

Impacts of COVID-19 Traffic Light System on Education in New Zealand

Lee-Anne Taylor, Jodee Reid and Dr. Anita Jagroop-Dearing

School of Health and Sport Science, Eastern Institute of Technology, Te Pukenga, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand

COVID-19 has impacted the world and New Zealanders over the past three years. New Zealand established a 'traffic light system' to manage the omicron variant in the community following the initial COVID-19 lockdowns. This system was initiated in December 2021 and remained in place until September to balance public health with societal and economic considerations. Therefore, educational delivery was required to adapt and evolve at tertiary education during this period. The School of Health and Sport Science was required to develop accordingly to continue to provide appropriate educational programmes. Therefore, the aim of this project was to understand the teaching approaches across this school during the various traffic light settings, alongside the impact of these approaches on management, teaching staff and students.

Focus groups with semi structured questions were undertaken across the 2022 academic year involving management, staff and students. Programme surveys that included information on the impacts of Covid-19 for students were also included. Data was analysed using a thematic inductive approach.

New learnings and adaptations were particularly key for management and staff; while support was a theme identified by management, staff and students and varied across the programmes dependent on the programme and cohort. Students provided clarity for their preferences for learning approaches over this period. This presentation will review these findings and provide an insight to future planning.