

**DO THE SCORES MEAN THE SAME
THING IF WE USE THE
COMPUTER?**

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Abstract

Comparability refers to the commonality of score meaning across testing conditions including delivery modes, computer platforms, and the means of scoring constructed-response items. As education agencies introduce online tests and use technology to grade responses to open-ended test questions, score comparability becomes important. For example, it should be a matter of indifference to the examinee whether the test is administered on computer or paper, whether it is taken on a large-screen display or a small one, or whether an examiner grades the paper the response was originally written on or a digitized image of that response. To the extent that test results are invariant across such conditions, scores may be used interchangeably. This presentation explores the comparability issues related to online assessment among students at the k12 and post-secondary levels, and reviews the available research.