

# STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PEN AND PAPER VS. DIGITAL ASSESSMENT

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How do we cater to the growing student body who want to be able to organise their university learning at their convenience (Wooden, Summerfield, O'Shea, Watson, & Wilkins, 2018; Australian Psychological Society, 2015)? Is a move to digital assessment an answer?

A first-year chemistry course at The University of New South Wales has undergone a course redesign with the separation of unit learning outcomes into Threshold (core) and Mastery (non-core) outcomes.

The threshold learning outcomes are taught online via weekly lessons and formative quizzes. In past years, three face-to-face, paper-based multichoice validation quizzes were used as summative assessment of the threshold learning outcomes.

At the end of 2019, UNSW Chemistry piloted digital assessment for the final validation tests (E-exam trials at UNSW, Ethics HC 180137). The tests were administered online in a testing centre. Students were surveyed on their perceptions of sitting a summative digital assessment.

Preliminary results indicate that students perceive digital assessment as a comparative experience to paper-based assessment in terms of effect on factors such as thinking processes and stress levels. Students are in favour of digital assessment allowing more flexible learning timetables and instantaneous marks and feedback. Technological difficulties and ensuring the integrity of online assessment is a concern for students (and teachers!). Solutions to these problems lie in community exchange of successful approaches – some of which will be discussed here (Bearman et al., 2020; Lee-Post & Hapke, 2017).



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