

## **Sabbatical Report: Theresa Bosch**

### **Digital Assessments**

Background:

One of my roles as Deputy Principal at Baradene College is to implement the ICT related strategic goal for the Board of Trustees (BOT). The BOT, in consultation with the wider school community and other stakeholders, sets the five year strategic goals for the college and then these are annualised so that targets and strategies can be met. The outcomes are then reported to the BOT on a regular basis. The annual plans set the direction for what should be implemented to ensure the goals are met. At Baradene college I have been responsible for the implementation of a 1:1 device / Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program that supports teaching and learning as set out in the strategic goals. We started with a staged rollout of devices and in 2017 the school will begin the year with all students at Baradene bringing a recommended device to school. As NZQA moves to digital assessments I felt it critical to develop my own professional learning to ensure a seamless and successful transition. The challenge was not just digital assessments but also the 'anytime, anywhere' assessments 'as and when the learner is ready'. This will require a mind-shift for staff and several challenges will need to be kept in mind.

The purpose of my sabbatical was to contact pilot schools as well as project leaders at NZQA, Education Perfect and Network for Learning. I wanted to work alongside key people to ensure I fully understood the process and pitfalls schools will need to be aware of so that I can support our students and staff as we make this transition to online assessments.

As my investigations continued I soon found that the direction of the project changed as the landscape around online assessments changed. Originally the Language Perfect platform was used as a possible online assessment platform, however, it became evident that other options were being explored. I met with Steve Bargh, Implementation Manager - Digital Assessment Pilots, Secondary Examinations Team, Assessment Division, NZQA team. He has a wealth of knowledge around online assessments and has been working closely with 6 pilot schools: De La Salle College, Epsom Girls Grammar School, St Andrews College, Darfield High School, Porirua College and Paraparaumu College. He shared the lessons these schools had learnt and aspects that schools need to consider during this transition. I also surveyed schools to ascertain which schools were prepared for this transition and the progress made in these preparations. I made contact with schools who indicated

that they had changed or adapted their procedures and found myself being interested in this process. I also gathered anecdotal evidence from teachers who were working through the pilots and trials.

The plan:

My plan was to learn from pilot schools and others involved with the process, to enable me to support our school community. I wanted us to take the next steps with confidence. As teaching with technology requires a transformation of teaching practice I wanted to focus on seeing how this has been done and also how assessments could align with this transformation so that they remain credible and robust.

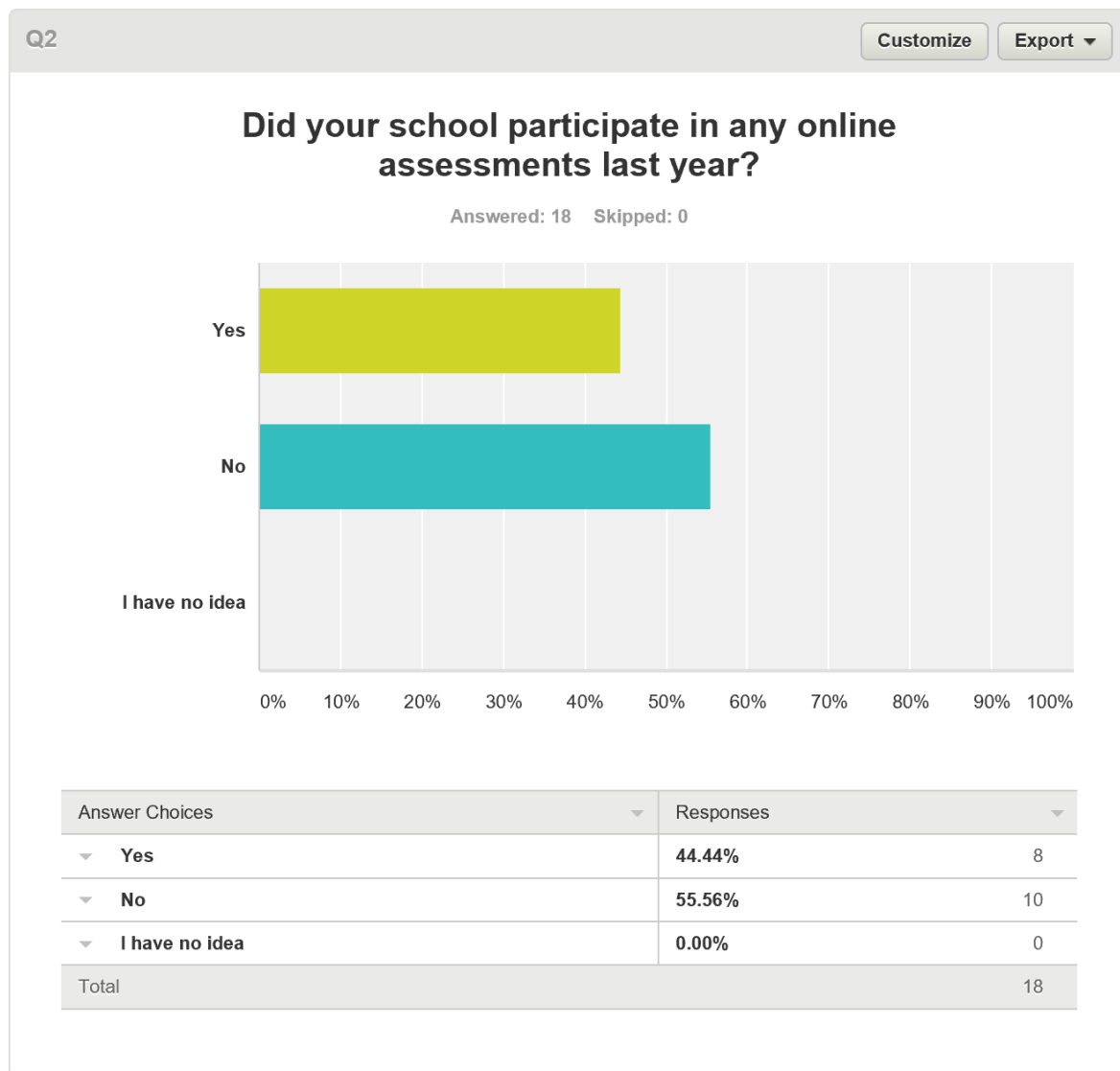
Survey:

To gather some evidence around online assessments so that I could contact various schools, I conducted a survey that was sent to all the schools that the ASDAPA (Auckland Secondary Deputy and Assistant Principals Association) had in their database. I also conducted a paper survey at a seminar run by ASDAPA. The online survey was completed by 18 participants and the paper based survey was completed by 19 schools. I have included the paper based results under the screenshots of the online results below.

What was surprising was the number of schools that had participated in online assessments last year but were not participating this year. As I investigated this further, it became evident that the lack of communication was a barrier for most and not enough information from the NZQA assessment division. Most schools were expecting to conduct the MCat online assessment again and were very surprised that this was not available. They felt they had learnt enough from the previous MCat online assessment that they would confidently attempt this again.

Below is a snip of the survey results.

Online Survey – sent to all members of ASDAPA association



Paper based survey:

Yes	57.89%	11
No	21.05%	4
I have no idea	21.05%	4

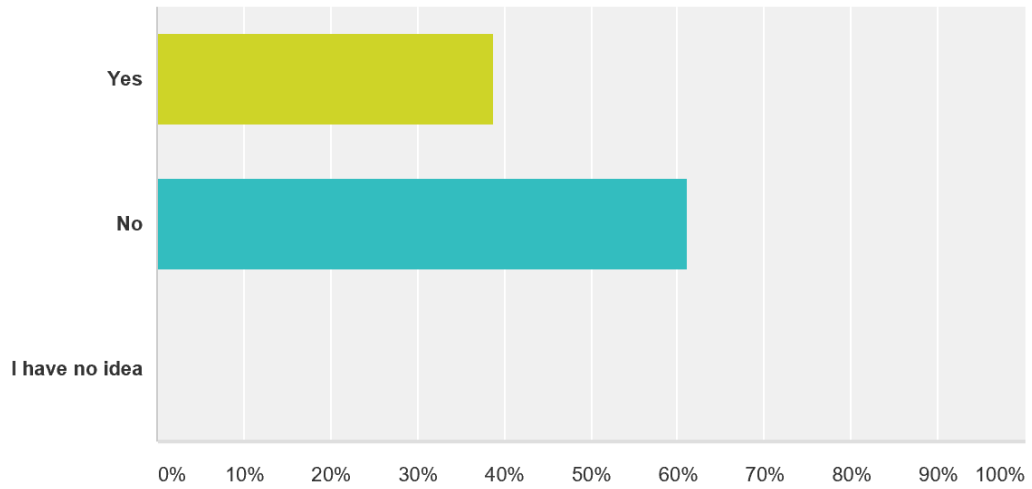
Q3

Customize

Export ▼

### Is your school participating in any online assessments this year?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Yes	38.89% 7
▼ No	61.11% 11
▼ I have no idea	0.00% 0
Total	18

Paper based survey:

Yes	57.89%	11
No	10.53%	2
I have no idea	31.58%	6

#### Q4 Who is the person to contact about online assessments at your school?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	Start with Lynda Perkins	7/29/2016 9:15 AM
2	Johan van Deventer	7/20/2016 5:29 PM
3	Clare Humber	7/14/2016 9:51 AM
4	Andrea Bossenger	7/13/2016 3:37 PM
5	Russell McPherson	7/11/2016 9:48 AM
6	Geoff Burge	7/8/2016 9:08 PM
7	Me	7/8/2016 4:20 PM
8	Cath Johnston	7/8/2016 3:29 PM
9	John Allpress DP	7/8/2016 2:54 PM
10	noelene martin	7/8/2016 2:10 PM
11	Noelene Martin	7/8/2016 1:25 PM
12	Carol Pottow	7/8/2016 1:09 PM
13	Dirk Smyth	7/8/2016 1:06 PM
14	Christine Williams	7/8/2016 1:01 PM
15	Allister Gilbert	7/8/2016 12:54 PM
16	Mrs Karen Campbell	7/8/2016 12:46 PM
17	Carol Mare	7/8/2016 12:41 PM
18	Allan Logan HO maths did the on line mcas last year	7/8/2016 12:39 PM

#### Q5 Please supply their email address:

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	lynda.perkins@pompallier.school.nz	7/29/2016 9:15 AM
2	johanvandeventer@rodneycollege.school.nz	7/20/2016 5:29 PM
3	principal@pcschool.co.nz	7/14/2016 9:51 AM
4	bg*manurewa.school.nz	7/13/2016 3:37 PM
5	mcpherson@hhs.school.nz	7/11/2016 9:48 AM
6	gburge@kristin.school.nz	7/8/2016 9:08 PM
7	kathrynd@tikihigh.school.nz	7/8/2016 4:20 PM
8	c.johnston@mahurangi.school.nz	7/8/2016 3:29 PM
9	John.allpress@greenbayhigh.school.nz	7/8/2016 2:54 PM
10	noelene.martin@wghs.school.nz	7/8/2016 2:10 PM
11	noelene.martin@wghs.school.n	7/8/2016 1:25 PM
12	carol.pottow@elim.school.nz	7/8/2016 1:09 PM
13	dirk.smyth@otamatea.school.nz	7/8/2016 1:06 PM
14	c.williams@bdsc.school.nz	7/8/2016 1:01 PM
15	a.gilbert@wbhs.school.nz	7/8/2016 12:54 PM
16	karenca@okaihau-college.school.nz	7/8/2016 12:46 PM
17	cmare@lbc.school.nz	7/8/2016 12:41 PM
18	alogan@breabaycollege.school.nz	7/8/2016 12:39 PM

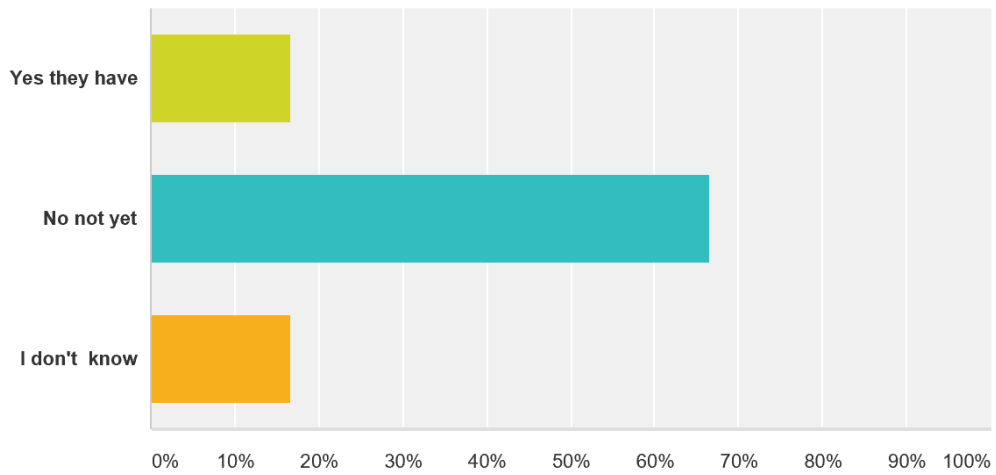
Q6

Customize

Export

### Do you know if your school has changed their assessment policies and/or procedures to accommodate online assessments?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes they have	16.67% 3
No not yet	66.67% 12
I don't know	16.67% 3
Total	18

Paper based survey:

Yes they have	15.79%	3
No not yet	52.63%	10
I don't know	31.58%	6

I contacted the schools that had indicated that they had changed or adapted their assessment policy and procedures and asked them for feedback about the process. There were clearly a number of lessons learnt and procedures that they would adapt in the next round. These also include suggestions for refinement and highlight aspects that schools should take into consideration. I have collated the responses below and tried to group the ideas into similar threads:

- Allowing at least 15 minutes for log-on time before the exam code is supplied to the students
- Using smaller rooms instead of large school hall or auditorium
- The ideal class size is 20 students with two supervisors per room. (This has huge cost implications for many schools.)
- The heat in a hall or auditorium could be problematic with 200 girls in a room with their devices.
- Noisy keyboards have been very distracting for students – some schools suggested earplugs for students.
- Having staff PD to ensure all staff are up to date and understand the role they will play in conducting the online assessments. Giving staff the opportunity to have hands on-training was helpful
- Having more staff to supervise and retraining them
- Computer labs are a viable alternative but there will still be the need for two supervisors
- Staff/ supervisors need training on how the master dashboard works. This delayed the start of the exam
- Teachers being vigilant, walk around all the time.
- An authentication page when logging on to do the assessment, so that students can sign in and be verified
- Conducting the assessment in a school computer lab if possible - in most cases the school computers have larger screens than the student BYOD devices. This made it easier for the students. The font size was also problematic for some students on their own devices.
- When using own devices, the device needs to have a long enough battery life and robust enough to give the student confidence that the device can do what is required
- Students need to be familiar with the device. This will only happen if they use it all the time in the class. It does however pose a problem when swop-outs are used when a student's device does not work or has issues.
- Surprisingly enough some students forgot to bring their own laptop.

- Although Chrome was the preferred browser for the exams, the Chromebooks could not support the exam. Students had to use the school swop-outs.
- Spare devices or swop outs need to be available. On average 10 % of the number of students sitting the exam needs to be available for swop-outs.
- Having access to graphing tools would be beneficial. Students need to practice using this software and be familiar with it.
- Printing facilities need to be robust
- Having a paper exam if technical issues occur and these issues are not able to be resolved quickly enough
- Blocking YouTube helped with internet traffic in one school because YouTube is internet heavy
- Enough opportunities to practice in the online environment for the final exam so that students are confident with:
  - Logging on
  - Navigating the website
  - Using the practice questions on the website
  - Using the software to write mathematical formulae and equations.
  - Using the practice NZQA past papers
  - Entering a code to start an assessment
- Students needed training on how to format their answers so that the system could recognise the numbers - this was especially true when the formatting of the answers did not match the model answer
- When codes are supplied it was important that there were no letters that could be confused. An example was when a font resulted in an S looking like a 5. This resulted in a delayed start.
- Students require wired headphones not wireless headphones
- Students need their own calculator alongside the computer.
- It is vital that the school wireless infrastructure is robust enough to allow all students access to the at one time. It has been suggested that every area is tested for the capability of the wireless to see if it can cope with the load.
- A suggestion was to ensure the IT support staff set the wireless controllers so that the priority can be adjusted for exam areas or supply extra wireless points
- Frozen computer - the importance of having technical support was reiterated. The technical staff need a mobile and need to be roaming between classes.
- A large ICT team is vital – this cost is invariably covered by the school and would be something that needs to be budgeted for. In one school they had 4 ICT staff available.



- On average there were 15 computers swapped out during any given session
- The firewall at some schools resulted in the internet falling out. This was identified in the trials and addressed for the pilots.
- Power cables for charging could be a potential health hazard
- Having enough multi-boards available is reassuring for students
- If two digital exams were to occur on any given day, a recharge station would need to be available
- The distribution of passwords need to be considered. Expanding the spreadsheet from NZQA and snipping the page yet keeping it in homeroom format allowed for the systematic distribution of the passwords
- Video in a number of assessments – this needs to be tested in advance during practice opportunities to ensure the devices are capable of displaying the video
- Students need to remove their screen saver timing for their machine. If machines went into screen saver mode, the program would flag this as a student going outside of the exam.
- Marking on screen was difficult for some teachers
- The 0800 number was very helpful. Calling this number allows you to request that the exam gets reset for the whole school. It was felt that it would have been beneficial if the Principals Nominee or the Exam Centre manager had this ability.
- Students generally did not regret taking part in these digital exams
- By far the largest technical issues that arose included: Flash/ HTML not updated on Mac machines and students unable to log on

Teachers made the following suggestions/observations that they felt could improve the system:

- Having a platform which locks the computer down was important for most schools
- The importance of ensuring valid assessment conditions so that teachers could confidently support the online assessment process
- Better online trials and that need to be supplied well in advance
- Better communication about when trials and pilots would be available
- Having trials and pilots available sooner
- Having an electronic formula sheet where students could copy and paste from
- A platform similar to Turnit-It to see if students have been collaborating with others
- A safe exam browser-program that restricts access to certain websites

- Classics and Media studies online assessments lend themselves to the online assessment environment and teachers felt that this would continue to be the case
- Opening the internet up to students. Many assessments are no longer based around the recall of knowledge. It would mean that the exams will require students to make new knowledge from the knowledge they can gather from the internet.
- Browser based assessments that save every 15 seconds.
- Anytime, anywhere assessments with at least three exam periods throughout the year
- Touchscreen devices are proving to be more popular and this would possibly see a shift within the next 5 years.
- It was felt that the digital Moderation submission format that teachers would be using could reinforce the shift to an online digital process

Other issues to consider:

Many schools have a number of candidates that qualify for Reader and/or Writers. The online assessments added to the already high level of complexity around this. Readers instructions and login details need to be very clear. Many Reader/or Writers are not offey with technology and some were wary of this new level of complexity. In most schools a roving trouble-shooter was on hand to help with any technical issues, this included going to the various rooms where the special assessment conditions took place. In one school I visited there were 131 special assessment condition students.

Conclusion:

Assessments that are 'fit for purpose' within the context of digital teaching and learning, is what the Digital Assessment Transformation programme has as its goal. The intention of my data gathering was to challenge my own professional learning so that I could clearly understand how this programme will be implemented and what lessons there were to learn from other schools who have participated in the process.

Online assessments are a reality we are all facing. The sabbatical afforded me the opportunity to be upskilled so that I could potentially support the school-wide adoption of digital assessments. As a 1:1 device /BYOD learning environment our students have the hardware to support this transition

but as a school we acknowledged the need to embrace this change. We want our students to benefit from being equipped for the future.

I have always been mindful of the change our staff has undergone as we transitioned to a 1:1 device program. The intention is to ensure that the next steps we take to successfully implement digital assessments are based on valuable data that allows us to undertake this process in a well thought through, systematic way.

From my understanding online Literacy and Numeracy credits would ensure assessments could be presented to our students at the right time as 'in-the-moment' assessments which would of huge benefit, especially for our priority learners; Maori, Pasifika and our diverse learners. Most students find assessment stressful at the best of time. The importance of the school being prepared can never be underestimated. Planning for this transition benefits students and as a result they will gain the best grades possible because they are not hindered by technology. The online literacy and numeracy credits could also help with workload around the assessment of Level 1 NCEA Literacy and Numeracy achievement.

Students who require special assessment conditions will also benefit from online computer-based solutions, especially those who require reader/writers for assessments. In many schools the number of students requiring this support is growing and finding suitable reader/writers is proving to be difficult. The proposed text-to-speech recordings in exam scripts could be hugely beneficial to students and ensure they gain the best grade possible.

The 1:1 device / BYOD process has been a huge learning journey for our students and staff. Online assessments are yet another step in the journey but because this process directly impacts on students results it is imperative that schools are prepared and ready to lead this transition.

For most staff the leap to digital assessments that can take place anytime and anywhere will require a mind-shift. It is therefore imperative that any barriers and difficulties are removed and that the process is well thought through and meticulously planned.

I am grateful to Teach NZ for awarding me this sabbatical, the BOT at Baradene College and our Principal Sandy Pasley for endorsing the application and to all those who have answered my unending questions. These include:

Allison Barrett and Keith Barrett - Baradene College

Mel Potto - Elim College

Pat Baird, Carl Lidstone and Carina Goebel - St Kentigern College

Kath Nell - Lynnfield College -

Craig Smith - Education Perfect

Steve Bargh, Implementation Manager - Digital Assessment Pilots, Secondary Examinations Team, Assessment Division, NZQA team.

Paul Alford - Western Springs College

Mary Graham - Sacred Heart College

Sophie Wright - Mount Roskill Grammar School

Coralie Baines - Team Leader & School Relationship Manager, School Quality Assurance and Liaison, NZQA

Karyn Dempsey - Epsom Girls Grammar School

Karen Poutasi - Chief Executive NZQA

Debbie Lawn - Glendowie College

**Theresa Bosch**

Deputy Principal: Baradene College of the Sacred Heart.