

Literacy Data for Year 9 students – what do schools collect and how do they use it?

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The presentation would consist of an analysis of data about literacy assessment practices relating to Year 9 students drawn from an online survey of secondary schools. The data is being collected at present. The survey will be closed at the end of Term 4 after which time the data will be analysed; so I am unable to predict the findings. Thus far 81 schools have completed the survey which was sent to most Secondary Schools on the MoE website. The survey questions were designed to answer some questions around the type(s) of assessments used, who is responsible for collecting the data, what uses are made of the data and whether teachers have access to the data and whether they use it in meaningful ways to inform their planning, or not. I have conducted the survey to find out if my pre-conceptions about what sort of literacy data is most frequently collected are correct. I am undertaking a wider research project for a Ph D thesis which is concerned with the assessment and teaching of word-level literacy skills, such as decoding, spelling and the understanding of morphemes(word parts). I wanted to find out if there is widespread collection of data relating to these skills or not. My assumption is that very few schools test the spelling skills of all Year 9s but I may be wrong. Schools are encouraged to collect literacy data to track students and to inform teaching but I have another assumption, which is that I suspect schools mostly use the data to assist with the grouping of students into classes of similar or mixed ability. One question relates to the provision of special support to students who are identified as having high literacy needs and it will be interesting to see how schools deal with this issue. I realise this is rather a dry topic however I would attempt to make the presentation as interactive as possible. I would use a pre-lecture/post-lecture anticipation guide consisting of statements about the subject matter some of which would be false. People attending would complete this questionnaire before I start and then throughout the presentation they will find out if their decisions match the data or not. I would also invite participants to share their literacy data collection practices.