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“It’s the best idea ever!”: Exam for the BYOD generation.

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Abstract

This research sought to investigate the feasibility of digitising exams to improve student outcomes and was based on research suggesting that the handwriting speed of undergraduate students limits their ability to demonstrate knowledge, while poor legibility makes it difficult for the assessor to accurately judge the quality of the response. Research found that the handwriting speed of undergraduate students was equivalent to fluency data on 11-year-old schoolchildren, which is a significant concern when we consider that handwriting fluency accounted for considerable variance in writing quality and tutor marks for examination answers. This generation of students typically relies on digital technologies to record their thoughts and access to mobile devices has opened up the possibility of carrying out a digital examination without the need for specialised campus facilities. This approach was trialled with 32 students in a 4th year elective unit in the Bachelor of Education. Students were surveyed to determine why they chose to use traditional paper and pen or a word processor and their experience of using these mediums for examinations. A document analysis was also undertaken to determine whether there were differences in the quality of responses between these mediums.

KEYWORDS: BYOD, digital exams, paperless exams

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