

## Co-Managed Trials School Case Study

School	King's High School	MoE Id	383
Roll Year 11 cohort	1044 251	Region	Otago
School Type	State Boys Yrs 9-15	Decile	7

King's High School was involved in the previous digital examinations:  
2015 Online Practice Examinations

### **Situation**

King's High School has a successful Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) programme rolled out across years 9 and 10. Devices are frequently used across a range of subjects. The school recommends Chromebooks with a minimum screen size, and the school has a number of Chromebooks and iPads available for loan. Students are required to sign a contract agreeing to the rules and regulations regarding device use and network access. There is a no-phone rule within the school, and students are allowed a single device login.

The school was part of the ICTPD contract some years ago, but many of the staff who were involved in it have now left. Teachers are working together to develop their own digital learning knowledge and skills. The school uses Google Classroom.

In 2017, 94 students sat the English Digital Trial examination and 28 sat the Classical Studies Trial.

### **Examination Management**

The school has been through the School Network Upgrade Project once; any further upgrades will be their responsibility. Both staff and students previously commented that wi-fi connectivity can be an issue in many parts of the school. The school is looking at increasing the number of access points to mitigate this.

King's High School used computer labs and classrooms for the Digital Trial examinations. The system was loaded so examination students had priority access, and juniors had only limited access at that time. No wi-fi issues were detected during the Digital Trial examinations.

Students sat the Classical Studies Digital Trial on 19 August in a classroom with a set of school Chromebooks. Students sat the The English Digital Trial on 21 August across five computer labs with two supervisors per lab. The Exam Centre Manager (ECM) roamed between the labs.

The school created a personalised card for each student containing their name, username (NSN) and password, the digital examination they were sitting, and the room they were expected to be in. Students were able to place this on their desk for ready use.

There were some delays with students needing to get onto the school network and some students having lost their login information, but most students were ready to start the examination 10 minutes before the scheduled start time.

The Network Manager and a technician were available for the Digital Pilot examinations to provide support.

### **Staff impressions**

The staff were interested in finding out if students were advantaged by doing digital examinations, and wanted to know what their students thought of the experience. Students had the choice of whether or not to participate, which reflects NZQA's opt-in approach.

Staff used the Familiarisation Activities in a range of different ways. One teacher took his class through the Familiarisation Activities by projecting it onto a screen and involving the students in a whole class activity. Another teacher used it as a homework activity, and a third used it as an individual classroom activity. There was consensus that the Familiarisation Activities were useful in that they provided students with the opportunity to see what the examination looked like, and an understanding of the navigation processes, but they were not essential for their students as the digital examinations were intuitive.

The staff were not directly involved in the management of the Digital Trial examinations but visited the examination rooms at some stage to observe. They were impressed by the level of engagement demonstrated by their students – much more than they expected. The English teachers felt that, in general, the students wrote more, and crafted better essays than they expected.

The Classics teacher felt his students produced the standard of work he expected. His students do a significant amount of their work on a computer and he felt the digital examination was a natural extension of the classroom activity.

The staff initially expressed some concerns about the typing skills of their students. Although the school offers a Year 9 keyboarding course, the teachers were keen to have students practise their typing in preparation for digital examinations. After observing them in the examination and viewing their work, this aspect is no longer a concern.

### **Student impressions**

An in-depth discussion about digital examinations was held both before and after the Digital Trial; this was attended by 10 students.

The students commented that the examination was intuitive and simple to use. Some students entered the examination without completing the Familiarisation Activities and were able to complete it without any problems. These students did not feel hindered or disadvantaged by not completing the Familiarisation Activities.

A few students experienced login issues and the “loading hang” but saw these as minor inconveniences and were not concerned about them.

The students felt they could complete their essays quicker in a digital examination, and that enabled them time to edit and recraft their work, which was also easier in a digital space. They saw this as a distinct advantage of digital examinations over paper-based examinations.

Most students used the planning section in the digital examination by adding their quotes at the beginning so they did not have to keep remembering them; one student typed in his main ideas. Some of the students did not formally plan at all.

NZQA provided a paper resource for English AS 90851: *Show understanding of significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, using supporting evidence*. The resource was provided so that students could interact with the text in the way they are taught in class. About half the students in the King's High School focus group did not use the paper resource at all – preferring to use the digital text provided online.

A student who had completed the digital Classical Studies examination, said that he preferred to complete his NCEA examinations on paper rather than on computer. He felt that the nature of handwriting a response disciplines him to create a more thoughtful and succinct essay.

The rest of the group indicated a preference for completing their examinations on a device. The students indicated three main reasons for their preference

- the ability to edit and recraft their essays,
- their handwriting was messy and typing an essay presented a better chance of getting their ideas across
- they use computers all the time and a digital examination is a natural extension of the way they learn and like to work.