AUTOMATED ESSAY SCORING (AES)
Approach and mitigation

How NAPLAN writing is marked now
Human markers undergo extensive training to learn to mark NAPLAN writing tasks. They use a ‘rubric’ that has 10 marking criteria.

How NAPLAN writing will be marked with AES
We train autoscoring systems to mark NAPLAN writing, using the same rubric. These systems can mark thousands of essays consistently, reliably and quickly.

Tried, tested and used overseas
The concept of automated essay scoring is not new. It has been successfully trialled and introduced in many other countries. AES has been found suitable for a range of ages and content areas.

Advancing with care
We have undertaken research and practical trials of our own.
For example:
In 2013, 1353 students took an online NAPLAN writing task (Years 3, 5, 7, 9). Their essays were marked by two experienced human markers, using the rubric.
One thousand and fourteen of these double marked tests were sent to four expert auto scoring companies who used the essays to train their systems.
The remaining 339 essays were then marked by these systems.

Result: All four AESs reached a consistency comparable to the two human markers.

Benefits of AES
Greater consistency
Individual interpretation of the rubric means that not every essay is being marked exactly the same at the moment. Automated essay scoring will provide greater consistency in marking.
Faster turnaround of results
Results get back to students, parents and teachers faster than ever before (within two weeks) and any literacy and numeracy issues can be addressed as soon as possible.

Continuous improvement
The autoscoring systems will be trained to identify all types of writing – from all skill levels and creative abilities. If it can’t understand a piece of writing, it will ‘red flag’ it and a human marker will score the essay.

Viability and mitigation
Research on the viability of automated essay scoring in the NAPLAN context is continuing. Further detailed results will be available in 2016.
We understand our obligation to build public confidence. If needed, we could mark a percentage of NAPLAN writing tasks by both the automated scoring system and human markers.

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