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E-asTTle as a Catalyst for Change.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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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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List of Tables

Table 1  Databases searched, keywords and other search parameters used  5
Table 2  Principles of Culturally Responsive Practice  13
Table 3  Comparison of Practising Teacher Criteria against Quality Teaching Dimensions  18
Table 4  Descriptive Statistics for Student Sample Group  38
List of Figures

Figure 1   Comparison of usefulness of assessment data to inform teaching practice 46
Figure 2   Comparison of teacher familiarity and confidence with the e-asTTle tool from the beginning and end of the study 47
Figure 3   Teacher belief that the use of e-asTTle tool has had a positive impact on student engagement and achievement 49
Figure 4   Year 7 average point shift in reading by gender 53
Figure 5   Year 7 average point shift in reading by ethnicity 54
Figure 6   Year 8 rate of progress in reading as compared to Year 8 results from similar schools 55
Figure 7   Year 8 average point shift in reading by gender 56
Figure 8   Year 8 average point shift in reading by ethnicity 56
Figure 9   Year 9 average score shift in reading by gender 58
Figure 10  Year 9 average score shift in reading by ethnicity 59
Figure 11  Study School Y7, 8 and 9 achievement in reading compared to Year 7, 8 and 9 results from similar schools for the quarter 60
Figure 12  Comparison of Year 7, 8 and 9 national average point shifts and the average point shifts for the study school in reading 61
Figure 13  Year 7 average score shift in mathematics by gender 62
Figure 14  Year 7 average score shift in mathematics by ethnicity 63
Figure 15  Year 8 average score shift in mathematics by gender 64
Figure 16  Year 8 average score shift in mathematics by ethnicity 65
Figure 17  Year 9 average score shift in mathematics by gender 66
Figure 18  Year 9 average score shift in mathematics by ethnicity  

Figure 19  Study School Y7, 8 and 9 achievement in mathematics compared to Year 7, 8 and 9 results from similar schools for the quarter  

Figure 20  Comparison of Year 7, 8 and 9 national average point shifts and the average point shifts for the study school in mathematics
# Table of Contents

TITLE PAGE i
ABSTRACT ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii
LIST OF TABLES iv
LIST OF FIGURES v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 01
   Intent of Study 01
   Key Characteristics of Study 02
   Structure of the Thesis 02
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 04
   Literature Review Methodology 04
   Part One: The Context of Student Achievement 06
   Part Two: Elements of Effective Teaching Practice 12
   Part Three: Examination of the e-asTTle Tool 22
   Summary 26
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS 27
   Introduction 27
   Theoretical Underpinnings 27
   The Research Design 28
   Structure of the Study 30
   Data Gathering Tools 36
   Ethical Considerations 39
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS 44
   Introduction 44