

Supporting the SEL of Young Children on the Autism Spectrum: Trialing an Australian Model of Practice for the Early Years

Wendi Beamish^{1,2} and Annalise Taylor^{1,2}

¹ Griffith University

² Autism CRC

Results

When trialed the EY-MoP was found to be a **locally viable** and **potentially effective tool**, which supported the teaching of students on the spectrum.

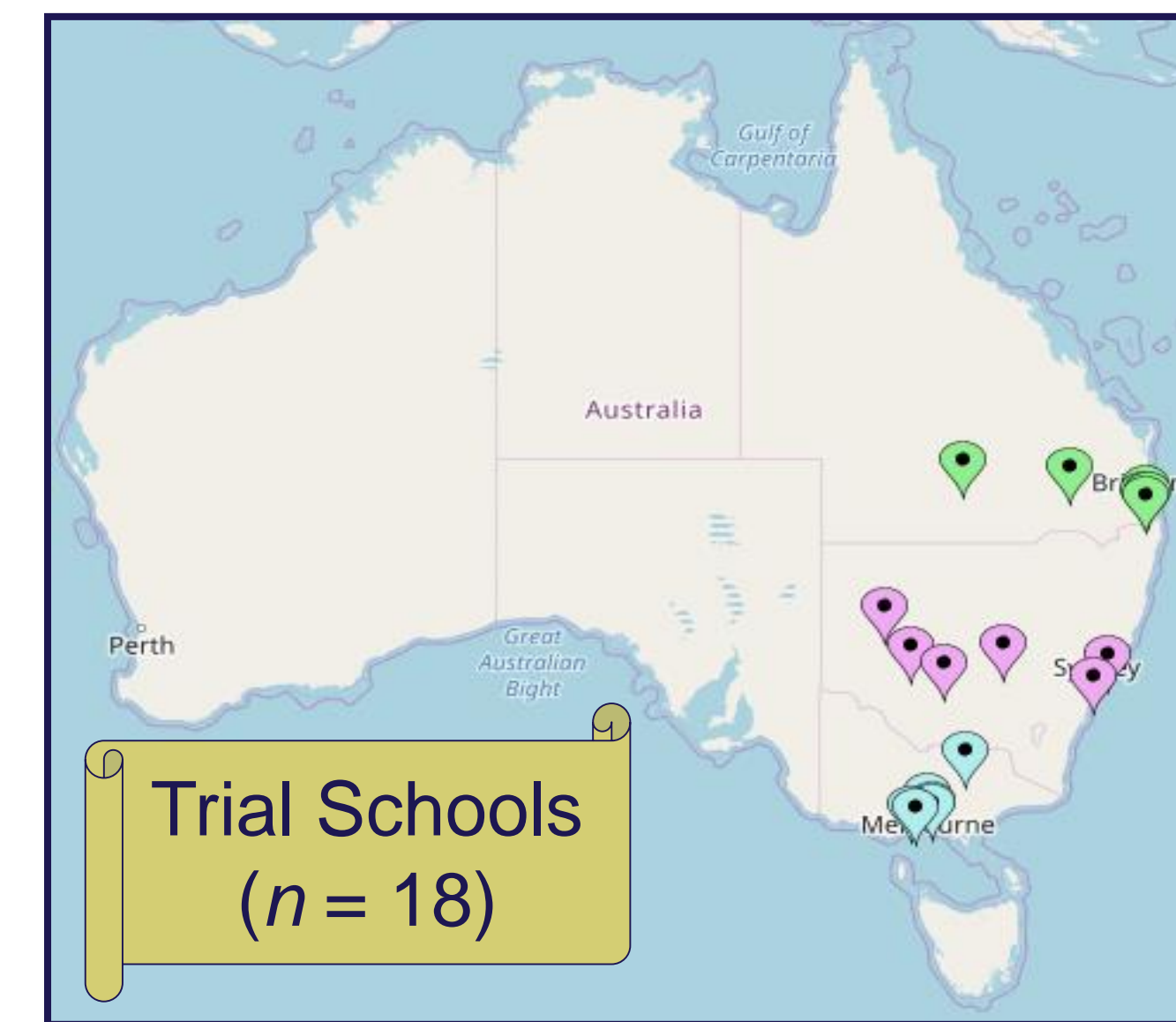
- Teachers felt the EY-MoP was **familiar**, **user-friendly**, and **beneficial (RQ1)**.
 - They viewed *Being* practices were critical to the teaching of students on the spectrum in the early years of school.
 - They thought support was required for *conduct ABC analysis* and *modify environment to reduce behaviour* in their mainstream classrooms.
- Teachers (a) **actively used** the EY-MoP by implementing identified practice/s in their classroom in response to student need and/or to develop their practice; or, (b) **superficially used** the EY-MoP by reflecting on their practice (RQ2).
- Active and superficial users ($n = 19$) experienced **large statistically significant increases** in their knowledge, confidence, and sense of efficacy post-use of the EY-MoP (RQ 3).

Method

A Design-Based Research (DBR) approach was used to develop the EY-MoP. This approach is characterised by **iterative cycles of design and evaluation**, and **researcher-practitioner collaboration**.

The EY-MoP was trialed by **38 teachers in 18 schools** (see map).

- Teachers were asked to use the EY-MoP to support the teaching of student/s on the spectrum in their class.
 - A sub-set of teachers ($n = 13$) were supported in their use of the EY-MoP by an expert practitioner in autism and education.
- Data were collected before (T1) and after (T2) use of the EY-MoP using online surveys and phone interviews.
- Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and non-parametric statistics, while qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis.



Being

Practices relate to the development of social-emotional skills and a preventative approach to challenging behaviours.

- Engage with students
- Model positive interactions
- Teach friendship skills
- Model emotional literacy
- Teach self-regulation
Teachers foster self-regulation in students by providing systematic instruction.
- Teach social-problem solving
Teachers build student ability to solve social problems by systematically teaching the problem-solving process and encouraging its use when solving a problem.
- Use peer-mediated instruction
- Conduct ABC analysis
- Modify environment to reduce behaviour



The **Early Years Model of Practice (EY-MoP)** comprises a set of foundation practices which support decision making regarding the teaching of students on the autism spectrum in the early years. Practices encourage the creation and maintenance of an inclusive and supportive classroom environment (*Belonging*), **the development of student personal and social capabilities and management of challenging behaviours (Being)**, and the delivery of the Australian Curriculum and development of student communication, literacy, and numeracy capabilities (*Becoming*).

For more information

Wendi Beamish (w.beamish@griffith.edu.au) | Annalise Taylor (annalise.taylor@griffithuni.edu.au)

autismcrc.com.au
@autismcrc