

Title of Project:

Product and process in TOEFL iBT independent and integrated writing tasks: A validation study

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Abstract:

This study will compare TOEFL iBT integrated writing (writing from source materials) with independent writing (writing from prompt only) by exploring written products as well as writing processes. In analyzing written products, data provided by Educational Testing Service (ETS) will be used. 240 test takers responded to the two tasks. Using indices from Coh-Metrix (an automated text analysis tool), statistic analysis will be performed to determine whether linguistic features of the essays vary with the task type, essay scores, and academic experience of the test takers. In analyzing writing processes, 20 English as a second language students will participate in think-aloud writing sessions and post-session interviews. The same writing tasks used in the textual analysis section will be used. The processes will be coded for writing episodes and compared across the two writing tasks. Furthermore, the processes will be examined in relation to the essay scores and the academic experience of the participants. Results to be yielded by the proposed study will help to illustrate whether TOEFL iBT integrated and independent writing tasks are eliciting similar or different written products and writing processes, providing evidence about construct inherent in the two tasks. Such information is vital to validate the integrated and the independent tasks, particularly in justifying the concurrent use of them on the writing test.