

# Changes You've Been Asking for: The RLA Test Screen & Score Reports

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# Agenda

RLA Extended Response  
with Scrollable passages



Score Report



# Extended Response

*Research findings and potential test improvements*



# Cognitive Labs

## Why did we investigate the Extended Response task?

- Listened to educators that students weren't excelling since launch
- Investigated potential causes, including misunderstanding of
  - Task itself
  - Scoring criteria
  - Meaning of "analysis" and "evaluation"

## What did we decide to do?

- Designed a series of studies with cognitive labs
  - Collected data in November 2015
- Invited students from multiple locations in several categories to participate
  - took RLA and passed
  - took RLA and failed
  - had not tested yet

# Pilot Study Research Questions

- Do test takers
  - Understand what they need to do to complete the task?
- Comfortably interact with the computer?
  - Use the space in the response box?
  - Use the onscreen Answer Guidelines?
  - Navigate the tabs successfully?
- Prepare for the test?
  - Have a MYGED® account?
  - Use the resources on GED.com?

The screenshot displays the GED Ready® interface. At the top, it shows 'GED Ready® - RLA - Candidate Name' and a timer for 'Time Remaining 00:44:51'. Below this is a navigation bar with 'Highlight (J)' and 'Flag for Review'. A tabbed interface shows 'page 1', 'page 2', 'page 3', and 'page 4', with 'page 1' selected. The main content area displays the title 'Diamond Mining: Harmful to the Environment' by Tavin McLeavitt. Two paragraphs of text are visible, numbered 1 and 2. To the right, there is an 'Answer Guide' button. Below the text, a yellow box contains the instruction: 'In your response, analyze the two articles to determine which position is best supported. Use relevant and specific evidence from both articles to support your response.' Below this is a response box with a red circle around it, and a toolbar with 'Cut', 'Copy', 'Paste', 'Undo', and 'Redo' options. At the bottom, there are navigation buttons for 'Previous', 'Navigator', and 'Next'.

# Pilot Study Findings

## Test-takers generally

- Do understand
  - Not to write their opinion and
  - The need to use evidence from the passages
- Don't understand
  - What the task wants them to do (“to analyze” means “to read”)
  - That they need to explain WHY the evidence they choose was the best to support the stronger argument
- Are comfortable with using computers
  - But are subtly influenced by the screen format to write responses that are too short
- Lack awareness of test preparation
  - Don't make use of Tutorial, Answer Guidelines, Noteboards

# New Study Research Questions and Materials

## Do test takers

- Understand what they need to do to complete the task?
- Comfortably interact with the computer interface?
- Prepare for the test?

- Created Instructional presentation
  - <https://youtu.be/c8Gg-yknu9Y>
- Reformatted the Extended Response Prompt and box
- Invited ABE students vs. Non-ABE students
- Structured interview questions to better understand our test takers

# Findings



Avid Mobile users



Positive Feedback on  
Short Instructional Video



Looking for online tools  
(Study Guide)



Guided Scaffolding  
(Score Report Personalized  
Study Guide)



Positive Outcomes to  
Resized Box



Clearly Understood  
Revised Instructions

# January 2019 release in English and Spanish

QAReview - Candidate Name Question 6 of 15

[Flag for Review](#)

page 1 **page 2**

### Instructions

**Read**

- On the **page 2 tab above**, you will read two texts presenting **different views** on the same topic.
- Both writers argue** that **their position** on the issue is **correct**.

**Plan**

- Analyze** the two texts **to determine** which writer presents the **stronger case**.
- Develop your own argument in which **you explain** how one position is better supported than the other.
- Include** relevant and specific **evidence** from **both sources** to support your argument.

**Write**

- Type** your response in the **box on the right**.
- Your response should be approximately **4 to 7 paragraphs of 3 to 7 sentences each**.
- Remember** to allow a few minutes **to review and edit your response**.

You have up to **45 minutes** for reading, planning, writing, and editing your response.

Cut Copy Paste Undo Redo

End Test ← Previous Navigator Next →

# Score Report

*Multi-phased usability and human-centered design studies*

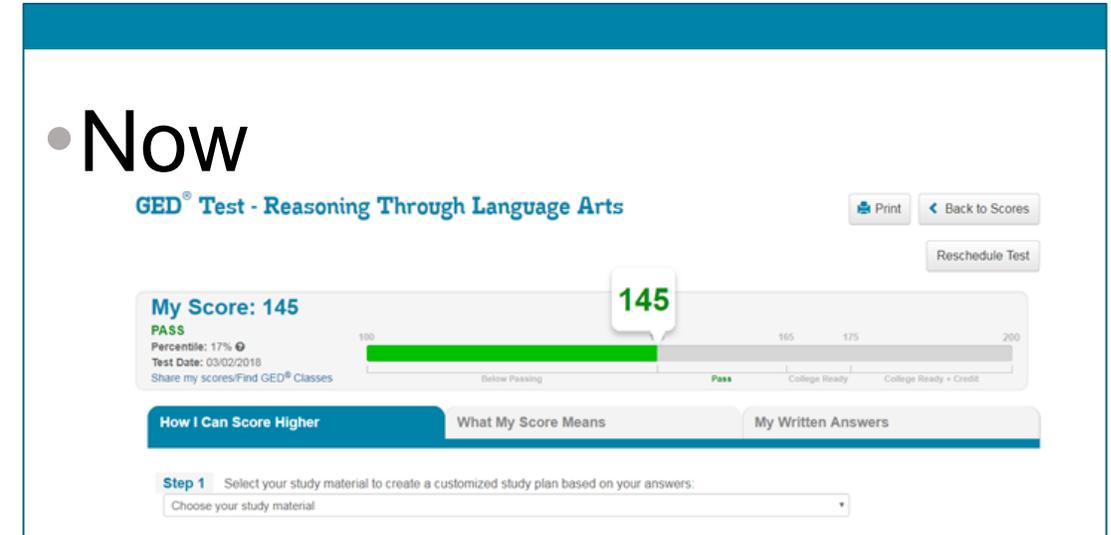


# Why are we investigating our Score Report?

- Then



- Now



How do students and teachers **use** and **understand** the score report?

# Study Overview

## Phase 1 – To Understand

- Baseline Usability Study ✓
  - Students
- Contextual Inquiry ✓
  - Educators

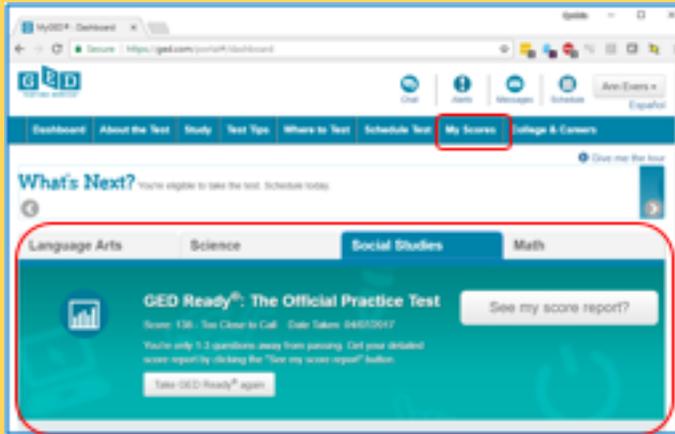
- 1) Research objectives and methodology
- 2) Participants
- 3) Data Collection
- 4) Combined findings for both studies

## Phase 2 – To Ideate & Iterate

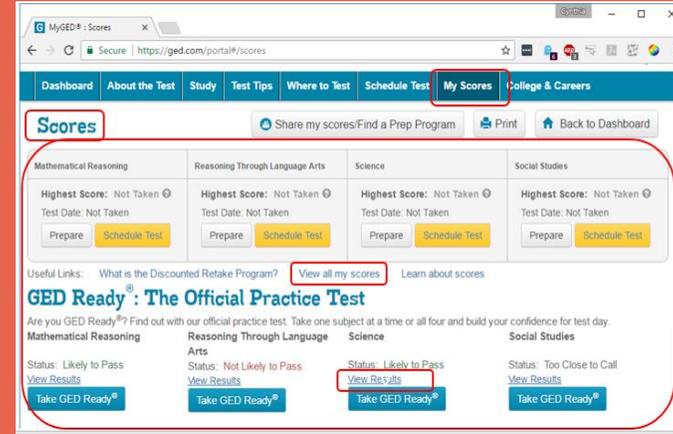
- Build Prototypes (Internal) ✓
- Concept testing
  - Students and Educators
- Usability Study
  - Students and Educators

# Scope of Study

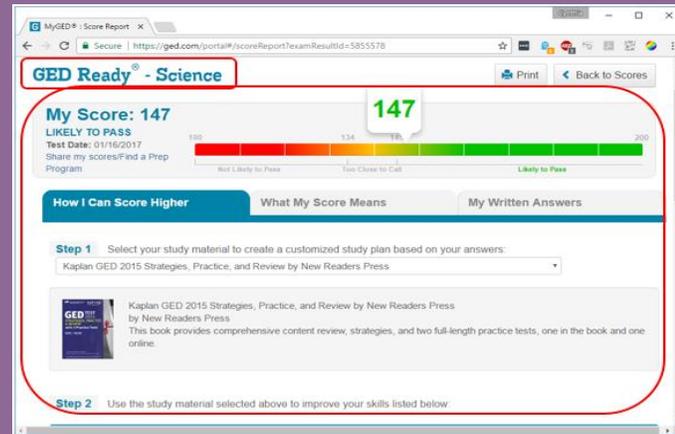
Dashboard



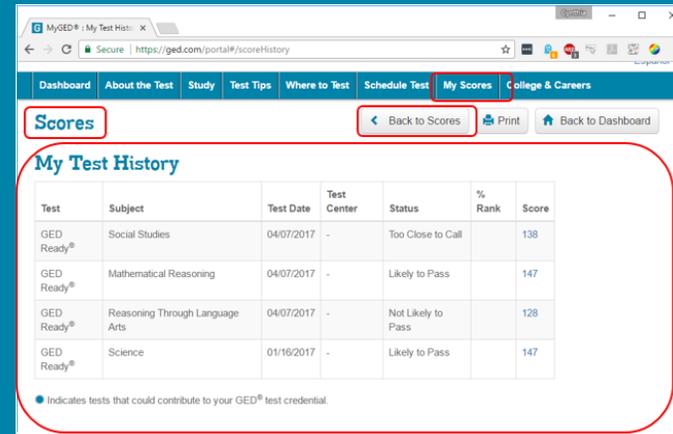
My Scores/  
Scores



Score Report

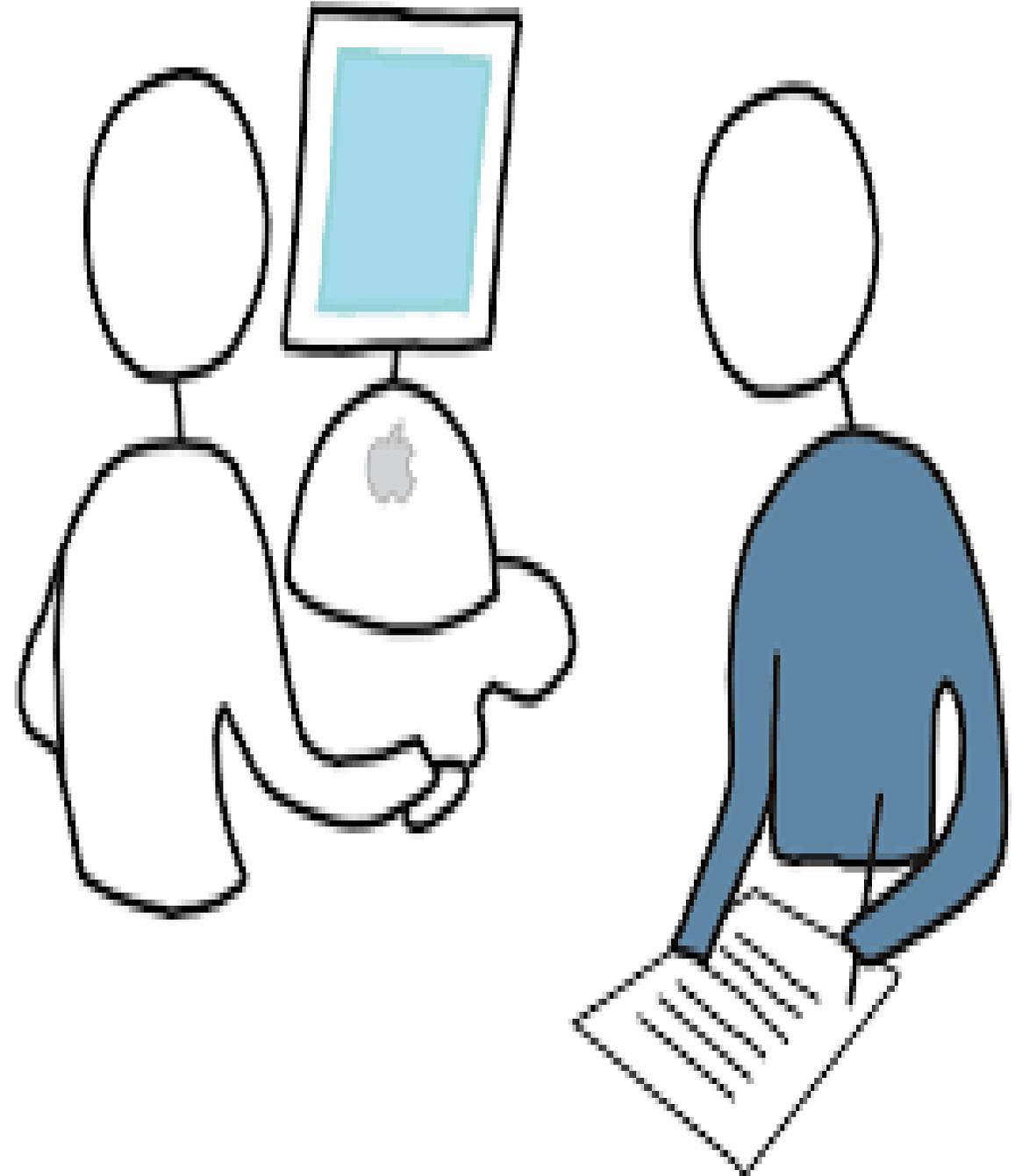


Scores/  
My Test History



# Usability Study

- Students



# Why is usability important?

**self-fulfilment**  
**satisfaction**  
**efficiency**  
**effectiveness**  
**utility**  
**safety**

is it fun?  
do I lose myself in it?  
does it make me feel good? or look good?  
does it empower me?  
can I use it to communicate?  
does it let me be me?  
does it understand me?  
do I prefer it?  
can I control it? is it confusing?  
does it make things quicker? or easier?  
does it understand my work?  
will it annoy me? is it repetitive/mundane?  
does it fit in with everything else?  
will it support me when I'm an expert?  
will I make mistakes?  
is it fast to use?  
can I learn it quickly?  
does it do the job well?  
does it work?  
can I do it?  
is it better?  
does it get the job done?  
do I want it?  
do I need it?  
is my reputation safe?  
is my identity safe?  
is my data safe?  
will it hurt? will I hurt anyone?  
is it dangerous?

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Time 00:19

Why is it doing this to me?!



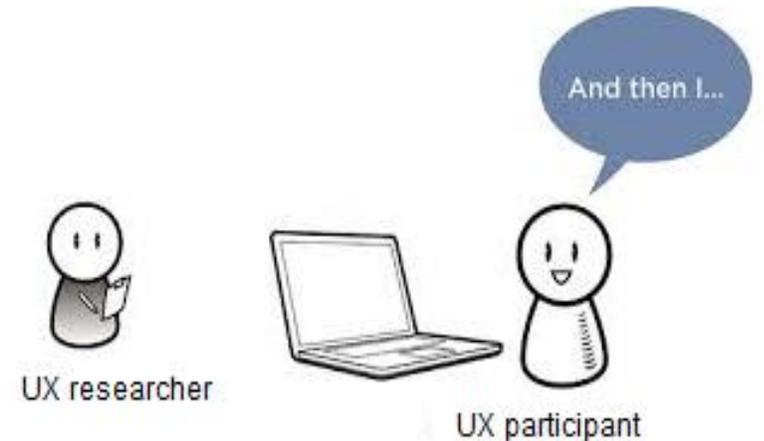
# Research Objectives

- Evaluate the usability of the current score report, identify areas of confusion and recommend improvements.
  - Can students find it?
  - Do they understand it?
  - Is it easy to use?
  - **Can they effectively use it as a tool to help them improve their score?**
  - Which individual elements do they notice?
  - Which elements are most and least helpful?



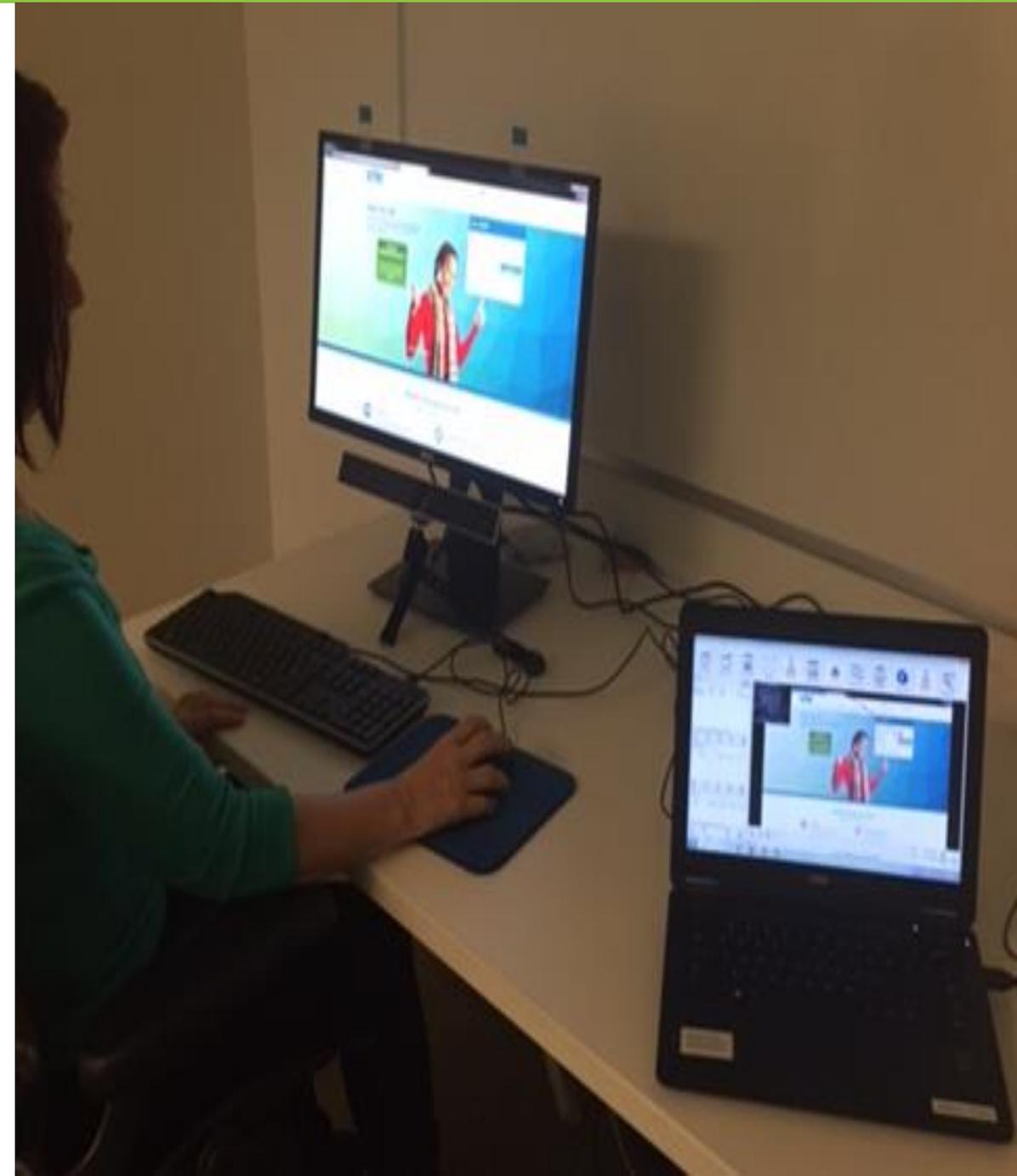
# Our Student Participants

- Mix of students at various stages of their GED<sup>®</sup> journeys
  - No GED Ready<sup>®</sup> tests taken
  - 1+ GED Ready<sup>®</sup> tests taken
- Split between mobile and desktop
- Demographic diversity
- Ages from 21-41
- Mix of self-study and ABE students
- DC office



# Study set up with *GAZEPOINT* Eye tracking on desktop

- Captured gaze patterns through hardware and software
- Researcher's computer showed, in real time, both the participant's display and participant's gaze plots.
- Eye gaze was tracked during the session to enhance prompting.



# Calibration of Eye Tracking on Desktop

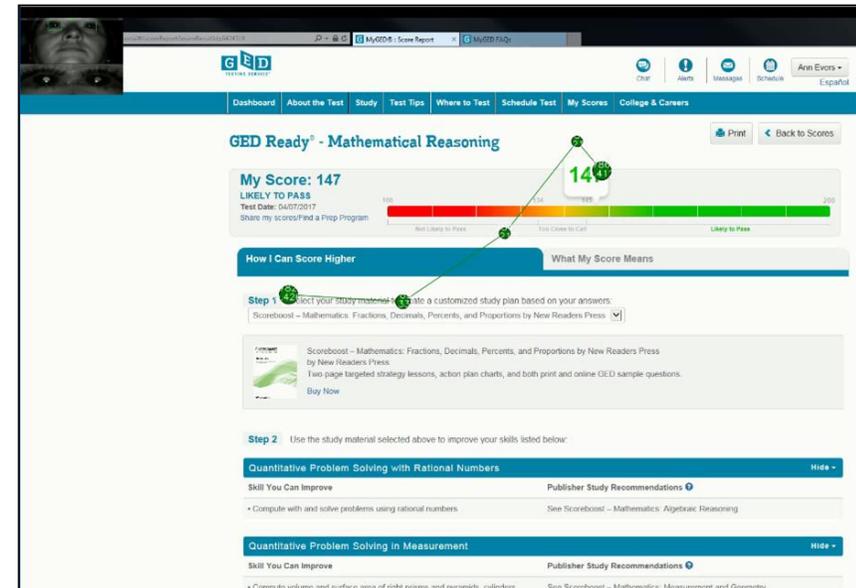
## Calibration

- First calibrate participant's eyes.



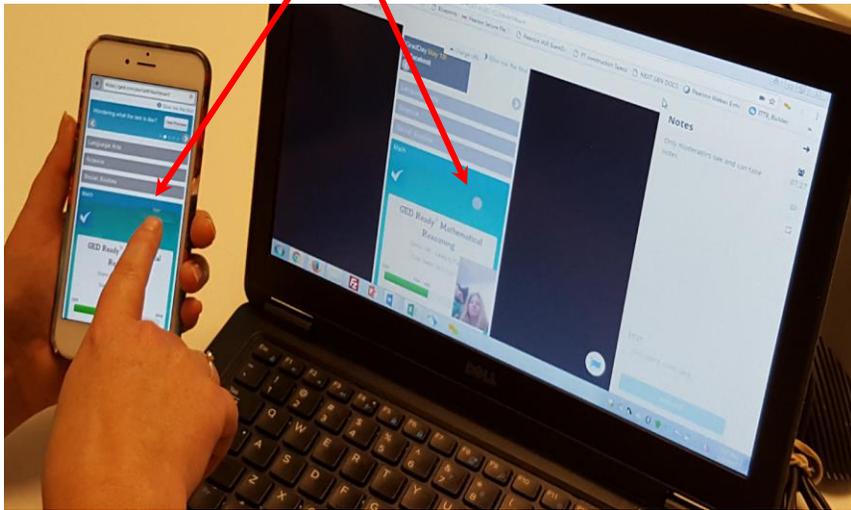
## Fixation Maps

- Eye gaze plots



# Screencasting on Mobile Remotely

- *Validately* app on phone
  - Records gestures and where they touch the screen



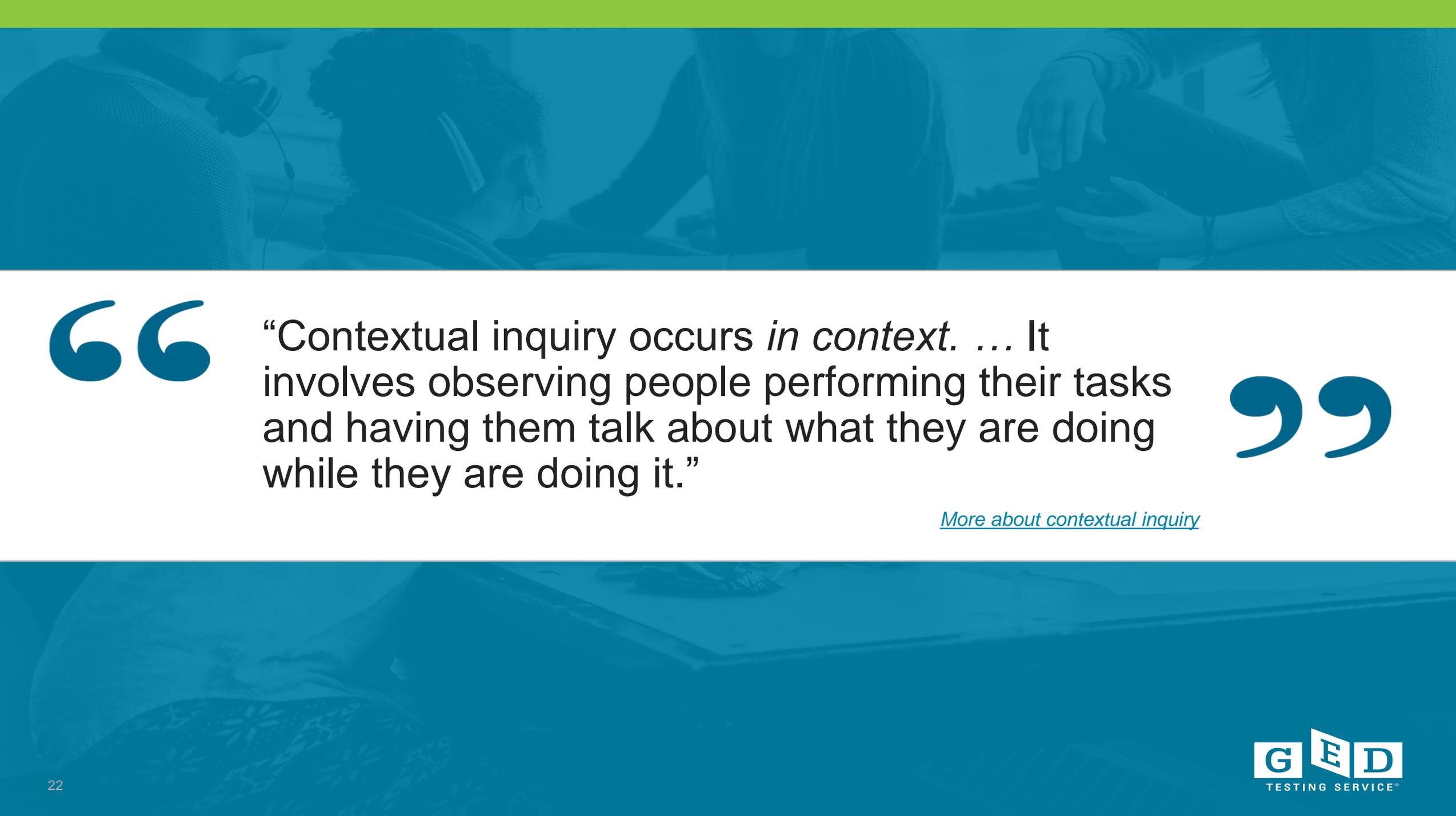
- Records their voice and facial expressions



# Contextual Inquiry

- Educators





“

“Contextual inquiry occurs *in context*. ... It involves observing people performing their tasks and having them talk about what they are doing while they are doing it.”

”

[More about contextual inquiry](#)

# Research Objectives

- Understand how and when educators use score related information, and evaluate the usability of the current score report for these uses.
  - What are their typical patterns of use?
  - How do they use score information individually and with students?
  - Which individual elements are most and least useful?
  - Is the content meaningful?
  - **Can they effectively use it as a tool to help them guide their students?**
  - What pain points do they encounter?



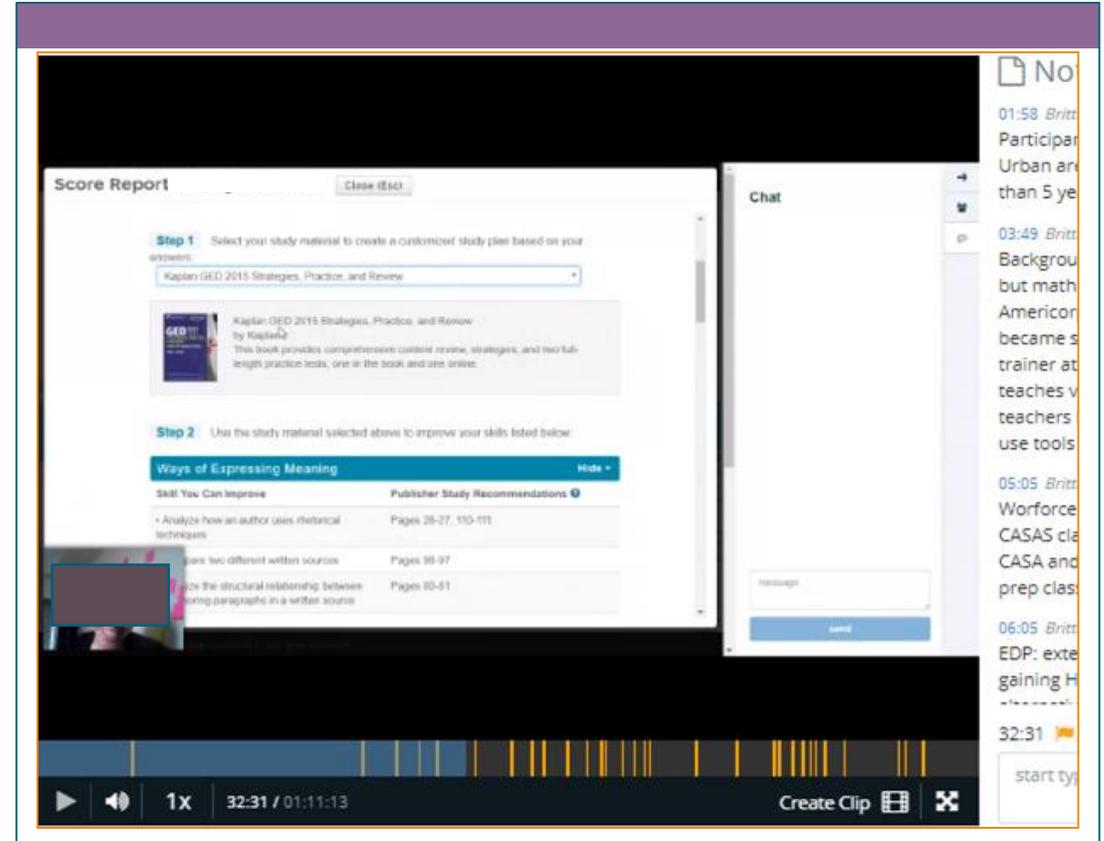
# Our Educator Participants

- Educators in a variety of settings
  - Rural with a single, part-time tutor
  - Urban center with a large, multi-role staff
- Individual sessions held remotely
- Geographically dispersed



# Screencasting on Desktop Remotely

- *Validately* app on desktop
  - Captured participant's face, voice and computer screen on desktop
  - Demonstrated using: GED.com, GED Manager and personal spreadsheets related to students' GED test scores



# What did we learn?

- Students and Educators



# Usability and Content Issues for Educators and Students

- Usability problems
  - Students trouble recalling page locations
  - Educators felt so frustrated they chose to limit their use of many score report elements
- Content improvements needed
  - Revise language to make easier to understand
    - Skills/indicators in How to Score Higher
    - What my Score Means
  - Reformat to highlight features
    - Directly link to the Scoring Tool in the Extended Response tab



# Functionality

## Educators

- Value additional functionality
  - Sorting the study plan by page numbers in the book
  - Being able to compare the performance of groups of students
- Often print the study plan
  - Hand-written notes in the margin and keep as a record.
  - Give copy and use it as an assignment for 2-3 weeks.

## Students

- Find receiving a score report an emotional experience
  - Opportunity: Offer encouragement and support to aid student persistence
  - Opportunity: Mention College Ready and College Ready + Credit

# GED Ready® RLA Score Report Prototype



Home About the Test Study Test Tips Where to Test My Scores College & Careers

SCHEDULE TEST



## GED Language Arts

Jim's Score Report

### Good job Jim!

You scored in the Yellow Zone.

Your score means that if you study more now you can increase the probability of passing the GED(R) RLA Test when you take it.

Remember, studying is the key to success on test day!

We've put together some study materials that will help you achieve your goals --

- see a study guide designed just for you
- see more about your written answer

My Personal Study Guide



My Extended Response



TOO CLOSE TO CALL  
Date: 12/05/17

137



# Personal Study Guide Prototype

We've put together some study materials that will help you achieve your goals --

- see a study guide designed just for you
- see more about your written answer

My Personal Study Guide



Want to get a higher score?  
Get your personalized study guide by clicking on a book or e-learning program below.  
Then, see what you need to study.

Step 1: Select Your Study Material



Select a Book



Select an E-Learning Program



Step 2: See Your Personal Study Guide



My Extended Response



# Personal Study Guide Prototype

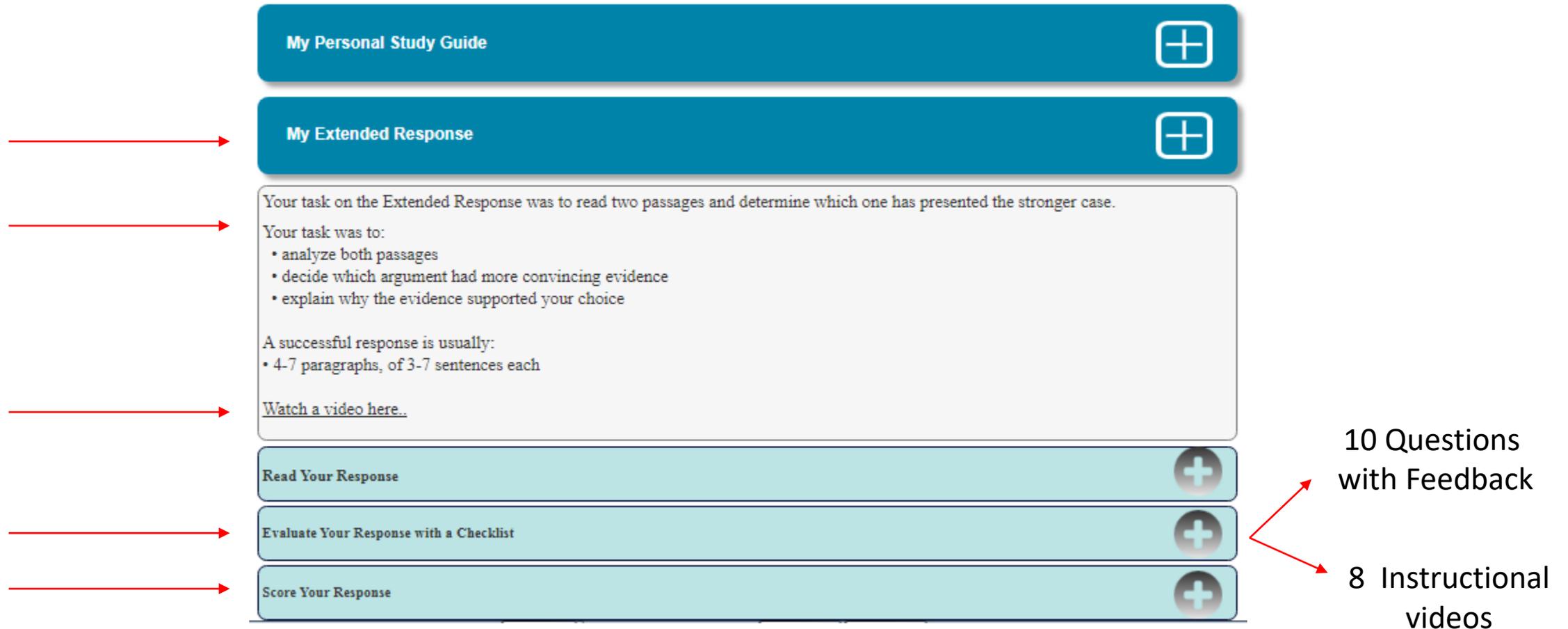
Select an E-Learning Program ▾

Step 2: See Your Personal Study Guide +

Your study guide -- based on your own answers to the GED Ready -- is provided below.  
If you'd like to see an example, just click on any of the GED skills listed.

Page/ Unit	GED Skills to Study
1.1 Main ideas and Supporting Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The relationship of evidence to main ideas and details</li></ul>
1.2 Summaries and Inferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the relationship between the main ideas and details</li><li>• Determine the main idea</li><li>• Identify the theme of a piece of fiction</li></ul>
2.2 Relationship in literary text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make inferences about plots, seq. of events, characters, setting and ideas</li><li>• Analyze relationships</li></ul>
5.1 Transition words and Phrases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyze how text is organized (Example: chronological, cause and effect, sequence)</li></ul>
6.1 Claims and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the steps of an argument</li></ul>
7.5	

# My Extended Response Prototype





**Thank you!**

