



## What You Need to Know About the 2014 GED® Test

by Jeffrey Elmore

Have you had a chance to peek at what's around the corner with the 2014 GED® test? If you haven't, you're not alone, but the time is here to begin looking at the new test. There are many significant changes, all of which will affect what GED® instructors do in their classrooms. Here's an overview of the new test along with a few links to make it easier for you to dig deeper into the ways our instructional world is changing.

### 2014 GED® Test

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FOR ADULT EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

## THE 2014 GED® TEST

Because we believe in adult learners

Adult learners can't wait to prove they're ready for better jobs, college classrooms, and higher wages. That's why we didn't wait to give them the opportunity.

Don't wait to give your adult learners the opportunity they deserve. Get the facts about the computer-based 2014 GED® test. Visit [GEDtestingservice.com/assessment](http://GEDtestingservice.com/)

High school standards are changing nationwide as career and college-ready standards are adopted. At the same time, the majority of jobs require more than just a high school diploma to apply. GED Testing Service is helping adults achieve both with the 2014 GED® test, launching January 2, 2014, in the U.S.

#### New Test Features:

- Measures current standards for high school equivalency
- Compliant with prevailing state and national standards from day one
- Computer-based system offers online registration and scheduling 24/7, enhanced security, and instant unofficial score reports
- Enhanced score report provides specific information for teachers and test-takers about academic strengths and weaknesses to improve performances
- Provides framework to determine readiness for employment, workforce training programs, and postsecondary education



Mackenzie, 2012 graduate, and her grandmother

### The 2014 GED® exam will be made up of 4 tests:

Science, Social Studies, Math, and Reasoning through Language Arts. Reasoning through Language Arts (RLA) has combined the former Reading and Writing tests into a single test. RLA will be 150 minutes (including a 10-minute break), Mathematical Reasoning 90 minutes, Science 90 minutes, and Social Studies 90 minutes. Each test will score up to 200 points, with a passing score of 150 points. 600 points will be required to pass the entire GED® test.

- [2014 Test FAQs from GEDTS](#)
- [2002/2014 GED® Test Comparison from KET](#)
- [The GED® Test: A Content Comparison Between 2002 and 2014 from GEDTS](#)

**Content of all four new tests is aligned to the Common Core State Standards,** placing emphasis on college and career readiness skills. Expectations for student performance will be aligned to Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK), measuring task complexity as opposed to difficulty. 80% of the test will be at DOK levels 2 or 3, while 20% will be at DOK 1. There will be no items at DOK 4.

*Continued on page 3 ...*

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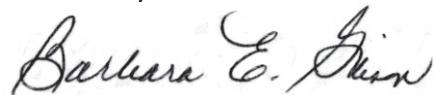
## A Few Words on Progress

**A**s we begin the new school year, the biggest challenge adult educators are facing is the implementation of the 2014 GED® test. We have been hearing about the new GED® test for several years, but now that we are only a few months away from its debut, we are pressed to learn all we can to make the transition from the old tests to the new as seamless as possible.

The challenges presented by the 2014 test are numerous: preparing students to take the test on computer, understanding the Common Core State Standards, teaching reading and writing in new and different ways, addressing higher level math content, beefing up science and social studies instruction. The list could go on, but suffice it to say that adult educators have their hands full—students too. Not only have teachers been scrambling to learn as much as they can in order to plan changes to instruction, but the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) staff have been working diligently to develop training sessions and identify resources that will aid adult educators in transforming their teaching to conform to the new requirements.

In this issue of *Progress*, we have assembled an array of articles that provide current, pertinent information about the 2014 GED® test. Jeffrey Elmore, VALRC Training Coordination Specialist, provides an overview of the most important changes on the new test. Brian Smith, Legislative and Advocacy Manager with GEDTS, answers questions posed by Virginia's adult educators. Debbie Bergholdt, former GED State Administrator, gives an overview of the administrative and organizational changes that have been made in preparation for the new test. Other articles cover the Common Core standards, the new Reasoning through Language Arts section of the test, and other relevant topics. In addition, a question and answer section geared especially for students will be a reference that every GED class should have posted on its bulletin board and every program should make available on its website.

The new test will be launched in January 2014 whether we are ready for it or not, but we are hopeful that by that time we will be not only be ready, but eager to help our students gain the knowledge and skills they need to earn their GED® credentials.



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# What You Need to Know About the 2014 GED® Test

(continued from front page)

- Common Core State Standards
- Webb's Depth of Knowledge (PPT Presentation) from GEDTS
- Webb's Depth of Knowledge (Webinar) from GEDTS

## For the majority of test takers, the 2014 GED® will be available only as a computer-based

**test.** It is NOT an online test! Students will have to report to an official Pearson testing center in order to take the test; they will register and pay for the test using an online system. Computer skills students will need include basic typing and

manipulation of on-screen items using a mouse. This includes using drop-down menus and drag-and-drop, selecting or de-selecting an item by clicking on it, scrolling, and opening and closing embedded items such as the calculator.

- Computer-based Testing Information from GEDTS

**Reasoning through Language Arts will be the longest of the four new tests**, combining content from both reading and writing. 75% of the items will come from informational text, while 25% will come from literature. There will be no poetry on the new test. Reading items will be from 450-900 words in length, and the related questions will require test-takers to evaluate arguments and

analyze information presented to them. There will be a single 45-minute extended response

item that requires test-takers to respond to a text, developing an argument with evidence from that text. The text itself may contain positions from two opposing authors.

- Reasoning through Language Arts (PPT Presentation) from GEDTS
- Reasoning through Language Arts (Webinar) from GEDTS

**The new math test will be 55% algebraic problem solving and 45% quantitative problem solving.** Broken down further, 30% of the test will be algebra using linear equations and expressions, 25% algebra using graphs and functions, 25% quantitative math using rational numbers, and 20% quantitative math involving measurement. The calculator (Texas Instruments TI-30XS) will be an embedded

need to demonstrate significant procedural skill and fluency with the math content. Items will be presented in both academic and workforce contexts. Finally, testing of math skills will not be limited to the math test, as items involving data and statistical evaluation will appear on the Social Studies and Science tests.

- Mathematical Reasoning (PPT Presentation with Notes) from GEDTS
- Information about the On-screen TI-30XS Calculator from GEDTS

**The 2014 GED® Social Studies test** will focus on four content areas: civics and government, 50%; U.S. history, 20%; geography and the world, 15%; and, economics, 15%. Across these four content areas will run two recurring themes: the "development of modern democracy" and "liberties and dynamic responses in societal systems." Social studies practices relating to reading and math comprehension will drive the complexity of questions and align the test with college and career readiness standards. Similar to the RLA test, the social studies test will have a 25-minute extended response item that will require testers to analyze text and support a position with evidence from that text.

- Social Studies (Webinar) from GEDTS

**Last but not least, the GED® Science test** will share design similarities with the social studies test. The science test will focus on three content areas: physical science, 40%; life science, 40%; and earth/space science, 20%. Across these content areas will run two recurring themes: "human health and living systems" and "energy and related systems." Similar to the social studies test, science practices relating to reading and math comprehension and scientific inquiry will drive the complexity of questions aligning the test with college and career readiness standards. Because some items on the science test will incorporate math skills, these questions will have the calculator as an embedded tool. The science test does not have an extended response item; however, there will be short answer and fill-in-the blank questions.

tool. The formulas page (another embedded tool) will change to reflect the content of the

- Science (Webinar) from GEDTS ::

new test. While problem solving continues to be a necessary skill for test takers, they will also

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# Virginia Embraces the 2014 GED® Test

by Debbie Bergholdt



The Virginia Department of Education launched GED® testing on computer in June 2012 with two pilot sites, and one year later, we have 46 centers offering the test on computer. All of our other GED® testing centers are in various stages of implementing the computer-based delivery of the test, including the Virginia Department of Corrections.

Our decision to continue using the GED® test as the officially recognized high school equivalency test in Virginia, rather than consider one of the newly developed alternative credentials, was based on many factors. I've listed some of them below.

- All indications suggest that the 2014 GED® test will be a much improved assessment, not only measuring high school equivalency, as it has always done, but also providing information to adults regarding their mastery of skills to evidence college and career readiness. We believe that the GED Testing Service is working hard to create a new test delivery and assessment system that will fundamentally improve adult education.
- All potential secondary credentialing alternatives to the GED® test are currently in the development stage. And until development is complete and implementation has been piloted and researched, including norming
- To maintain a high level of test security, Pearson VUE testing centers require the use of a web camera and digital signature pad to ensure the integrity of the test and the credential. We do not at this time have information about the security requirements of other alternative tests.
- We believe that Pearson VUE testing centers can provide test takers with the most advanced, highly reliable technology to consistently meet local programs' registration and delivery needs. Local adult education programs report receiving exceptional customer service from Pearson VUE technical support.

procedures, a decision to commit to an alternative assessment other than the GED® test seems premature. The GED® test is a proven assessment, recognized and respected by almost all postsecondary education and training entities and employers alike.

- An alternative high school credential other than the GED® test could easily take years for full recognition as a legitimate credential.
- The GED Option program (ISAEP), which is a GED® credentialing program authorized by GEDTS, would be directly impacted if a testing and credentialing alternative other than the GED® test were to be adopted.
- GEDTS has a mobile option using laptops to deliver the test. Some regions in Virginia, especially rural areas, would benefit greatly from a mobile testing solution because transportation for many adults is an issue. State and regional adult correctional facilities also need a mobile testing option. No other alternative test has this mobile option.

The 46 Pearson VUE computer-based testing centers in Virginia are currently delivering the 2002 version of the GED® test on computer. In addition, most of the centers are offering IT exams (such as CompTIA) and have found that there is a great demand for these certification exams. Extensive planning and preparation for these centers has been in development since GED Testing Service announced the new computer-based (CBT) test. It has required a great deal of coordination with local IT departments to procure the appropriate equipment and configure testing labs, but most programs anticipate being certified to deliver CBT by the beginning of the 2013-2014 program year.

Professional development for GED® examiners and regional program leaders concerning the 2014 GED® test has begun, and a plan for delivering professional development to teachers is being finalized. Many content-specific workshops were offered at this summer's Virginia Institute for



Lifelong Learning conference (VAILL), hosted by Radford University and sponsored by the OAEL. In addition to workshops provided by the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center and other local practitioners, Anthony Chan, a GED® math consultant from Texas, presented a number of workshops. Additional training opportunities will be available throughout the fall and will be advertised over the VAELN listserv. The [GED Testing Service website](#) is a great resource for information about the 2014 test. ■

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Debbie Bergtholdt contributed this article in June 2013, during her tenure as GED State Administrator with the Virginia Department of Education, Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL). Debbie now works as Accommodations Specialist for Pearson, Inc., a parent company of GED Testing Service.



## Take an Online Course from the Resource Center!

### Numeracy in Adult Education (40 hours)

This updated course focuses on mathematical concepts and principles that can be applied to adult learners' life and work situations. Participants will gain an understanding of the difference between teaching for discrete math skills and teaching for numeracy. Implications of the upcoming 2014 series GED® test are also discussed.

### ESOL Basics (32 hours)

Designed for new ESOL instructors, this course introduces participants to the basics of ESOL instruction with adults. Throughout the course, participants interact with peers around the state as well as an experienced facilitator, exploring topics such as characteristics of adult ESOL learners, needs assessment, the four language skills, and lesson planning.

### NEW! VAECP ABE/GED Level I Online (40 hours – 2nd pilot session)

The ABE/GED Instructor strand is the first of the VAECP strands to offer an online option! This highly facilitated online VAECP course incorporates the three sessions of Level I, the afterwork, and the action plan. VAECP Online allows participants to complete an entire level of certification through an interactive online setting consisting of individual work, group work, formative assessment, and reflection with a cohort from various geographical and classroom experience perspectives.

**VAECP Online Prerequisites:** From Intake to Achievement Series: Assessment Policy, Goal-Setting Policy, and TABE Certification; Creation of a Google account

### VALRC Facilitated Online Course Series Registration for Fall 2013: Open now through September 17 Courses begin September 20 and run through November 14.

These courses are available free to adult literacy educators, tutors, and volunteers serving Virginia's learners in programs funded through VADOE OAEL and/or the VLF.

#### Registration for VALRC facilitated online courses is through the *How To Be a Good Online Learner* short course in Blackboard.

To register for *How To Be a Good Online Learner*, go to the [registration page on the VALRC website](#). See the [VALRC website](#) for more course and registration information.

If you have previously completed *How To Be a Good Online Learner* and have been marked as attended in ERO, simply return to the course and complete the appropriate contract.



# The Common Core State Standards: A Primer

by Kate Daly Rolander

Core State Standards (CCSS) for K-12 instruction states have adopted the developed to increase rigor in mathematics and English language arts and to more closely align with college and career readiness. Virginia is one of five states that have not adopted the voluntary CCSS; however, Virginia's field of adult education will need to incorporate elements of the CCSS into instruction in order to prepare learners for the new GED® test.

Two major reasons adult educators will need to pay attention to the Common Core are that, first, the 2014 GED® test is based largely on the CCSS and, second, the U.S. Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) has developed College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education using the CCSS as a foundation. With the Common Core playing such a vital role nationally in both K-12 instruction and adult education standards, it is a good idea to understand what they are and how they have become so important in education across the life span.

## So, what are they?

The CCSS initiative was a state-led effort to develop education standards for mathematics as well as English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Based on empirical research, these standards are aligned to the skills and knowledge that employers and postsecondary educators demand of potential employees and students.

Some important differences between the CCSS and previous sets of standards include:

- the establishment of a nationally recognized set of standards to ensure equal educational benchmarks across states;
- a close alignment with college and work expectations, across all grade levels; and,
- a focus on the application of knowledge through high-order thinking skills.

The last two bullet points above have particular impact on adult education. For our learners to compete in the workforce, they will need instruction that both prepares them for career

**With the Common Core playing such a vital role nationally ... it is a good idea to understand what they are and how they have become so important in education across the life span.**

and postsecondary expectations and also strengthens their high-order thinking skills.

## And what do they look like?

There are two sets of Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts Standards and Mathematics Standards. The two are organized differently but have the same ultimate goal: to prepare students for success in postsecondary education and the workplace.

### English Language Arts (ELA) Standards

The ELA Standards have four strands that together form an integrated approach to literacy: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. These four strands fall under College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards, and for each strand under the CCR standards are grade-specific standards that match one-to-one with CCR standards. These grade-specific standards detail what learners should be able to do at the end of each grade to progress toward the CCR anchor standards.

An example of a CCR anchor standard for the reading strand is: **Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.** This CCR anchor remains the same across all grade levels with grade-specific standards progressing toward this ultimate CCR anchor standard.

Two examples of grade-specific standards under this CCR are:

- Grade 3: **Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison,**

*cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence).*

## Mathematics Standards

- Grades 11-12: **Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy (e.g., The Federalist, presidential addresses).**

For English Language Arts, the goal of the Common Core State Standards initiative is that successful students will:

- demonstrate independence;
- build strong content knowledge;
- respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline;
- comprehend as well as critique;
- value evidence;
- use technology and digital media strategically and capably; and,
- come to understand other perspectives and cultures.

The Mathematics Standards are organized into standards, clusters, and domains (see page 15).

- **Standards** define what students should be able to do and what they should know.
- **Clusters** are groups of related standards.
- **Domains** are larger groups of related standards that progress across grades.

For mathematics, the goal of the CCSS initiative is that successful students will:

- make sense of problems and persevere in solving them,
- reason abstractly and quantitatively,
- construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others,
- model with mathematics,
- use appropriate tools strategically,
- attend to precision,
- look for and make use of structure, and
- look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

**The standards may be accessed freely at the [Core Standards Website](#).**

L.7.3a. Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.											
L.8.1d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.											
L.9-10.1a. Use parallel structure.											

<sup>a</sup>Subsumed by L.7.3a

<sup>b</sup>Subsumed by L.9-10.1a

<sup>c</sup>Subsumed by L.11-12.3a

**PROGRESS:** *25th Volume 2525, No. 2*

# Teaching Reasoning through Language Arts

by Hillary Major

**O**n the 2002 GED® test, writing an essay is a lot like auditioning for a play. A spotlight shines down on the student writer, who struggles through her monologue, perhaps with confidence, perhaps with considerable rambling. The pronoun “I” abounds as she draws from her “personal observations, experience, and knowledge.” Offstage, the room is dark and empty, except for a pair of casting directors (the GED® scorers) who sit in the back row, quickly and silently making their decisions.

Writing an essay (or, if you prefer, an extended constructed response) on the 2014 GED® test will be more like auditioning for a comedy improv team. When the student writer comes on stage, there are already several other actors present, interacting vociferously. The student’s first challenge is to figure out what’s going on; then, she must insert herself into the action. Perhaps she will take sides with one of the actors; perhaps she will play them off against each other, being careful that her comments are both on target with what’s already been said and add something new to the conversation. The performance is still being judged, but now there are more variables to take into account!

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**Students need to be taught step-by-step processes for finding the most important elements in what they've read and putting them in their own words.**

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The 2014 GED® test makes a very deliberate shift from asking for an essay that is essentially an expressive monologue to asking for essays that require the tester to dialogue with other writers and ideas. The writer becomes a participant in an academic conversation: understanding and evaluating others’ viewpoints are important first steps, but ultimately the writer must share her own response to the texts and the issue. While responding in a timed, high-stakes setting to newly encountered reading passages is undeniably a challenge, it also reflects real life. After all, few of us form our opinions out of a vacuum; most of the writing (and talking) we do in our daily lives is in response to things we’ve read, heard, or observed. Students who felt they had nothing to say when prompted to share their personal opinions or experiences

may feel more comfortable writing when they have source texts to draw upon and dialogue with. In this new approach, critical reading and thinking are as important as clear, well-organized writing. This is reflected in the name of the 2014 GED® subject test that will focus on reading, writing, and language skills: “Reasoning through Language Arts.”

Fortunately for teachers, many of the instructional strategies they use to teach personal, reflective writing (teaching brainstorming and transition words, helping students understand how to “unpack” a prompt, using graphic organizers) can also be used to teach students to write text-based arguments. **Writing research also affirms best practices** that many teachers are already leveraging in their classrooms — for example, including pre-writing, giving specific goals for writing assignments, teaching explicit writing strategies, making use of collaborative writing, and giving students access to word processing programs. However, teachers will need to make some changes to prepare their students to perform on the 2014 GED® test. The five strategies described below are particularly relevant to the 2014 test and can help teachers and students begin to make the transition to reasoning through language arts.

## Write more in class.

Time is at a premium in most adult ed classes, but students can’t improve the quality of their writing if they aren’t writing. Even three minutes of dedicated writing time on a regular basis can make a big difference in learners’ comfort with timed writing and in their writing capabilities.

Connect reading and writing by using reading passages as prompts. To ease learners into the habit of writing in response to a text, use a letter to an advice columnist: students will be eager to share their advice and see how it compares to Abby’s or Ann’s or Prudence’s. Make cross-curriculum connections and build background knowledge by introducing texts or multimedia from other subject areas; you might use a YouTube video of a science demonstration, a news clip, historical film footage, a photo, a quote from a historical figure, or a piece of art to spark students’ writing.

Have students keep portfolios of the very short passages they’ve written during these quick writes. Follow up a mini-lesson on grammar or

mechanics by having students look for examples (whether correctly executed or in need of revision) in their own writing. Having portfolios available gives learners choice in which pieces of writing they want to further develop in class and helps them become aware of their growth as writers.

## Teach students to write summaries.

Students need to be taught step-by-step processes for finding the most important elements in what they've read and putting them in their own words. Summaries build reading comprehension as well (and can serve as formative assessment for learners' reading abilities). Here are two of many strategies for teaching summarization:

**1** After reading, have students close their books or turn the article they just finished face-down. Ask them to jot down the 5Ws (who, what, when, where, why) for the passage they just read. Then, ask them to condense their notes into a single-sentence summary. (You might want to give a 20-word maximum length.) Students can work in pairs or small groups to write their summaries. Starting with the 5Ws and requiring a pithy summary sentence encourages students to use their own words instead of copying the author's wording.

**2** After reading, ask students to look back through the passage and circle the ten most important words. Working individually or in small groups, have students summarize the passage using the selected words. (You might ask students to highlight important or unfamiliar words, using two different colors, as they read.) Depending on student level and the length of the reading, you might ask students to select five or even fewer words. This summarization strategy encourages students to incorporate academic vocabulary into their own expressive vocabularies.

## Encourage students to write reviews.

The one-page response paper is a common assignment in college and community college courses. Instructors use it to gauge whether students have actually done the reading as well as to assess their reasoning and reflective skills. The extended constructed response questions on the 2014 GED® test call for a similar set of skills, with the additional layer of complexity that comes in having to evaluate and respond to more than one source text in the same piece of writing. Many of these reasoning skills, however, come into play in a much less daunting piece of writing — the movie review. Reviews typically incorporate summaries but also prompt a learner

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**The 2014 GED® test makes a very deliberate shift from asking for an essay that is essentially an expressive monologue to asking for essays that require the tester to dialogue with other writers and ideas.**

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to take the critical next step of sharing (and explaining) his own opinion.

Students often enjoy the task of looking through movie reviews from different newspapers and websites and coming up with a class list of characteristics that make a good movie review before writing their own reviews. This exercise can help students understand that different types of writing have different "rules" or characteristics, reflect on the importance of audience and purpose, and see the value of revision as they evaluate their reviews against the class-generated list of criteria.

However, published movie reviews, which regularly withhold key information to avoid "spoiling" the film for viewers, can be very different from the types of review found embedded in academic writing. For the purposes of building up to the new GED® essays, you might want to implement a somewhat more structured two-part review, where learners first write a paragraph summarizing the source text and then write a paragraph explaining what they thought about the reading and why.

2002 GED® Test	2014 GED® Test
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Separate Language Arts, Writing and Language Arts, Reading tests</li><li>75% fiction; 25% nonfiction</li><li>Passage length: 200-400 words</li><li>Item types: Multiple choice, essay</li><li>Holistic four-point rubric</li><li>Paper-based</li><li>Writing skills tested only on Writing test</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>One Reasoning through Language Arts test</li><li>75% nonfiction; 25% fiction</li><li>Passage length: 400-900 words</li><li>Item types: Multiple choice, technology-enhanced, and extended response</li><li>Analytic, three-dimension rubric</li><li>Computer-based</li><li>Writing skills tested on Reasoning through Language Arts and Social Studies tests</li></ul>

*Continued on page 12 ...*



# FAQs: What GED® Learners Want to Know

## Q Who can take the GED® (General Educational Development) Test?

You may take the test if you are:

- At least 18 years old and not enrolled in high school OR
- Under 18 and have been released from compulsory school attendance by the local school division or are enrolled in an ISAEAP program.

## Q What is ISAEAP?

Q Individual Student Alternative Education Plan: For more information, contact your local high school counselor or principal.

## Q Where do I go to take the test?

Q To find the location nearest you, visit the VALRC website for a [list of providers](#).

## Q Can I take the test at any location?

Q Yes, you may register and take the test at any Virginia testing site.

## Q How much time does it take to complete the test?

- Taking the battery of five GED® subject tests takes 7 hours and 5 minutes to complete. (The tests are Language Arts, Reading; Science; Mathematics; Social Studies; and Language Arts, Writing.)
- The tests can be given in one or more sittings. Taking the test in two sittings is often recommended.
- Preparation for the test will vary depending on an individual's skill level and dedication to a program of study.

## Q How much does it cost to take the test?

- For the full test battery, the cost is \$58.00 for a first-time test taker; however, registration fees may apply.
- For each non-passed section, the cost to re-take is \$10.00.

## Q What makes a GED® credential "equivalent"?

The GED® credential certifies that the holder has demonstrated 12th-grade-level abilities in

reading, writing, science, social studies, and math. Most universities, colleges, community colleges, and employers in the United States regard a GED® certificate as equivalent to a high school diploma.

## Q What if I don't pass all the tests the first time: do I have to take it all over?

- No, if you took the test after 2002, you may just retest in the areas not meeting the requirements. You should review your test scores with a GED® counselor.
- There is a \$10.00 fee per test.
- A new version of the GED® test will launch on January 1, 2014. All scores prior to this date will be null and void. If you have not passed the test by January 1, 2014, you will need to take the test in its entirety.

## Q Will passing the GED® test get me into college?

According to the College Board (2001), 97% of U.S. colleges and universities accept GED® graduates. You may be required to take placement or achievement tests to determine if you need additional coursework. Please contact the admissions office of the school you are interested in to find out about this.

## Q I got a passing score of 410 on my tests; why didn't I pass?

To pass the complete GED® test, the following must be met:

- The standard score total must be at least 2,250 points.
- The overall test average must be 450 or above.
- The minimum test score is 410 for each test.

## Q How many questions do I need to get right on each of the GED® subject tests to earn the 410 passing score?

To receive a 410 standard score on an individual GED® test, you generally need to answer 60% to 65% of the questions correctly. The number of questions varies from test to test. Remember, an average score of 450 is needed for the five-test battery.

*For more information, visit [the Virginia GED website](#) or call 1-877-37-MY-GED (1-877-376-9433).*

## **Q I'm under 18 and have been court ordered to take the test; what is required?**

If you are under 18, you must follow the rules of your local school division. Please contact at least one of the following for further assistance:

- Your local high school counselor or principal for information about alternative programs
- Your local school board or Superintendent for a letter of release from compulsory attendance

## **Q How many times can I take the test?**

Each part can be taken 3 times over the course of one calendar year.

## **Q Do I have to take classes before I take the test?**

No, anyone 18 years or older who is not enrolled in school may take the GED® test. However, you are encouraged to take an Official Practice Test to assess your readiness prior to taking the official GED® test.

## **Q How long will it take me to get my test results?**

- Unofficial test results can be reviewed within 2 to 3 days; however, the essay results will take extended time.
- Official scores or certificate will be mailed to the address indicated on the test form. It takes approximately ten days to receive your scores. If you do not receive your results within two weeks, please contact the office where you registered to take the test.

## **Q What accommodations are available for people with disabilities?**

For learners with a documented disability, test accommodations are available. Each request is considered on an individual basis. To begin the process of requesting an accommodation, a GED® candidate should go to the GED® registration site to request the appropriate forms, or visit the [GED website page for students with disabilities](#). for further information. Some accommodations do not require prior approval. **Note:** Accommodation requests for the 2002 series GED® test must be completed and approved by November 1, 2013.

## **Q How do I register for the test?**

You must:

- Register in person or online at [GED123](#).
- Show a current valid official government picture ID.
- Pay at the time of registration.

## **Q What will the essay topic ask me to do?**

### **Q Can I find out what topics have been used on past writing tests?**

You will be asked to write on a topic of general interest. The topics are brief and generally ask the candidates to state their views and support them with examples from their own observation, knowledge, and/or experiences. Sample topics can be found in GED® study guides and on the Official Practice Test.

## **Q How long will it take me to get my GED® credential?**

It depends on your skill level. You should take the Official Practice Test to determine your readiness. Classes and study guides are available to help you prepare.

## **Q Is the GED® test given in any other language?**

The GED® test is given in three languages: English, French, and Spanish. Check with your GED® testing site for further information and scheduling. If your local testing site does not offer the test in your language of choice, you may wish to contact other nearby testing sites

## **Q My Language Arts, Writing test was not scored even though I took the test; what does that mean?**

When a test taker does not score a 2 or better on the essay, the multiple-choice section of the writing test is not scored and no score is reported for the Language Arts, Writing test. An asterisk (\*) on a GED® transcript indicates that the essay was off-topic; two asterisks (\*\*) indicates that the essay scored less than a 2. In either case, the candidate is required to retest on both parts of the writing test.

## **Q Can students enrolled in school take the GED® test?**

Generally, no, unless the student is enrolled in the ISAEP program. Other alternative education options under certain guidelines may qualify a student to take the test.

# Teaching Reasoning through Language Arts

(continued from page 9)

It can be difficult to get busy adults to find time for homework; take advantage of their leisure interests by asking them to review a TV show they watch during the week. Encourage out-of-class reading by featuring student-written book or article reviews in the regional newsletter or on a program bulletin board, website, or blog. Experiment with incentives by awarding a raffle ticket for each review a learner completes as extra practice and hold periodic drawings for a set of movie tickets, a bookstore gift card, a gas or grocery card, or other donated items. For a project-based approach, classes can collaborate on a project to review area businesses and service agencies or online resources for adult learners; collect their work on a blog, wiki, or Google doc that can be shared with others in the program and community.

## Allow more time for discussion.

Class time spent talking is not time wasted! To build the reasoning skills needed to back up opinion with fact, distinguish a strong argument from a weak one, and find the “holes” in a writer’s evidence, most learners will need to talk it through.

To write the kind of responses demanded by the 2014 GED® test, students will need to not only identify a writer’s argument, but decide whether it’s a good one. There are many criteria that can be used to evaluate arguments, but learners will need practice in stopping to consider questions like these: Is the source of the evidence reliable? Is there enough evidence? Is it really relevant to the writer’s claim? Does it seem reasonable, or is the writer using logical fallacies (like appealing to the reader’s emotions, citing celebrities instead of more qualified experts, or cherry-picking statistics that aren’t typical)?

Give small groups of learners examples of strongly supported and weakly supported arguments; ask them to determine which is which and explain why. Students tend to remember strategies that they’ve “discovered” for themselves — and they can learn as much (or more) from “bad” examples as “good” ones.

Make the most of class time with brief “Think. Pair. Share.” activities that encourage even shyer learners to dialogue and practice reasoning skills. Make an extra effort in all subject areas to ask open-ended questions and press students to explain their thinking.

Embed critical thinking in all levels of instruction: Students don’t need to be skilled

writers to share an opinion or back it up with evidence. Students who can’t yet read complex texts on their own can listen to audio clips, discuss videos, or delve into the deeper implications of simple texts. Encourage self-monitoring by having students periodically discuss their own and their peers’ work using the same criteria they apply to published writing.

## Use writing frames.

“Frames” look like simple fill-in-the-blank exercises, but they can help push student writing to the next level. With some of the formal wording provided for them, students are free to focus on their own ideas. A frame or sentence starter like “When comparing the two positions in this

article, \_\_\_\_\_ provides the clearest evidence that\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ prompts the student to think, giving him the freedom to share his original ideas while familiarizing him with sophisticated academic phrasing and vocabulary.

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**To build the reasoning skills  
needed to back up opinion with fact,  
distinguish a strong argument from  
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Frames can be as short as a few words or could encompass an entire paragraph. They can be used with any genre of writing – argument, sequence, cause/effect, summary, even thank-you or excuse notes – and with lower level and higher level learners. (The short book *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, first published in 2008, was written with first-year college students in mind but has been used in many K-12 contexts and is relevant for writers at all levels. The authors give many examples of sentence frames and also discuss aspects of text-based arguments like starting with what others are saying, summarizing, quoting, distinguishing what you say, and saying why it matters.) Frames can prompt writers to include important but often overlooked elements in their writing, introducing a counter-argument or explaining a quote, thus bolstering their “creation of arguments and use of evidence” and “development of ideas and organizational structure,” two of the three traits scored on the



2014 extended response rubrics.

Students need multiple opportunities to practice with a writing frame in order to be able to internalize some of the language and apply it in a testing situation, just as they need many chances to practice writing summaries and reviews or discussing evidence. By choosing interesting content from social studies, science, workplace, and literature contexts; making selections tailored to student interests; and encouraging students to bring in materials they want to discuss, teachers can help make this practice engaging and energizing for students as they prepare for star performances on the 2014 GED® test. ■

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Hillary Major is VALRC Publications and Communications Specialist.

**Figure 4. Frames From *They Say/I Say* by Graff and Birkenstein (2010)**

**Introducing what they say (p. 23)**

- It has become common today to dismiss \_\_\_\_\_.

**Making what they say something you say (p. 25)**

- Although I should know better by now, I cannot help thinking that \_\_\_\_\_.

**Agreeing—with a difference (p. 66)**

- I agree that \_\_\_\_\_ because my experience \_\_\_\_\_ confirms it.

**Agreeing and disagreeing simultaneously (p. 65)**

- Though I concede that \_\_\_\_\_, I still insist that \_\_\_\_\_.

**Making concessions while still standing your ground (p. 89)**

- Although I grant that \_\_\_\_\_, I still maintain that \_\_\_\_\_.

**Establishing why your claims matter (p. 99)**

- Ultimately, what is at stake here is \_\_\_\_\_.

The **TEAL Just Write! Guide** gives information on research-based writing instruction and general instructional practice for adult education. It includes a section on using writing frames. You can also find examples of frames [here](#). For practice with and more information about the writing strategies featured in this article and other writing strategies to help learners prepare for the 2014 GED® test, look for VALRC's face-to-face Write. Read. Think. and Teaching Strategies for Extended Response Items on the 2014 GED® Test trainings.

## Websites for Building Typing Skills

As students build word processing skills to prepare for computer-based testing, there are many online resources that can help. The list below is a selection of links featured on the **Virginia GED® website**.

- [Typing Web](#)
- [Typing Games](#)
- [Web Solutions for Improving Typing Skills](#)
- [Speed Typing Online](#)



YOUR FUTURE  
IS CALLING

**Don't forget that GED® Brand Central offers resources for the Closeout Campaign for the 2002 series GED® test.**

**Call volume will be high this fall and throughout 2013. Print out the FAQs on pages 10-11 of this issue and share them with any staff who will be helping answer your program's phone lines and with referral agencies.**



# Before-During-After with Online Resources

by Victoire Gerkens Sanborn and Hillary Major

Whether working with literacy level adults or GED® learners, teaching with technology requires preparation. Following a BDA, or Before-During-After, model can help instructors remember to focus on learning outcomes, not just on the *how-tos* of online activities or tools.

**Before** a class session, choose an activity that is timely and relevant. Make sure it fits learners' skills and needs and aligns with their learning goals. Practice so that you are comfortable with the website or online activity.

Well before class, turn on computers and make sure that they are in working order and connected to the Internet. (Make sure the website you will be using is working and not blocked!) Ideally, use a projector and screen for group demonstration.

**Before** the online lesson or activity, remind students of previous lessons and make connections to what they will be learning today. Ask students what they already know about today's topic. Let them look at the site and predict what information they will find there.

## GCFLearnFree.org

With [GFC Learn Free](#), Goodwill Community Foundation "creates and provides quality, innovative online learning opportunities to anyone who wants to improve the technology, literacy, and math skills needed to be successful in work and life." Userfriendly and up-to-date technology tutorials range from "Email 101" to Microsoft "Word 2013".

**During** the lesson, set your students up for success by explicitly modeling how to use the site, going over each step clearly. If students have trouble following, repeat the demonstration. In addition, provide students with clearly written instructions that they can follow as they are watching you or working on their own; include screen shots. Depending on the activity and the level of your students, you may want to pre-teach some vocabulary.

While students work independently, give them plenty of time to practice. Walk around the room to answer questions, remind them of steps they may have missed, or help with reading information on the monitor. Be sure to

## Sites for Creating Online Content

- [Google Docs](#)
- [Google Sites](#)
- [Weebly](#)
- [Blogger](#)
- [WordPress](#)
- [Edublogs](#)
- [VoiceThread](#)
- [Prezi](#)
- [Blendspace](#)
- [PBWorks](#)

intervene if learners seem stuck; don't let them reach frustration level. Some students will be faster than other: use them as mentors to help those who are lagging behind.

**After** the activity, give students time to discuss what they have learned. Focus on the content first. Then, discuss how the experience might have been improved. (Was the skill level too easy or difficult? Was there enough time for practice?) Before assigning homework or outside-of-class practice, ask learners if they feel comfortable using the site on their own.

If at all possible, provide learners with contact information for immediate technical assistance outside of class. (Once facilitator told her class, "Call for help at any time, but don't call to whine.")

As learners become more comfortable online, encourage small groups to discover websites and tools on their own. Monitor groups and provide assistance where needed. Invite tech-savvy learners to lead the class demonstration of a website or recommend online resources. ::

Victoire Gerkens Sanborn is Literacy Specialist and Hillary Major is Publications and Communications Specialist at VALRC.

## Science and Social Studies Content

- [Sick! Science experiment YouTube videos](#)
- [Smithsonian Magazine](#)
- [History Channel](#)
- [American Rhetoric speeches](#)

# The Common Core State Standards: A Primer

(continued from page 7)

## How do the Common Core State Standards affect adult education?

Two major developments in the field of adult education are directly linked to the development of the Common Core State Standards: the 2014 GED® test and the College and Career Readiness

Standards, released this year by the U.S.

- Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

The new GED® test has been developed to more closely align with the skills and knowledge expected of today's high school graduates,

shaped by the Common Core. The new test also shares the same ultimate goal as the CCSS:

to indicate readiness for career and college.

To ensure that a GED® credential reflects the same rigor and depth of knowledge as a high school diploma, test developers used the Common Core as a foundation. The GED Testing Service created **assessment targets** to focus the content in the CCSS for adult learners. Two overarching implications for instruction are that the test will require learners to have more background content knowledge, especially in science and social studies, and that learners will need to be able to apply concepts and use high-order thinking skills to answer test questions.

Additionally, in response to the wide-spread adoption of the CCSS, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education compiled selected standards from the CCSS to develop College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. This effort was prompted by an urgent need to prepare adults for an increasingly competitive

workforce that requires a higher-level skill set and an ability to demonstrate twenty-first century skills, like critical thinking, teamwork, and problem solving.

## Adult Education Resources

### [College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education](#)

- [Kentucky Adult Education's Guide to the Common Core Standards](#):

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*Kate Daly Rolander is VALRC Instructional Specialist. She provides technical assistance to PluggedInVA programs around the state.*

**Number and Operations in Base Ten****3.NBT****Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic.****Standard**

1. Use place value understanding to round whole numbers to the nearest 10 or 100.
2. Fluently add and subtract within 1000 using strategies and algorithms based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction.
3. Multiply one-digit whole numbers by multiples of 10 in the range 10-90 (e.g.,  $9 \times 80, 5 \times 60$ ) using strategies based on place value and properties of operations.

**Cluster**

# 2014 GED® Test: Your Questions Answered

In Spring 2013, VALRC asked program managers to share some of the questions about the 2014 GED® test that they would most like to ask the GED Testing Service (GEDTS). In August, Progress editor Hillary Major talked to Brian Smith, Legislative and Advocacy Manager with GEDTS, to ask those questions and more.

**Thanks for joining me, Brian. One of the first questions that our managers asked is: When will the 2014 GED® test be normed, and when will the field be getting information about the cut-off scores for both credential tiers?**

The standardization and norming study is going on right now, this August, and I think it will be wrapping up soon. We let hundreds of graduating high school seniors from throughout the country take the test, and a panel made up of a diverse group of stakeholders will be looking at that feedback and using it to set passing scores. Probably in late fall we'll be releasing more information about scores.

**Is it still accurate to describe the 2014 test as having two credential tiers, a college-and-career ready tier and a basic passing tier?**

Let me clarify that. All the states will still be using the high school equivalency pass score for awarding the GED® certificate or high school equivalency degree. That score will be based on the norming study that we're doing right now, and usually we set that so that around 60% of graduating high school seniors would pass and around 40% wouldn't. That high school equivalency level is still going to be the score you need to pass the GED® test.

The other "level" is going to be called "GED® with Honors." Our panel will set that score at what they think will be a score that indicates the tester will be able to go into credit-bearing classes or a job training program and be successful. We're still figuring out what that score will be, but "GED® with Honors" will be marked on the regular GED® transcript for any of the tests where an individual achieves that higher score; testers will not get a different "GED® with Honors" certificate or diploma.

**That ties into another question: Is GEDTS working at the national level to encourage colleges and community colleges to accept the GED® with Honors score as a college placement test?**

That's something that will be part of our research agenda going forward. Obviously, on our end, we need to demonstrate to colleges that someone who does reach the honors level goes on to be successful. So what we'll be doing in 2014 and beyond is following our graduates who reach that level to see how successful they are, making sure that "GED® with honors" really does show that they are college and career ready.

We're definitely in conversations with college groups and community college associations throughout the country. I think it's going to take time for us to show them that "GED® with Honors" could be a replacement for the sorts of placement exams they are using now, but it's something we hope we'll be able to demonstrate to them in the future, 2014 and beyond.

**Several programs asked about how long you anticipate the computer-based testing fee will remain at the current level.**

We're committed to that price in 2014 and 2015, and that's as far as we've released the price for the test.

**What do you recommend that teachers do to prepare to instruct the material on the 2014 test?**

There's a lot that they should be doing to become aware of the changes. Some of the material will be the same, stuff that they're already teaching, but there is a lot that's different. We've been releasing more information on our website. The **Assessment Guide**, which I definitely encourage everyone to look at, has really detailed information on what's new for all four sections of the 2014 test. We also have a [self-paced] **eight-week class** that I recommend, which takes about two weeks per each section to walk educators through what's different on the new test and what's the same as the current series. That's a free tutorial class our website.

We're also working with a consortium of groups, including the U.S. Department of Education, the National Center for Family

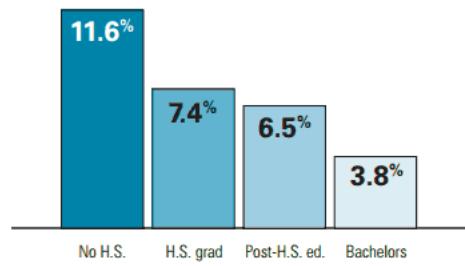
Literacy, and the Corrections Association, to do train-the-trainer sessions at conferences; we've had representatives from all the states come be trained, and they've gone back to train other educators within the state. So, I encourage teachers to seek out people who have been part of those trainings. [Editor's note: Virginia representatives, including VALRC's Jeffrey Elmore, have attended GEDTS training sessions; much of the information from those sessions is incorporated into VALRC GED®-focused trainings.] GEDTS also has staff who are going to be at state conferences and who have been attending them for the past year and a half, talking to adult educators about the changes and how they need to change to prepare for the 2014 test.

I will also say we know that 50% of our test takers don't go through adult education classes. So, we've been working really closely with about fourteen to sixteen publishers to make sure they understand the new test and can get materials online and available for those who are going to be studying by themselves. You can find all of those publishers' materials through the link to the **GED Marketplace** on our website.

So, there are a lot of resources out there. It is going to take some work to learn about the changes, but we think everyone has a role in making sure that teachers are getting up to speed. At GEDTS, we've been working to try to make sure that everyone understands the changes to the test and that there are plenty of resources out there to help individuals get prepared for the new test.

**Beyond the specific content and format changes, it strikes me that the Common Core State Standards basis of the new test potentially calls for some changes in classroom instruction. Has GEDTS been talking about any changes that affect adult ed practice?**

#### The Least Educated are the Most Unemployed



▲ Unemployment rate for those without a high school diploma compared to those with a high school degree, with some college or an associate's degree, and with a bachelor's degree (June 2013 seasonally adjusted)

Yes. Something we've heard and the reason that's driving the development of the 2014 test is that we need to make sure that adults have the skills to be successful. We need to do right by our adults so that they're successful in going to college and in careers. The feedback we heard – and the basis of the Common Core standards – is that adults need to have better problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills. These are the types of skills that are most applicable in the workforce, and questions targeting these skills make up a lot of what's different on the 2014 test. In the writing section, you'll have to write, cite a text, and really support your claims with evidence, which is different from our old test where you just had to sort of write. But the 2014 test makes a big change in moving to test the skills that demonstrate who's going to be most successful in the workplace. We're trying to do right by our adults and make sure that we're testing the types of skills that they need in order to be successful and have a chance to get a good job.

I haven't been involved in the specific trainings on new content changes but I think that at the core what people have had to change and really focus on is teaching GED® potential test takers about the new sorts of problems that are going to be on the test: how do they solve them, and especially how do they look at a situation and think about it critically in order to solve a problem?

**Many programs have expressed concerns because they anticipate their older adult learners, including those affected by layoffs and who often have limited technology skills, being negatively impacted by the computer-based format. What do you have to say to address these concerns?**

Well, first of all, we're definitely aware of these concerns. But, what we're trying to do is prepare our adults for success in finding a good job and in the workforce. We feel strongly that basic technology skills are a requirement for any job. In order to apply for a job, in order to even look for a job, you need to be able to use a computer; there's really no job out there where you don't have to understand basic technology skills. So we're doing everything we can, including computer-based testing, in order to

*Continued on page 18 ...*

# 2014 GED® Test: Your Questions Answered (continued from page 17)

give adults a fighting chance and a best shot when they go on to something else. We know nowadays that passing the GED® test or just getting a high school credential isn't enough in order to get a good job with a good wage; you need something else, whether it's community college, a certificate program, or a job training program, to be successful, and you need to have basic technology skills.

I will say that, before we implemented computer-based testing, we did a comparability study and user ability study where we heavily over-sampled older adults or adults who said that they were less familiar with technology. And they were all able to finish on time and type the essay on time, and they passed at the same rates on computer as they passed on paper.

**The overwhelming feedback is that computer-based is just a much easier testing environment.**

Furthermore, I want to point out that we've done over 100,000 computer-based tests for the past year and a half, and the results are pretty great. We find that testers are passing at much higher rates, 88% on computer versus 71% on paper; they're much more likely to retake a test; they're 60% more likely to retake a test if they didn't pass it on computer than they are on paper; and they're finishing much faster. (This is representative of all races and all age groups, too; it's not just the 19-year-olds who are taking the test on computer.)

The overwhelming feedback is that computer-based is just a much easier testing environment. If you only want to take one test, you set it up that way; if you want to take all 5 you can. It's flexible. Anecdotally, we've heard from test takers that the paper-based set-up was much more stressful because you were in a room where it was "pencils down" all at the same time; if everyone else in the room was done and they were looking at you, you got nervous about it. On computer-based testing, you start when you're ready, and if you finish a test, you can move on to the next one. It's self-paced and it's much easier.

I was talking with a testing center in Jacksonville, Florida, which offered both paper and computer testing, and there was even a price difference between the two. I think it was \$70 on paper and \$120 on computer. The examiner

said it was overwhelming, something like 80% or 85% of the people who came in chose to take the computer-based version. When they were told they could take the test on computer and get scores instantly or take it on paper and get scores in six weeks, this was a no-brainer.

So, while we've definitely heard the concerns that older adults or adults who are less familiar with technology are going to be disadvantaged, we've made sure that we've really looked at the issue. We've found that they can take this test and, furthermore, we're really trying to make sure that our adults are successful in their next steps. We feel strongly that the very basic technology skills on the GED® test – typing an essay, moving a mouse, clicking, drop and drag – are those adults will need to be successful in the workforce.

**A very specific question about computer-based testing came up during our summer institute. We heard at one point that students would have erasable whiteboards, and then we heard that scrap paper would be allowed. In the testing situation, do you know specifically what students will be able to use to make notes and jot their thoughts on?**

I know that's gone back and forth. I've checked with our assessment people, and they tell me that **erasable noteboards** will be used. Testers will be able to get a second board if they need one, but they'll have to turn in the original board first. (They will only have access to one noteboard at a time.)

**I've seen a few examples of extended response prompts and responses, but I haven't yet seen any extensive sets of responses. Do you anticipate that educators will be able to eventually have access to sample responses at different score points on the extended response rubrics to get a more complete sense of how those rubrics are going to be used?**

Yes; those will definitely be coming out. A detailed version should be out in September.

And, as I've said, we've been working with around fourteen publishers to put out materials about the new test; the extended response items will definitely be a part of it. Roughly speaking, the timeframe for that is this fall. Up until now, a lot of the focus has been on getting people through the 2002 series.



**The scoring of the extended response is of course causing a lot of discussion, and I know some organizations, like the National Council for Teachers of English, have expressed concerns about machine scoring. Does GEDTS have a response to concerns over computer scoring?**

I haven't seen the National Council of Teachers of English's statement, so we don't have an official response to that. What I can tell you in relation to the artificial intelligence scoring for the essays for the 2014 test is that we input thousands and thousands of essays into the computer so that the machine can figure out how score them. Initially, in 2014, we will be making sure that some of the responses are also being scored by hand to verify that the artificial intelligence is getting it right. We're very conscious that this important, and we will have hand scorers making sure that everything is right for the beginning of the 2014 series. I will also say that the feedback I've heard is that the artificial intelligence is often more reliable than hand scorers.

[Editor's note: Following our phone conversation, Brian Smith shared **this statement** about constructed response scoring from the GEDTS assessment team. Of particular interest is the statement that "an automatic rescore process is being implemented. This process flags tests that have a failing score within a predetermined margin, such that if the CR (constructed response) scores on the test would have been higher, the final score result would have changed from 'fail' to 'pass.' The CR responses on these flagged tests will also be automatically routed to human scorers for evaluation so that the results from the automated scoring engine can be confirmed or adjustments made."]

### **Can you tell me more about the Educator Portal?**

Yes. I'm glad you asked about that. The portal is really exciting; if you want to, you can read more in the **PowerPoint I sent** that talks about our new services.

So, the heart of the new GED® test is going to be the new tools we're providing. Part of our thinking with the new test is that all of our research told us that we can't do just a test: we need to create a GED® program and provide other tools if we're really going to give our adults a fighting chance and a good shot to be successful at the next step. And in research with our test takers, one of the things they told us was that it would be great if there was one place to go for

**MyGED portal provides one standard place to find study tools, local adult education centers, publisher materials, practice tests, test registration, and information about next steps.**

information. With paper-based testing, they're going online to find information, they're calling all the different testing centers to find a time to test, calling around to find an adult education class or going to libraries to try to find material ... there's no set area where they can find all the information they need to prepare, take the GED® test, and find the next step, whether it's going on to college or a job training program.

MyGED portal provides one standard place for everyone to find all the information they need. Once they register there, they'll go into My Portal and be able to find all their study tools. They'll be able to find the adult education centers in their area, and they'll be able to directly order specific publisher materials to help them study for the test. They'll be able to take a practice test through the MyGED portal that will provide the same conditions as those of the regular test so they'll be able to understand if they're ready to pass.

One of the new benefits of the 2014 test that you might be aware of is that testers will get detailed feedback when they take the test, and they'll also be able to get that detailed feedback on the practice test. It'll say, "These are the skills you've mastered; these are the skills you need to work on." We think that's going to be really critical. Right now, if students don't pass the test, a lot of the time they'll say they don't know why; they just know that they got a 400 and need to get a higher score. With the new test, we'll be able to say, "Hey, you've mastered algebra, but you really need to work on geometry in order to pass this test." That's a huge benefit.

Also, once adults are ready to schedule and take the test, they can do that through the portal. It will pull up all the testing centers in their area.

The other cool thing is that we're going to be able to work with states to put in information for them on the back end for individuals once they've passed the test. We'll be able to say, "These are the community colleges in your area; these are the job training programs in your area that you might be interested in."

*Continued on back page ...*

# 2014 GED® Test: Your Questions Answered (continued from page 19)

People take the GED® test because they want a better job and they want a better wage. And now we'll be able to build information into the MyPortal so that potential testers will be able to see at the beginning, "If I want to be an HVAC technician, this is what it pays; these are the jobs that are available here; this is the path." It will show them that the GED® test is a stepping stone on that path but that they'll need something after that, maybe a couple of community college classes or a job training program. They'll understand at the beginning that more is required, and they can set their expectations then. We think this is going to dramatically improve the information that test takers have and the success they'll have.

## So a student will be prompted to create a MyGED portal account whenever she or he looks for or signs up for the computer-based test?

Yes.

## It looks like the educator side will allow teachers to see information like the score report diagnostic for their students. How is that educator side going to work?

We really want MyGED portal to be a better, learner-centric system, and we want the educator portal to connect with that. I know we're still working out how educators will gain access and what permissions test takers will need to give for educators to see their records. Our focus right now is on the test taker side of MyGED portal; the educator side will be in development in 2014 and beyond.

## Will there be a version of the practice test that educators take or see?

Yes. In September, we'll be releasing a practice test that instructors will be able to print off to see the types of questions that will be on the 2014 test.

Then there will be the official GED Ready, the practice test that you take through the portal and that gives detailed feedback and mimicsexactly how test takers will experience the GED® test when they sit down at a GED® testing center and take the official test on computer. The GED Ready comes out in November.

## What's the central message that you would like adult ed teachers and program managers to take from the testing service as they continue to prepare for the 2014 transition?

I want them to know that everything we're doing is focused on improving outcomes and giving our test takers a better shot at success. You know, we think the current test served its purpose, but it's a changing time; the landscape of adult education and the economy have changed. We really want to give our adults a better shot to be successful and to find a better job that pays a better wage. That's what this is all about.

And we realize that you can't just do that with a test; it needs to be a GED® program. And that's what we're really focusing on and unveiling in 2014: a whole GED® program. It includes the MyGED portal; it includes GED Analytics so the state can really slice and dice and look at all of the pertinent testing information; it includes the GED Ready test that gives testers detailed feedback so they know what they need to study; it includes that really detailed score report that will give more information to colleges and job programs so that both they and adults understand the skills mastered and the skills that need to be worked on in order to get to the college and career readiness level. We're changing what we measure so that what we're actually measuring on the test is reflective of the skills adults need to be successful in the workforce. On the back end, we're providing links and information to help adults transition, so they know how to go on to a community college program or a certificate program, so they can get those middle skills jobs that are available in this economy and that pay a better wage. So what I really want adult educators to know is that GEDTS is focused on providing a comprehensive program that we think will benefit our test takers. ::

