

Co-Managed Trials School Case Study

School	Karamu High School	MoE Id	229
Roll Year 11 cohort	856 169	Region	Hawkes Bay
School Type	State Co-educational Yrs 9-15	Decile	4

Karamu High School was involved in the previous digital examinations:

2015 eMCAT and Online Practice Examinations

2016 Digital Trials in L1 Physics and L1 Science
Digital Pilots in L1 English and L1 Media Studies

2017 Digital Trials in L1 English and L1 Media Studies
Digital Pilots in L1 English, L2 English and L2 Media Studies

Situation

Karamu High School is phasing in a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) programme over several years.

The school uses Office 365 and digital devices are used often in some subjects and almost never in others. The school has digital pedagogy as a professional development focal point and acknowledges that staff usage for teaching and learning is varied at present.

Karamu High School has some significant challenges associated with the implementation of its BYOD programme and maximising the potential that computer technology affords. The school wants their students to develop the desire to have a device for school and acknowledge that, as a mid-decile school, funding is an issue.

The school has undergone the School Network Upgrade Project once and have good wi-fi coverage. However, the technician admits that coverage is not the issue – density is. Work is currently underway to ensure that every student in the school can access the wi-fi at the same time.

Examination Management

Karamu High School participated in the Digital Trials and Pilots in 2016 and despite some issues with the English Pilot examinations, felt it was worthwhile participating again in 2017. The school felt they would be able to use the knowledge gained from 2016 to be better prepared in 2017.

The school was limited by the number of devices available, and restricted the number of students sitting the 2017 Digital Trial examinations. 37 students sat each of the Level 1 English and Level 1 Media Studies Digital Trial examinations on 17 and 18 August respectively. They were amongst the first to sit the 2017 Digital Trial examinations.

The school used two computer labs that were hard-wired to the internet, and had two supervisors in each with an extra supervisor roving. They felt this was effective and intended to retain this model for the Digital Pilot examinations.

The Principal's Nominee spent time individually seating each student and created a map, which took up some additional time. The Exam Centre Manager (ECM) and IT Technician felt that they did not spend any more time with examination management, when compared to the paper examinations. Unfortunately, the technician was sick on the day of the English Digital Trial examination; the ECM was pleased to have the support of the NZQA helpline. The school planned to have the IT Technician onsite throughout the Digital Pilot examinations to ensure the students log in properly and to provide on-going support during the examinations.

The school is aware of the additional time it took for some students to log into the school network. Concern was expressed about the length of URL the students had to input. This was addressed by students clicking on the link provided in the NZQA website.

The ECM suggested that supervisors should have access to the examination - management dashboard for their training prior to the examinations, and that the dashboard should indicate when each student was last active. They suggested a dashboard 'sandpit' as a useful space for supervisors to practise and become familiar with the software.

Based on the experience of the Digital Trial examinations, the ECM felt confident about managing the Digital Pilots in 2017 and ensured there was sufficient time for the students to work through the login procedures properly.

Staff impressions

The staff were excited by the possibilities that digital examinations can offer in the future and two of the staff attended a Mindlab course in 2017 which provided a useful resource for the school.

Staff felt that the students needed to be exposed to the digital examination format sooner so that they could understand things like how their response looks on the screen and how the word count works.

The staff found the Familiarisation Activities good preparation for the Digital Trial examinations, although they found there were some slight differences in the login procedures. Overall, they felt the Familiarisation Activities helped "calm the nerves" of both the students and teachers.

In general, students wrote more, and a few performed better in the digital examinations, than the staff expected. The staff reported that students appeared to be more engaged, and the experience has provided staff with an incentive to teach students how to plan and write a digital essay.

Student impressions

Students use computers for their English internal assessments, for research in History and often in Media Studies.

Prior to the Digital Trials, students were concerned about the variability of the school wi-fi (which was identified by the staff as a potential issue as well), and the possibility of a technical failure – either of a device or the network. Concerns were also expressed

regarding logging on and saving their responses. These concerns are understood by the school. As well as limiting device use to hard-wired PCs, paper versions of the examination were made available for students should it become impossible to complete the digital examination.

Prior to the Digital Trial examinations students were concerned about a perceived opportunity to cheat by accessing the internet. Post-examination they were comfortable that anti-breach software they had experienced in the Digital Trials would not allow this.

Students had used the Familiarisation Activities and were not fazed by the word count and textbox turning red when they exceeded the recommended word limit. They felt the Familiarisation Activities were useful preparation for the Digital Trial examinations – especially with the Spellcheck and planning spaces.

In the Digital Trials, some students used the planning space to note key words and ideas, and structure their essay better, while others spent more time editing at the end of the answer. They also commented on the advantage a split-screen would give for essay planning and writing. Some students did not use the planning space.

Students commented that they were able to type faster and avoid poor handwriting, and liked the Spellcheck function. Students have a marked preference to complete the examinations digitally, as they are able to complete their essays in a shorter timeframe enabling them to edit and rework their essay.

2017 Digital Pilot experience

Karamu High School students were entered in the Level 1 and Level 2 Media Studies, and L1 English Digital Pilot examinations. The school had a good experience. Students were seated in the examination rooms earlier than for a paper examination. The URLs and login information for the digital examinations were stuck to the desks. There were no technical issues.