Co-Managed Trials School Case Study

School	Wakatipu High School	MoE Id	374
Roll Year 11 cohort	853 198	Region	Central Otago
School Type	State Co-educational Yrs 9-15	Decile	10

Wakatipu High School was involved in the previous digital examinations:
2015   Online Practice Examinations
2016   Digital Pilots in L1 English
2017   Digital Trial in L1 English
        Digital Pilots in L1 and L2 English and L1 and L2 Media Studies

Situation

Wakatipu High School has a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) programme and device use
is embedded in all subjects.

The BYOD programme was fully implemented in 2016. Staff were initially apprehensive but
2017 felt a lot more relaxed. In 2016, they ensured that in week one all students completed a
series of tasks designed to help them upskill to the point where they could use their device for
learning. In 2017 these tasks were completed by the year 9 students.

The school has weekly and after school professional development sessions, and makes use
of staff who have a higher level of digital expertise.

Students are recommended to bring a laptop, chromebook or netbook – tablets and phones
are not supported by the school. The school recommends suitable devices, offers financial
support, and works with a local supplier to offer discounts. The school uses Google
classroom. Students use devices regularly in most classes.

Wakatipu High School has been through the School Network Upgrade Project twice and has
invested heavily in infrastructure. The Wi-Fi is still patchy in some areas such as the gym
where the main examinations currently take place. The school will be moving to a new site for
2018 so is unwilling to make a significant investment in their infrastructure for 2017. The
school has been working with N4L regarding their digital readiness.

Examination Management

The school was involved in the Digital Trials and Pilots in 2016 and the students who took
part were overwhelmingly positive despite issues with the English Digital Pilot. Both teachers
and students were positive about digital examinations and keen to be involved in 2017.

The Level 1 English Digital Trial examination was sat by 175 students on 14 August
2017. Wakatipu High School was the first Co-Managed Trial school to complete a Digital
Trial examination and their experience was able to directly benefit other Co- Managed
Trial schools completing their digital examinations later in the term.

The Level 1 English Digital Trial examination was held in six classrooms of varying size – some accommodating up to 35 students. The classrooms are in close proximity to each other and within the same block. There was one supervisor per classroom, with the Exam Centre Manager and IT technician roving between classrooms.

Students used their own devices for the examination and, while the school provided some multi-boxes, the devices only required battery power. The devices were a mixture of laptops – Macs and PCs.

At the beginning of the digital examination, slips of paper containing usernames and passwords were placed on desks specific to each student. The password was a 10-character alpha-numeric password supplied by NZQA and this proved problematic for some students, who experienced login difficulties. For the Digital Pilot examinations, NZQA streamlined the processes associated with provision of passwords and logins, logging on, and getting the examination underway.

Most students were able to start the examination on time and those that took longer to begin were noted by the supervisors and provided with extra time at the end of the examination. Once underway there were few issues and no technical issues.

The end of the digital examination session was a lot smoother than for a paper examination, as students submitted their answers digitally and papers did not have to be collected in.

After the Digital Trial examinations, the school was positive and confident that students would be well prepared for the Digital Pilot examination.

Staff Impressions
2017 was the second year the school has been involved in the digital English examination and they wish to continue being involved as they see this as the future of assessment.

The teachers felt that the Digital Trial examination was great preparation for the Digital Pilot examination at the end of the year. They felt that, in general, the results from the Digital Trial examination were fair.

Student impressions

The students use computers for most subjects and work mainly on the Google Classroom platform.

They were mainly concerned with restricting the ability to cheat or losing work through a technical issue. They were comfortable with the idea of typing their answers rather than writing, as they use their devices often.

The students had used the Familiarisation Activities as preparation for the Digital Trial examination. This enabled them to become familiar with the layout of the examination and they felt this was good preparation.

When a student's essay exceeded the recommended word limit, the textbox border turned red as an indicator. Some students found this a little off-putting.

As students were not able to highlight or annotate the digital version of the unfamiliar text provided for AS 90851 (Show understanding of significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, using supporting evidence), they appreciated the provision of a paper version of the unfamiliar text. Some students used the planning space provided to set out ideas in bullet points; not having a mind-map function was not an issue.

All the students preferred a digital examination rather than a paper-based examination. Some of the reasons the students gave for their preference were that their handwriting is messy, and that they found typing faster or easier than writing. The students felt they could get more done because they type faster and a digital examination gives the ability to go back, edit and add more detail. Students also commented positively on having a spellcheck for their essays.

2017 Digital Pilot experience

The Digital Pilot examinations generally went well – with Level 2 English and Media Studies going much smoother than Level 1 English.

In the Level 1 English examination, the ECM did not realise till 40 minutes before the examination that the Year 11 and 12 passwords were mixed together. Time was lost sorting the passwords into the correct classrooms, and errors were made with the distribution of written papers. This resulted in a delay to the start of the examination, with time made up at the end.

When students started typing in the URL for the Pilot examination, their computer often recognised an old link, perhaps to the English Trial examination, and they ended up on the wrong webpage. Students also made mistakes inputting the long URL or their password.

Nine students were entered for the wrong achievement standard in the Level 2 English examination; one selected the wrong achievement standard. Very few students reverted to paper.

Supervisors were on a learning curve with the Level 1 English examination, and were noticeably more confident in the Level 2 English examination.