The GED® Test After 5 Years: What’s on the Horizon?

Ann Evers, July 27 2018
Agenda

RLA Extended Response with Scrollable passages

Score Report

New Scoring Tool and Data Matching Studies
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?
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](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
Beneficial 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

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.
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?
Research Objectives

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

• Mix of students at various stages of their GED® journeys
  • No GED Ready® tests taken
  • 1+ GED Ready® 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
Access to Score Report and Connectivity to Internet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educators</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Limited educator access to GED Manager™</td>
<td>• Ignore email and only read texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access Score Report through GED.com</td>
<td>• Younger students treat email as spam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Corrections and some ABEs have minimal-to-no internet access</td>
<td>• Smart phones are very common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Some students have minimal-to-no access to computers or internet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GED Ready® RLA Score Report Prototype

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
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
### 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page/Unit</th>
<th>GED Skills to Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Main ideas and Supporting Details</td>
<td>* The relationship of evidence to main ideas and details</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1.2 Summaries and Inferences | * Identify the relationship between the main ideas and details  
* Identify the theme of a piece of fiction |
| 2.2 Relationship in literary text | * Make inferences about plot, seq. of events, characters, setting and ideas  
* Analyze relationships |
| 5.1 Transition words and Phrases | * Analyze how text is organized (Example: chronological, cause and effect, sequence) |
| 6.1 Claims and support | * Describe the steps of an argument |
My Extended Response Prototype

My Personal Study Guide

My Extended Response

Your task on the Extended Response was to read two passages and determine which one has presented the stronger case.

Your task was to:
• analyze both passages
• decide which argument had more convincing evidence
• explain why the evidence supported your choice

A successful response is usually:
• 4-7 paragraphs, of 3-7 sentences each

Watch a video here.

Read Your Response

Evaluate Your Response with a Checklist

Score Your Response

10 Questions with Feedback

8 Instructional videos
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score 0</th>
<th>Score 1</th>
<th>Score 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Put a mark in this column</td>
<td>makes no clearly-stated claims</td>
<td>makes at least one clearly-stated claim or claims are strongly implied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if the test-taker earned a zero in this sub-dimension</td>
<td>attempted or vague claims are illogical and are not text-based</td>
<td>at least one claim is logical and text-based, while other claims may be tied to the larger issue rather than to a close reading of the text itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attempted or vague claims do not support an overall stance</td>
<td>implied or clearly-stated claims may support an overall stance. Stance may be vague, unclear or inconsistent</td>
<td>explicit support and consistency is absent such that the criteria for analyzing the issue or evaluating argumentation is not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attempted or vague claims lack explanation such that the criteria for analyzing the issue or evaluating argumentation is not supported</td>
<td>at least one claim is explained such that the criteria for analyzing the issue or evaluating the argumentation is supported</td>
<td>claims and clearly-stated claims and clearly-stated claims and clearly-stated claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upcoming Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scoring Tool

NOW
- Not easy to find on website
  - Can't find it
  - Don't know it exists
  - Don't use it
- Not easy to use
  - PDF
  - Download
  - Print


FUTURE
- Easier to find on redesigned website
  - https://ged.com/educatorsadmins/teaching/classroom_materials/er_scoring_tools/
- Include in the Score Report
- Easy to use
- Electronic
- Designed to provide feedback
- See here:
  - https://mygedsctt.pearsonvue.com/preLogin2#/essayScoring
Data Matching Study

Ongoing
Learning more about our GED® Graduates since 2014

- Matching GED® graduate data with state or school student data
  - GED® data files include: GED® ID, score, demographic info
  - State/school matches student with state information
  - Pre-determined data elements

- Example data elements
  - courses taken
  - course grades
  - whether the courses were credit-bearing
  - placement test scores
  - major or course of study
  - enrollment dates
  - credits earned
  - whether any credential was earned
  - Job/labor data, etc.
Interested?

1. Organization can be a state, school system, or individual school
2. Let us know you’re interested – send email GED2014@ged.com to get started
3. Set up a data sharing agreement. Info needed includes
   - Address, Technical contact person, Administrative contact person
   - Purpose for data sharing
   - Scope of the use by each party
   - Term of Agreement
4. Agree on data file structure and criteria then do match
5. GEDTS does analysis, creates the report and shares with you/others
Thank you!

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