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E-asTTle as a Catalyst for Change.

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Abstract

This thesis studies the introduction and use of the formative assessment tool e-asTTle (Assessment for Teaching and Learning) in a low decile, high Māori school and the impact it has on teacher practice and student achievement. The project's aim was to identify if teachers, through using the data from the tool, moved to an evidence based teaching model which supported increased student achievement in reading and mathematics. Identifying a major shift in teaching practice and corresponding rise in student success would support the assertion unpinning the study, that e-asTTle is a catalyst for change.

The data for this study was gathered during the first quarter of the school year. Teachers of Year 7, 8 and 9 students volunteered to complete a confidential online survey. The focus of the survey was to identify previous and current assessment practices, changes to practice and prompted teachers to reflect on the usefulness of data in supporting their teaching practice. Beginning of the year and mid-year student assessment score data in reading and mathematics was gathered and compared to identify shifts in achievement of each year group. These shifts were then compared to e-asTTle nationally expected shifts to identify the level of progress.

The results suggest that the introduction of the e-asTTle tool into the school supported teachers to change to formative assessment, evidence-based teaching practice. This change had a positive effect on student achievement with accelerated progress occurring in reading and mathematics. However, the results also identified a much lower level of progress for Year 7 students, which is consistent with trends identified in national research data on the transitioning of students between primary and secondary schools. Based on this data a recommendation was made to study the transitioning of students between the local primary schools and the study school, and the impact it may be having on learning and achievement, particularly in mathematics. Should the results of the study support it, a programme could be put into place that met identified student needs and supported their successful integration into the school. Although evidence of accelerated progress met the study's brief, the continued low level of achievement of the students in reading compared not just to all schools but to other decile one, high Māori roll schools, is a concern that needs to be addressed.

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