

Online Marking of the GEPT Intermediate Level Writing Test

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Abstract

In order to promote the scoring reliability and efficiency of the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT), the Language Training and Testing Center (LTTC) conducted a trial of an online marking system for the GEPT Elementary Level Writing Test in June 2006 on a (Local Area Network) LAN. In 2007, the LTTC carried out a follow-up study using the same system for the GEPT Intermediate Level Writing Test. The system was operated on a Virtual Private Network (VPN) linking the two marking centers located in Taipei and Kaohsiung.

In this study, we explored the relationship between online marking and traditional conference marking in terms of inter-rater and intra-rater reliability in both settings and the possible benefits of online marking. The results indicate that it is feasible to run online marking on a VPN, but the system did not perform well in paper distribution in the second trial and needs improving and debugging. Raters marked consistently, and there is no significant difference in scores obtained from the two different settings. Two surveys were conducted before and after the online marking session to investigate raters' computer familiarity with the online marking system and their attitude toward using it. Their feedback shows that online marking, with its simplified procedure, is more efficient for marking and monitoring raters' work. Moreover, their valuable insights and practical suggestions will be considered when implementing an online marking environment in the future.