

# 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?

The screenshot displays the GED Ready® RLA interface. At the top, it shows 'GED Ready® - RLA - Candidate Name' and a timer 'Time Remaining 00:44:51'. Below this is a 'Highlight (J)' button and a 'Flag for Review' button. A navigation bar contains four tabs: 'page 1', 'page 2', 'page 3', and 'page 4'. The 'page 1' tab is selected and highlighted with a red circle. The main content area displays the title 'Diamond Mining: Harmful to the Environment' by Tavin McLeavitt. It contains two numbered paragraphs. The first paragraph discusses the impact of diamond mining on 10 million people and the environment. The second paragraph discusses the pollution of soil and water during mining. To the right of the text is an 'Answer Guide' button, also circled in red. Below the text is a response box with a yellow border containing 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 the response box is a toolbar with icons for Cut, Copy, Paste, Undo, and Redo. At the bottom of the interface are buttons for 'Previous', 'Navigator', and 'Next'.

GED Ready® - RLA - Candidate Name

Time Remaining 00:44:51

Question 1 of 1

Highlight (J)

Flag for Review

Answer Guide

Diamond Mining: Harmful to the Environment  
by Tavin McLeavitt

1 The diamond mining industry directly affects an estimated 10 million people around the world. Eleven nations are currently considered major producers of diamonds, and several other countries also currently operate diamond mines. While some companies and countries have made a fortune from diamond mining, the diamond mining industry as a whole has a long history of abusing human rights and exploiting workers. The industry's devastating impact on the environment is another reason why diamond mining should be banned.

2 During any mining process, the soil, water, and air surrounding a mine become polluted. Diamond mining is no different. Large quantities of soil must be removed, reducing available natural land resources. For example, the process of removing soil along the coast forever changes shorelines, which has a wide-ranging impact. In addition, any mine's expansion encroaches on natural animal habitats, decreasing wildlife populations.

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.

Cut Copy Paste Undo Redo

Previous Navigator 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

# 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

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*

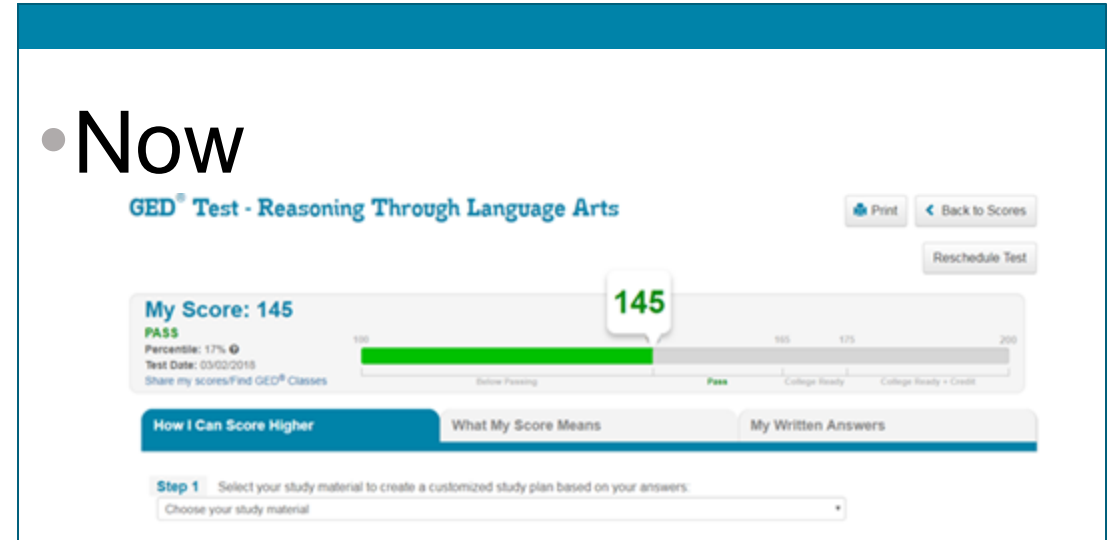


# Why are we investigating our Score Report?

- 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

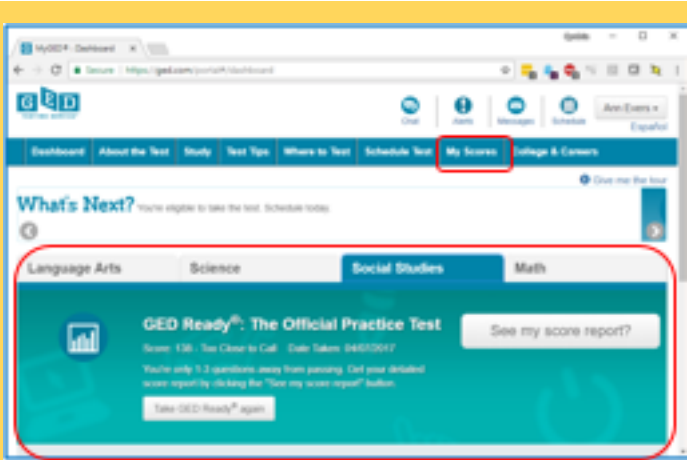
- 1) Research objectives and methodology
- 2) Participants
- 3) Data Collection
- 4) Combined findings for both studies

## Phase 2 – To Ideate & Iterate

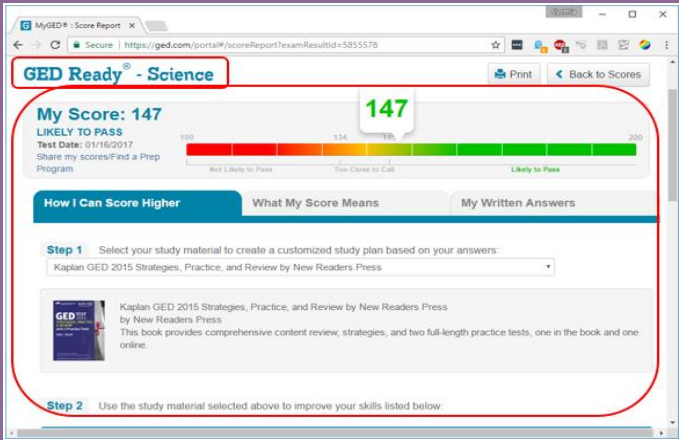
- Build Prototypes (Internal) ✓
- Concept testing
  - Students and Educators
- Usability Study
  - Students and Educators

# Scope of Study

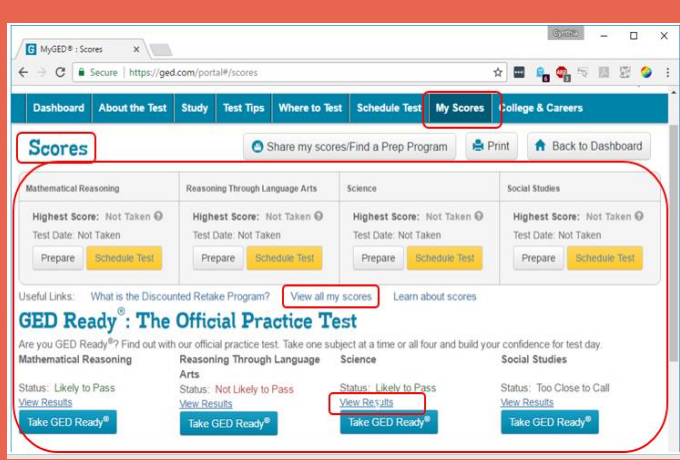
Dashboard



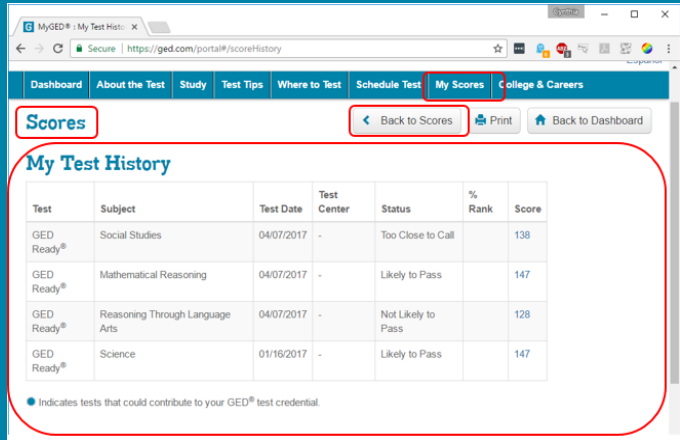
Score Report



My Scores/  
Scores

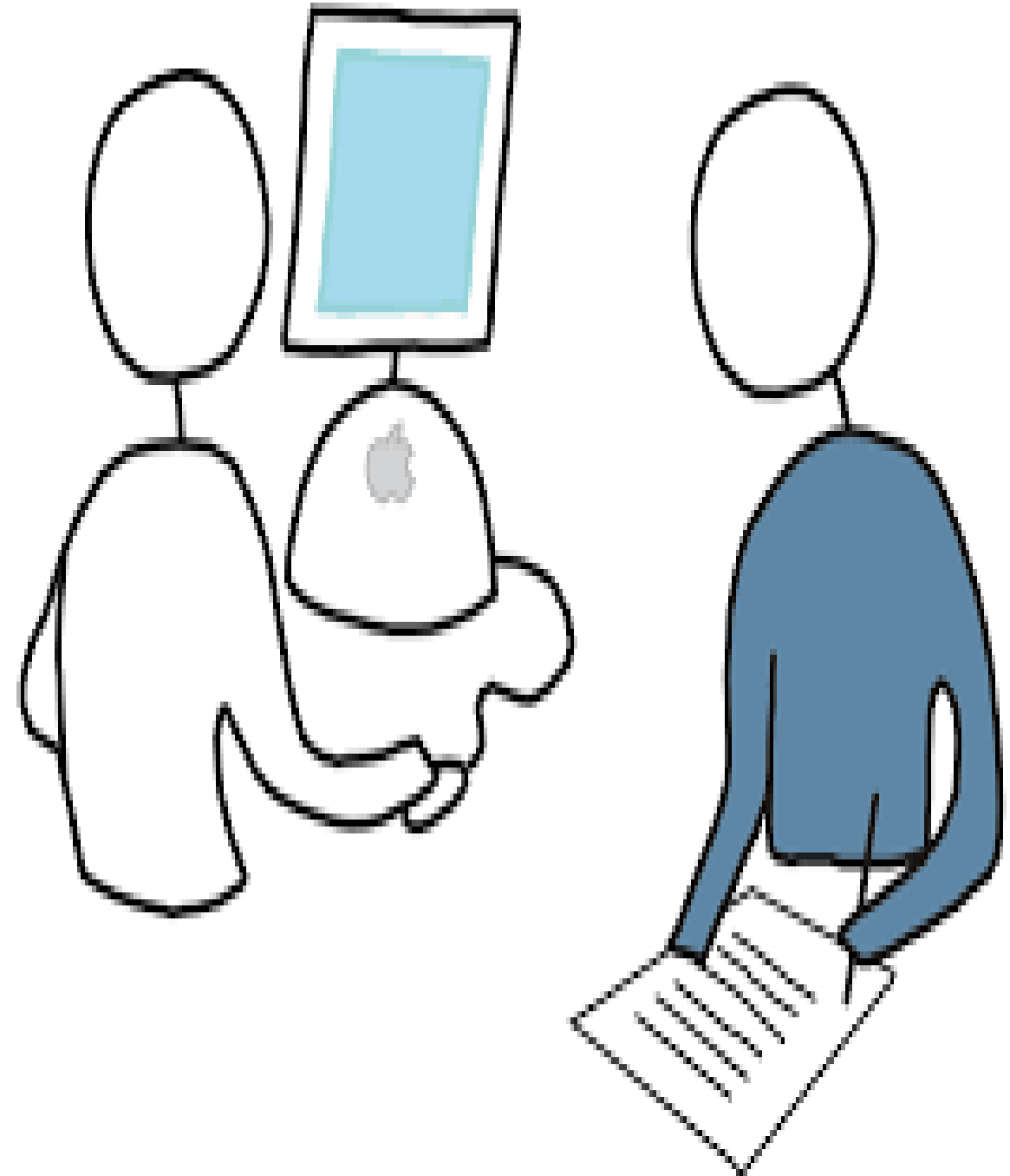


Scores/  
My Test History



# Usability Study

- Students



# Why is usability important?



# Research Objectives

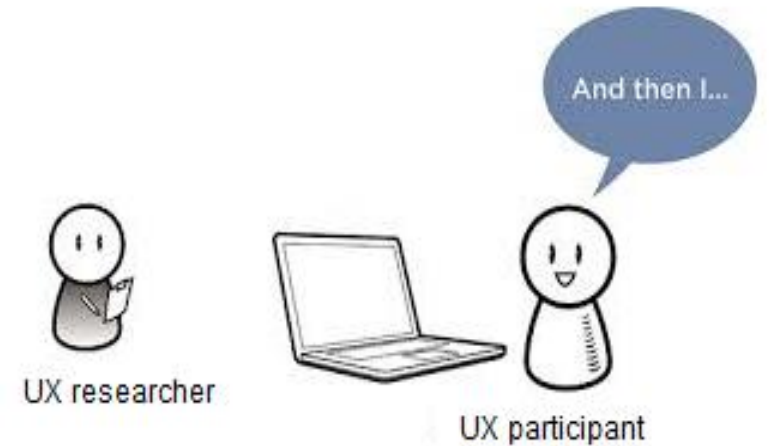
- Evaluate the usability of the current score report, identify areas of confusion and recommend improvements.
  - Can students find it?
  - Do they understand it?
  - Is it easy to use?
  - Can they effectively use it as a tool to help them improve their score?
  - Which individual elements do they notice?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





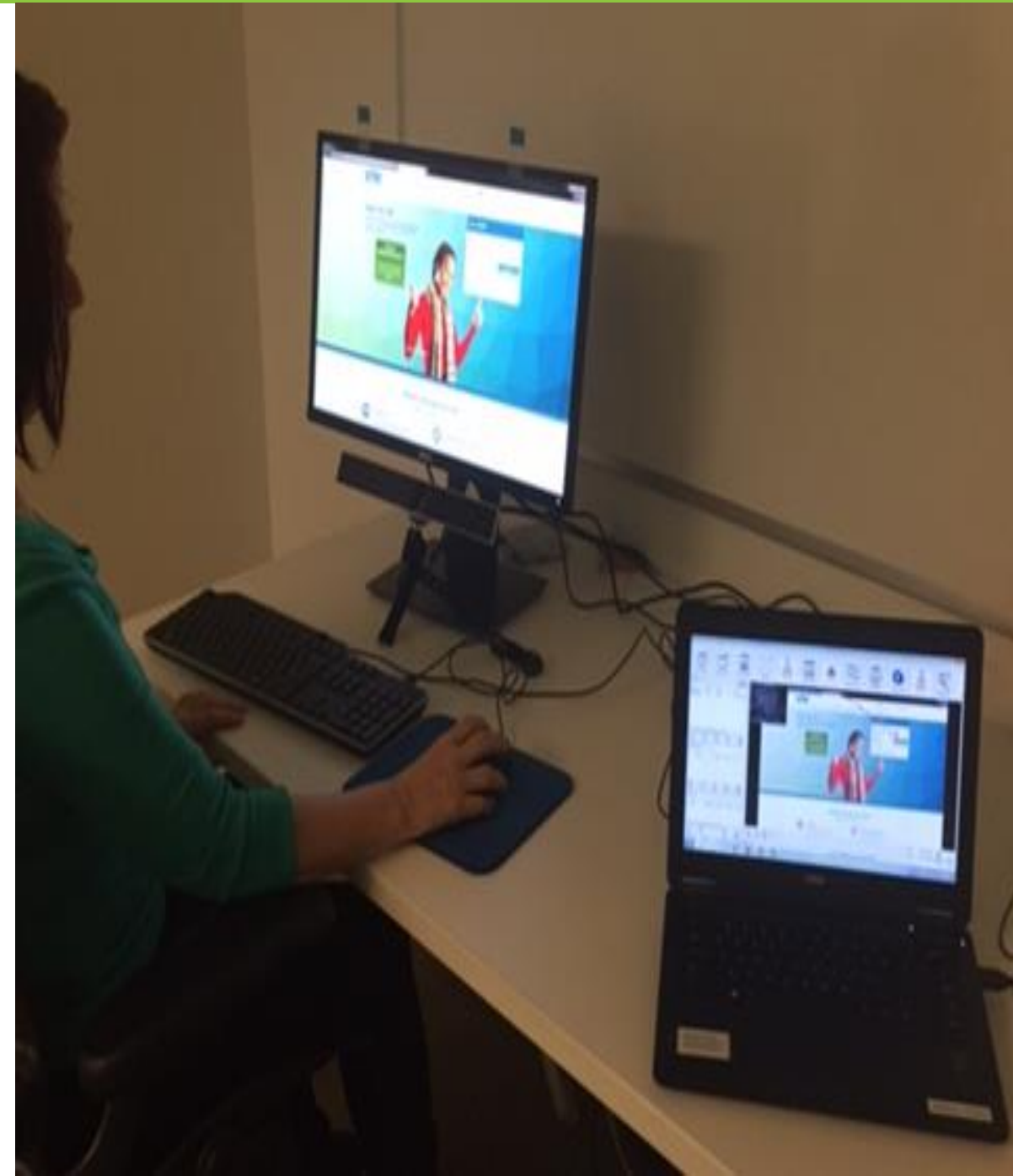
# Our Student Participants

- Mix of students at various stages of their GED® 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

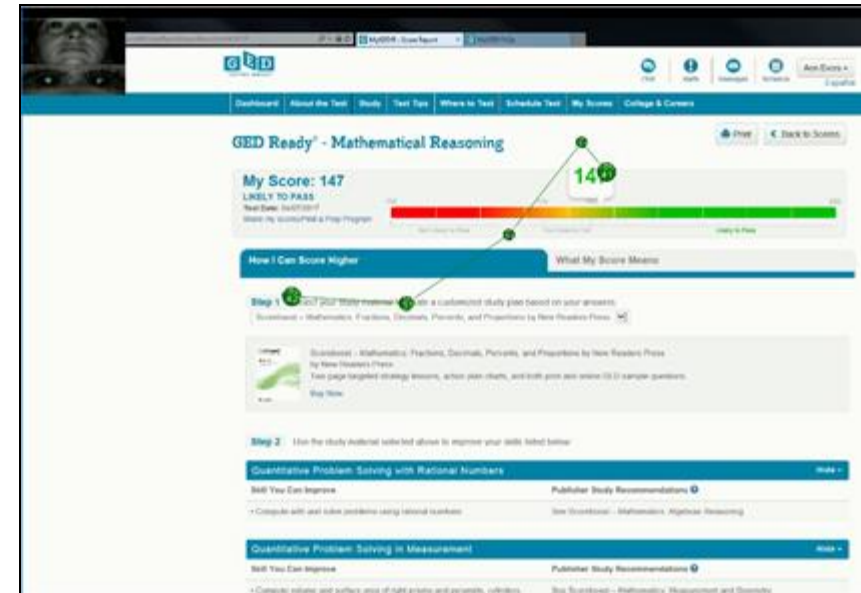
## Calibration

- First calibrate participant's eyes.



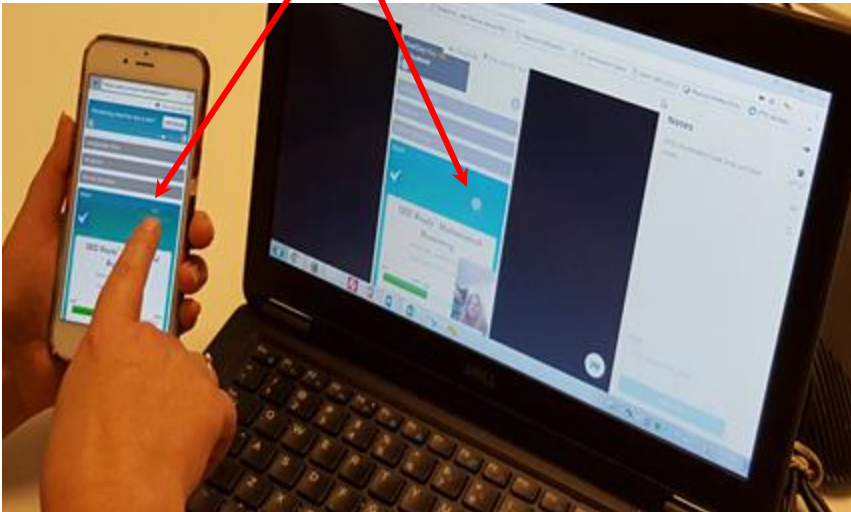
## Fixation Maps

- Eye gaze plots

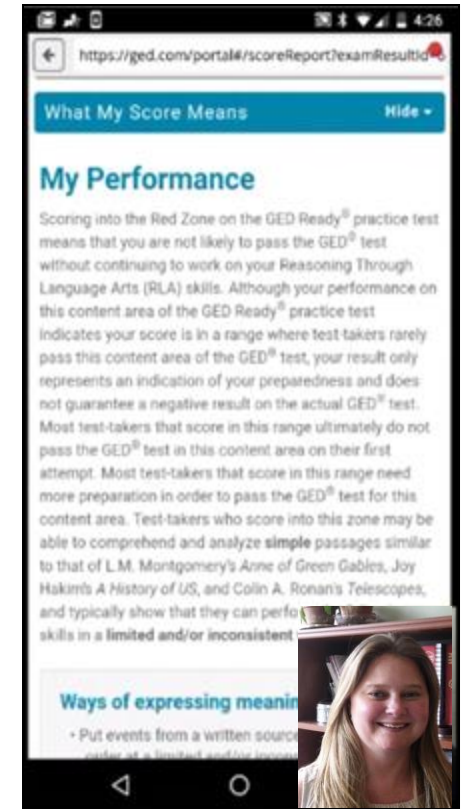


# Screencasting on Mobile Remotely

- *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

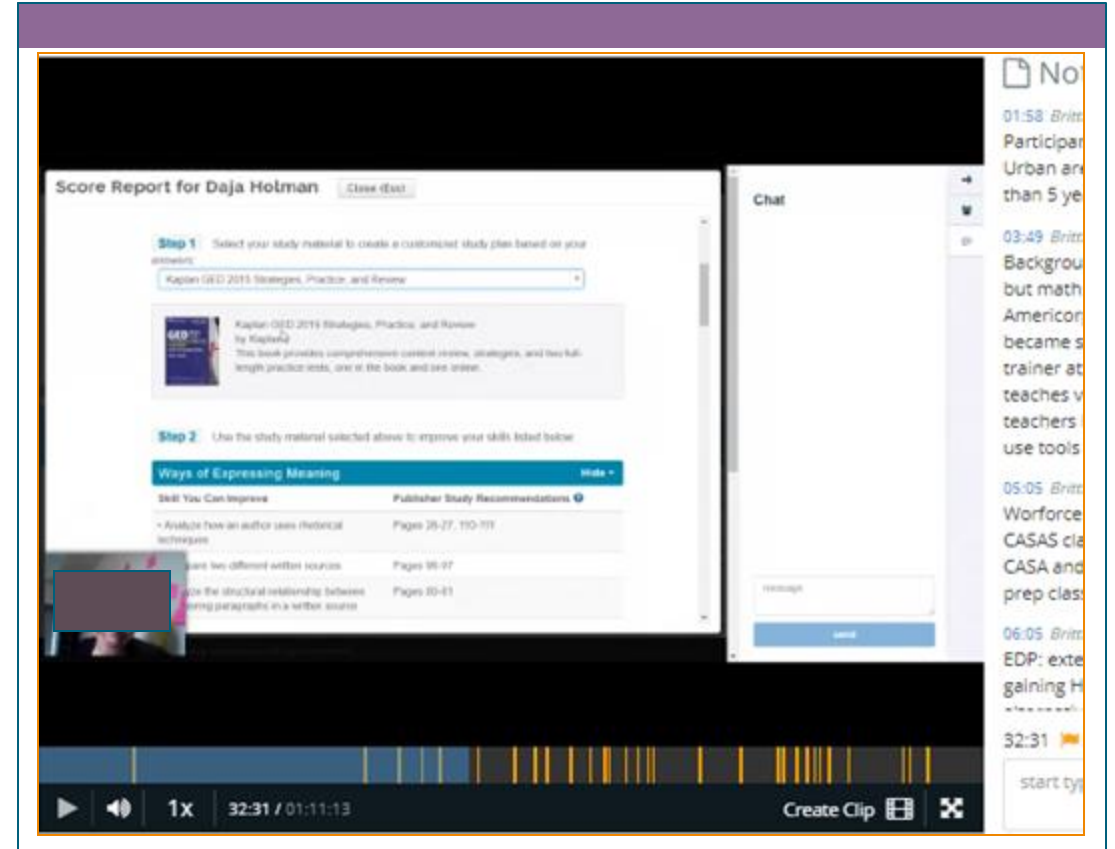
- Educators in a variety of settings
  - Rural with a single, part-time tutor
  - Urban center with a large, multi-role staff
- Individual sessions held remotely
- Geographically dispersed





# 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


## Educators

- Limited educator access to GED Manager™
  - Access Score Report through GED.com
- Corrections and some ABEs have minimal-to-no internet access

## Students

- Ignore email and only read texts
  - Younger students treat email as spam.
- Smart phones are very common
- Some students have minimal-to-no access to computers or internet

# GED Ready® RLA Score Report Prototype




[Home](#)[About the Test](#)[Study](#)[Test Tips](#)[Where to Test](#)[My Scores](#)[College & Careers](#)

SCHEDULE TEST

Chat

Profile



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

TOO CLOSE TO CALL

Date: 12/05/17

100134145200

Not Likely to Pass

Too Close to Call


Likely to Pass

→

My Personal Study Guide

→

My Extended Response



TESTING SERVICE®

30

# 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 ▼

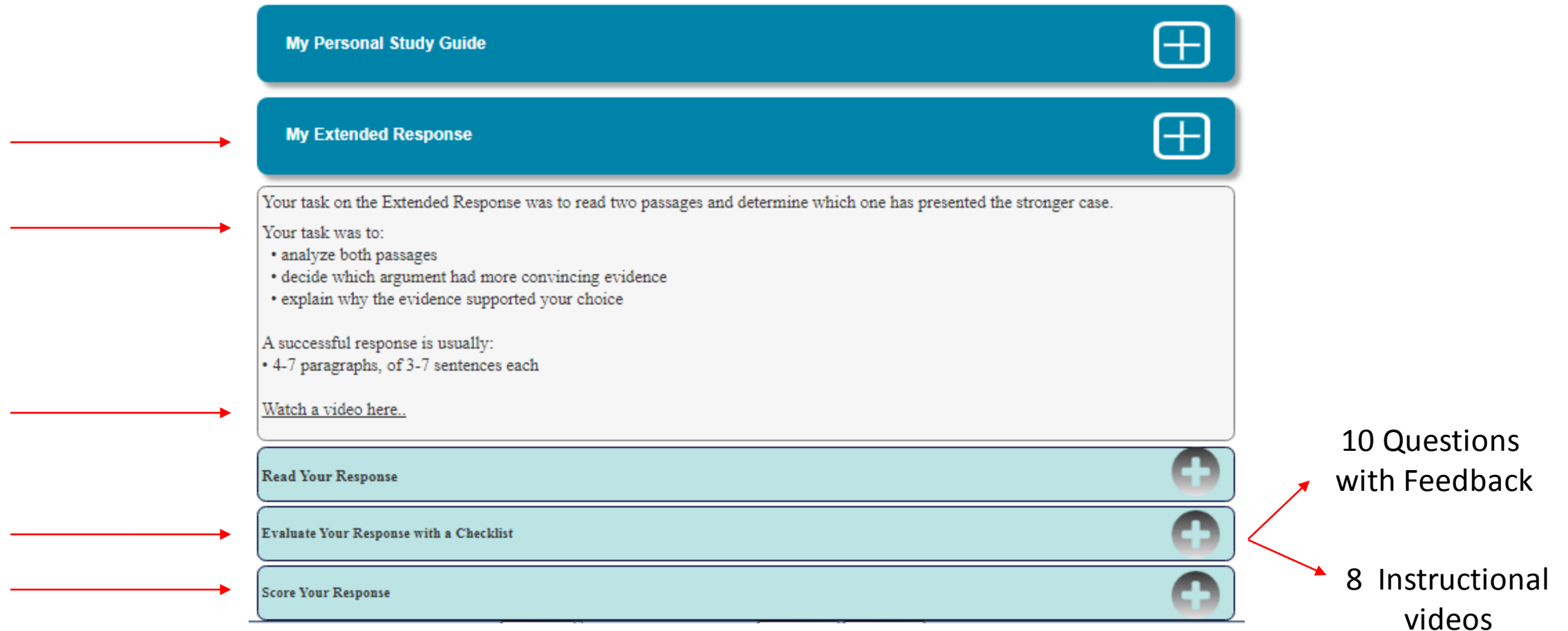
Step 2: See Your Personal Study Guide +

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	• The relationship of evidence to main ideas and details
1.2 Summaries and Inferences	• Identify the relationship between the main ideas and details • Determine the main idea • Identify the theme of a piece of fiction
2.2 Relationship in literary text	• Make inferences about plots, 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
7.5	



# My Extended Response Prototype



# Scoring Tool

*Upcoming Studies*

Score 0		Score 1		Score 2	
Put a mark in this column	makes no clearly-stated claims	Put a mark in this column	makes at least one clearly-stated claim or claims are strongly implied	Put a mark in this column	claims and cle There multip claims
if the test-taker earned a zero in this sub-dimension	attempted or vague claims are illogical and are not text-based	if the test-taker earned a one in this sub-dimension	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	if the test-taker earned a two in this sub-dimension	claims and ba close r text
	attempted or vague claims do not support an overall stance		implied or clearly-stated claims may support an overall stance. Stance may be vague, unclear or inconsistent		explicit suppor consist
	attempted or vague claims lack explanation such that the criteria for analyzing the issue or evaluating argumentation is		at least one claim is explained such that the criteria for analyzing the issue or evaluating the argumentation is		claims such th criteria the iss evalua argu

# 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

[https://ged.com/wp-content/uploads/extended\\_response\\_scoring\\_tool\\_for\\_ged\\_ready.pdf](https://ged.com/wp-content/uploads/extended_response_scoring_tool_for_ged_ready.pdf)

## FUTURE

- Easier to find on redesigned website
- [https://ged.com/educators\\_admins/teaching/classroom\\_materials/er\\_scoring\\_tools/](https://ged.com/educators_admins/teaching/classroom_materials/er_scoring_tools/)
- Include in the Score Report
- Easy to use
- Electronic
- Designed to provide feedback
- See here:  
<https://mygedtsctt.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](mailto: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!

Ann Evers

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