

Co-Managed Trials School Case Study

School	Paraparaumu College	MoE Id	248
Roll Year 11 cohort	1139 230	Region	Kapiti Coast
School Type	State Co-educational Yrs 9-15	Decile	8

Paraparaumu College was involved in the previous digital examinations:

2015 eMCAT and Online Practice Examinations

2016 Digital Trials in L1 Geography, L1 Health, L1 Science and L1 Economics
Digital Pilots in L1 English, L1 Classical Studies and L1 Media Studies

2017 Digital Trials in L1 English, L1 Classical Studies and L1 Media Studies

Situation

Paraparaumu College is a future-focussed school with a vision to be at the forefront of the transition to a digitally-enabled pedagogy. Being involved in digital examinations is seen as an extension of that vision. The school was involved in 2016 and had a positive experience, despite some issues with the Level 1 English Pilot.

The school has a BYOD programme in place and is gradually moving to develop this across the entire school. Devices are used across a range of subjects and classes, but the extent and nature of their use varies between departments and teachers. The school has a number of computer labs, and for the 2017 Digital Trials, students used a combination of desktop PCs, school Chromebooks and personal laptops.

In 2017, 174 students sat the English Digital Trial, 27 sat Media Studies and 23 sat Classical Studies. The students at Paraparaumu College were amongst the first in New Zealand to sit the Digital Trial examinations.

Examination Management

Students sat the Classical Studies Digital Trial on 21 August in a computer lab with one supervisor in the lab, and a spare supervisor. There were delays with students needing to get onto the school network and some students having lost their login information.

Examination management processes were modified for the English and Media Studies trials which were held the following day. These included, the Exam Centre Manager (ECM) and supervisors switching on the school devices well before students arrived, and issuing brightly coloured post-it notes to students who had forgotten their passwords, as they entered the examination venue. The post-it notes enabled supervisors, who had a list of student login information, to quickly assist students.

The school used its auditorium for 70 Level 1 English students, with the balance across two computer labs and one classroom. There were six supervisors in the auditorium, a supervisor and a teacher in each lab, as well as a roving supervisor.

The school felt that having large numbers of students in the auditorium was logistically challenging, with electrical cables presenting health and safety concerns. There were also issues with wi-fi connection in the auditorium. It acknowledges that, based on its

supervision model, costs are likely to be higher if classrooms are used, and it is not sustainable for supervisors to turn on school devices prior to students' arrival.

The ECM noted that there is a need for staff who can problem-solve at the start of the examination, and the school is considering earlier arrival of students for the Digital Pilot examination sessions at the end of the year.

Staff impressions

The teachers who were involved in the 2016 examinations felt they were better prepared for the 2017 digital examinations, as they know what to expect, and appreciated that NZQA provided resources, especially the Familiarisation Activities, to assist their students' preparation.

All the English teachers were involved in the English Digital Trial, preparing devices prior to the trial, providing substitute devices, and helping with logins.

Once they were logged in, students were focussed. There was no negative student-feedback post the digital trials. In Media Studies, the students generally performed better than staff expected.

Teachers will encourage students to participate in the Digital Pilot examinations, and have also entered some students for Level 2 Media Studies and Classical Studies. In response to the experience of managing the Digital Trials, Paraparaumu College has decided to enter fewer students in the Level 1 English Pilot examination. This decision is based on logistical considerations.

Student impressions

Prior to the Digital Trials, student concerns included:

- what would happen if the network went down;
- how would the planning process work in a digital examination;
- the noise associated with using keyboards; and
- how NZQA would prevent cheating.

They were reassured by the availability of the auto-save function, and that there would be back-up examination papers, as well as paper for those who would use diagrams in their planning. Students who were concerned about keyboard noise were told to bring ear-plugs. They were briefed on the anti-breach software,

During the Digital Trials:

- one student triggered the anti-breach function and received the lock-out message on multiple occasions. This was likely due to pressing on the Windows key, or using keyboard shortcuts other than ctrl C or ctrl V;
- a student experienced issues logging into the English and Classical Studies examinations and used the links on the NZQA website instead;
- a student, who used an iPad (not a recommended device), experienced issues with the examination. In particular, the use of an in-screen keyboard, which left little space for them to view what they had typed.

Students had used the Familiarisation Activities to get used to the layout of, and functions available, in the Digital Trials. They were warned by teachers that when their answers exceeded the recommended word limit, the word count and border around the textbox would turn red. A student who normally uses a PC, had difficulty using a school Chromebook during the English Digital Trial examination, as he was unfamiliar with the device. He reverted to answering on paper.

After the Digital Trials, students prefer digital examinations to paper examinations. Reasons given included:

- speed of typing and ability to avoid poor hand-writing;
- the spellcheck and edit functions;
- they can focus better, and ideas flow more easily;
- using the planning spaces to brain-dump ideas or list quotes they planned to use in their answers.

Students suggested improvements to the digital examinations such as avoiding more than one scroll-bar on each webpage, providing the ability to highlight digital text, providing the alternative of using a right-mouse click to copy and paste text; and ensuring that the clock is visible when students scroll down the webpage.