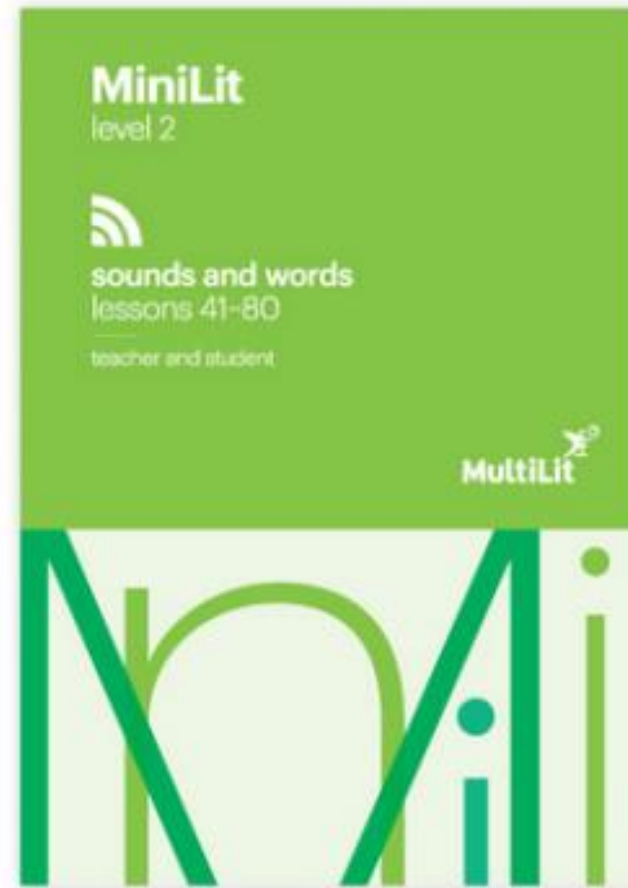
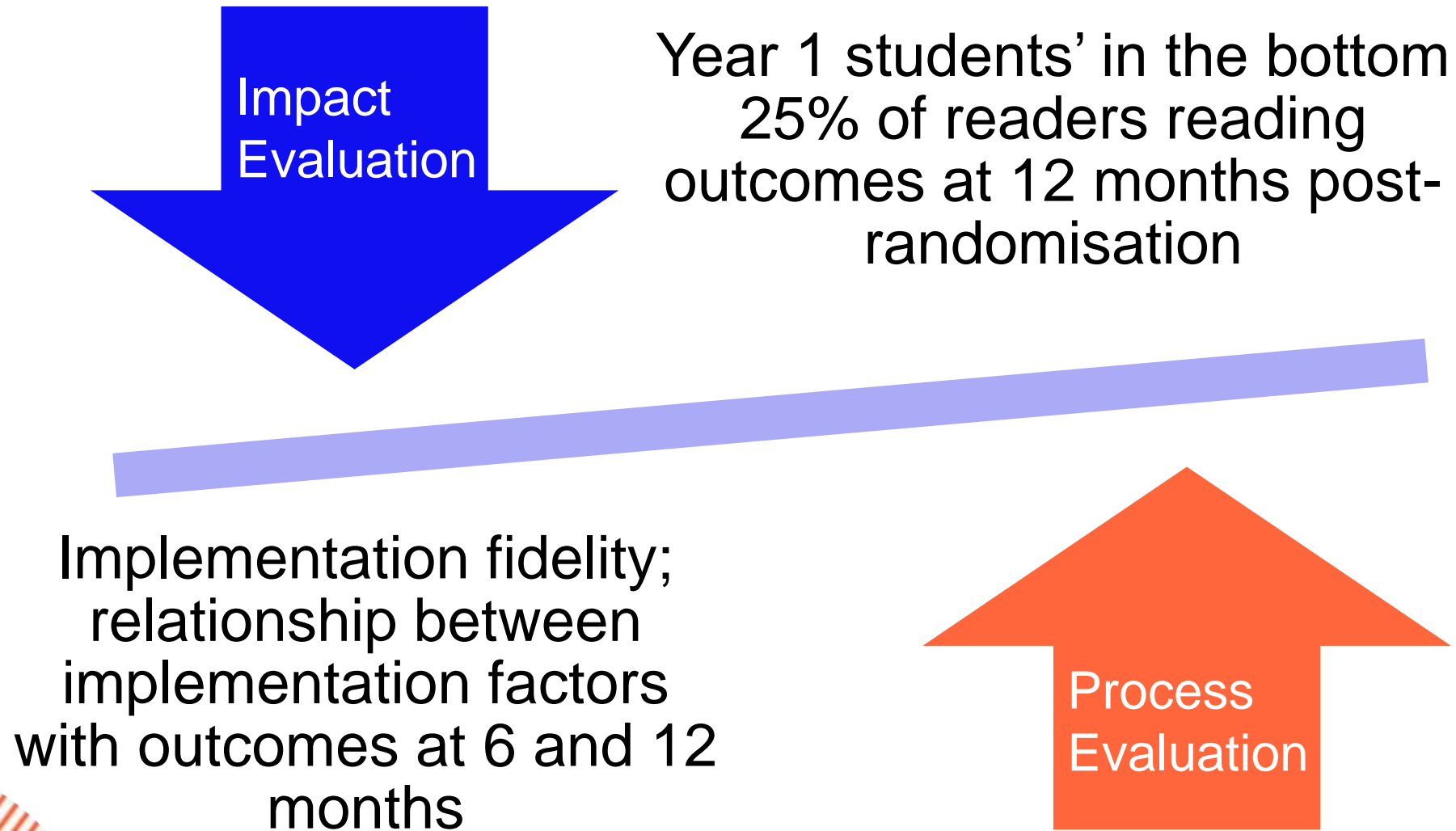**Type of trial**
Efficacy

Cost
$ $ $ $

Security
🔒🔒🔒🔒🔓

Months' impact
+1

Results release December 2018

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Building Better Readers study

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Impact & Process Evaluation Questions

Impact Evaluation

Year 1 students' in the bottom 25% of readers reading outcomes at 12 months post-randomisation

Implementation fidelity; relationship between implementation factors with outcomes at 6 and 12 months

Process Evaluation

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Different roles, integrated efforts

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Evidence Broker / funder

Schools

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Why trust matters?

- All stakeholders are 'taking a leap of faith'

- Intervention developers - Will the evaluation be fair on my intervention?

- Policy – Does the evaluation provide me with the answer/s to my question?

- Knowledge broker – Will this evaluation be robust enough for me to promote?

- Evaluators – Integrity as an expert

- **Ultimate goal is so that all stakeholders can trust the evaluations findings – regardless of what they are**

Informing vs dictating the design

What outcomes matter and when (SMART goals)?

How are the outcomes achieved (i.e what's the magic ingredient)?
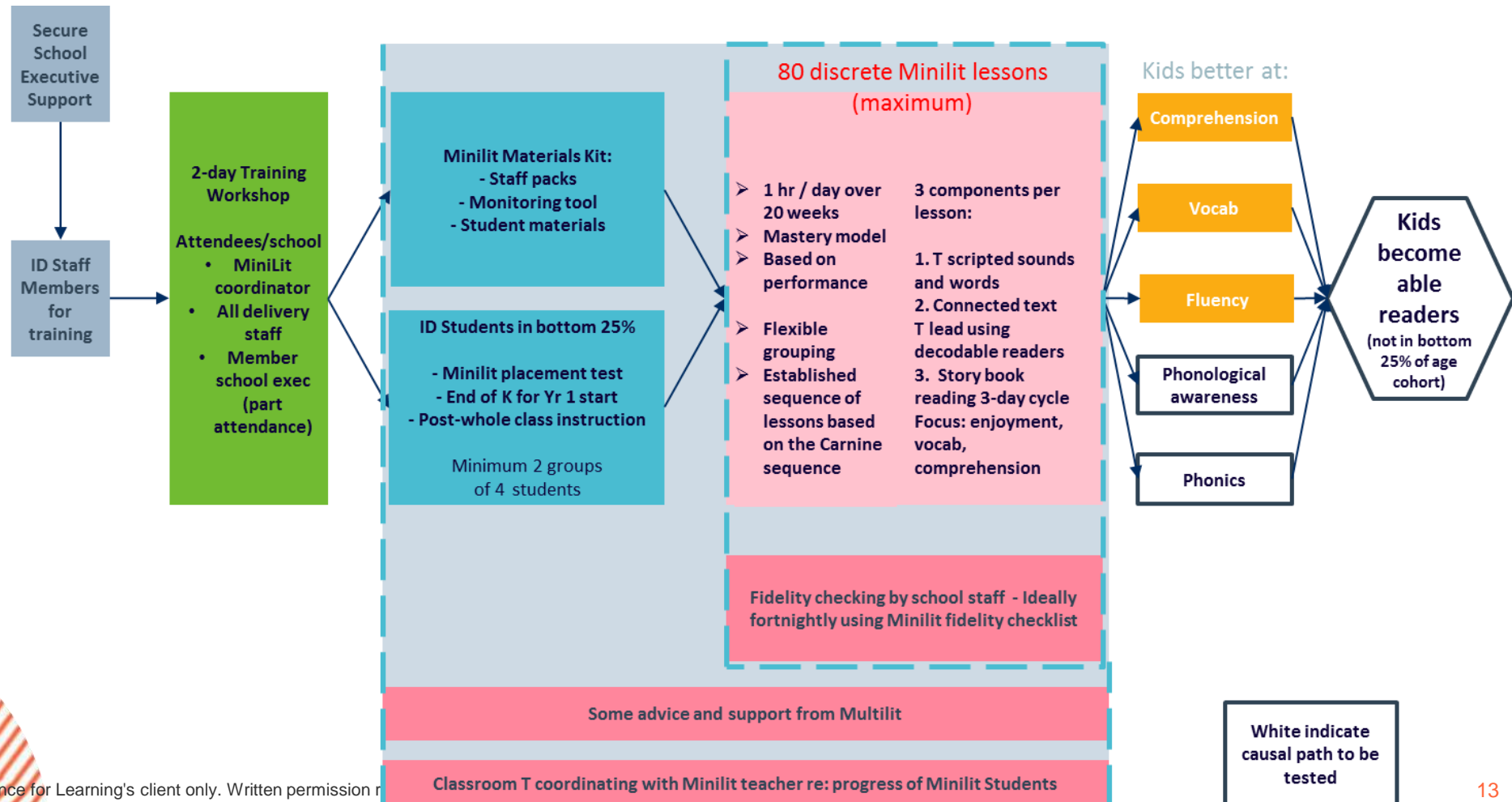
SMART goals

SMART GOALS

S **M** **A** **R** **T**

SPECIFIC Good goals are clear and defined. If you goals are too general they will be hard to accomplish.

Measurable You must be able to measure your progress toward your goal so you know when you have reached it!

Action Plan Set an action plan that tells what you are going to do!

Realistic Make sure that your goal is not too hard or too easy!

Time Limit Think about what you want to accomplish in the next couple of weeks.

Transparency

Evaluation Protocol

MiniLit – Building Better Readers: A literacy program for Year 1 students with low reading ability

15 December 2016

Evaluators

A joint project: The Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute and Centre for Program Evaluation, Melbourne Graduate School of Education Prepared by Dr Jon Quach, Prof Sharon Goldfeld, Prof Janet Clinton

Human Research Ethics Committee at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne
- HREC 36301A
- Version 3, 15th November 2016

Statement of compliance

This document is a protocol for a research project. This study will be conducted in compliance with all stipulation of this protocol, the conditions of the ethics committee approval, the NHMRC National Statement on ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) and the Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice (CPMP/ICH-135/95).

ANZCTR
Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry

CREATE ACCOUNT   LOGIN

DEFINITIONS   HINTS AND TIPS   FAQs   REGISTER TRIAL   MY TRIALS

Trial Review

Please note that the ANZCTR website will be unavailable from 3:00-3:30pm this Thursday the 25th of October. At this time the IPD sharing statement and summary results sections will be added to the ANZCTR form in order to comply with the updated WHO Trial Registration Data Set.

VIEW TRIAL AT REGISTRATION   **VIEW HISTORY**

The safety and scientific validity of this study is the responsibility of the study sponsor and investigators. Listing a study does not mean it has been endorsed by the ANZCTR. Before participating in a study, talk to your health care provider and refer to this information for consumers

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Trial registered on ANZCTR

Trial ID	ACTRN12617000179336
Ethics application status	Approved
Date submitted	19/01/2017
Date registered	2/02/2017
Date last updated	8/01/2018
Type of registration	Prospectively registered

Open access **Protocol**

BMJ Paediatrics Open

Testing of a synthetic phonics-based targeted reading intervention for students with reading difficulties in Year 1: protocol for an efficacy randomised controlled trial

Jon Quach,[1,2] Janet Clinton,[1] Georgia Dawson,[1] Libby Smith,[2] Tanya Serry,[2,3] Sharon Goldfeld[4,5]

ABSTRACT
Introduction Literacy is fundamental for educational achievement, and in the longer term contributes substantially to a range of life skills. Literacy difficulties during the early years of school are associated with long-term impacts on academic success, with differences in academic achievement sustained through children's schooling. Therefore, addressing literacy difficulties during the early years of school is essential in reducing the risk of children progressing onto negative academic, psychosocial and vocational trajectories. This trial will determine difficulties during the early years of school are associated with long-term impacts on academic success, with differences in academic achievement sustained through children's schooling.[1] As well as academic underperformance, poor literacy is associated with higher school dropout rates,[2] lower likelihood of pursuing tertiary education[2] and limited employment opportunities.[3] Furthermore, children with literacy difficulties are at risk of emotional

What does 'quality implementation' look like?

- Implementation measurement informed by:

1. Program logic workshop – 10+ hours
2. Evaluation of 'exemplar' schools - 3 schools, observations, checklists, interviews

- Develop measurement rubrics which can identify quality, sensitive to variation and change

- Quality needs to be informed by the views of the intervention developers – staying true to the intervention

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Learnings from the pre-study trust exercise

- Consultation process enabled a process of self-reflection / evaluation before the study started for all stakeholders

- Focusing on quality in exemplar schools identified important learnings:

  - High level of adaptation by teachers, more likely from experienced teachers

  - Quality of implementation varied through the implementation

  - Teachers can follow the scripts – more important to capture quality

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Key learnings

- Independence is about have clear roles and boundaries, but also defined ways of engagement

- Stakeholder views are required to inform the study, but not dictate how study is conducted and interpretation of findings – however need to have a right of reply

- Remember it's a trust exercise – all parties are taking a leap of faith

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Helping great practice
become common practice