

Comparative Judgment of direct writing assessment asks raters to select the better of two essays instead of rating each one individually with a rubric. In this study, experienced and novice raters used both approaches and found CJ to be a viable option when used in conjunction with anchored essays.

Traditional rubric rating is a standard approach to direct writing assessment (Park, 2004), yet it is a highly resource-intensive rating method. An alternative, potentially less expensive rating method called Comparative Judgment (CJ), may offer a more practical approach with comparable results. The CJ model was first proposed in 1927 by L.L.

Thurstone but required extensive paper shuffling and onerous mathematical procedures. Randomly Distributed Comparative Judgment (RDCJ), made possible through computer algorithms, requires fewer resources than traditional rubric rating, and shows promising results in terms of reliability and validity. This session presents results of a comparative study. Using 60 essays that had been previously double rubric-rated, analyzed with many facet Rasch modeling (MFRM), and selected using stratified random sampling, we employed two groups of raters: novice ( $n=8$ ) and experienced ( $n=8$ ). We compared the results of these two groups against initial ratings while additionally collecting and comparing data regarding the amount of time spent to complete each rating session. RDCJ produced highly reliable results comparable to traditional methods (MFRM  $r=.97$ ; RDCJ  $r=.92$ ), and significant correlations with initial ratings (MFRM  $r_s=.95$ ; RDCJ  $r_s=.93$ ), with fewer training requirements and shorter rating times. Additionally, the RDCJ approach is more transferable to novel assessment tasks while still providing context-specific scores.

Results from this study can guide writing programs in identifying rating models best suited to their specific needs. This presentation briefly reviews relevant research, reports on study results, outlines potential uses for RDCJ, and provides practical hands on experience using RDCJ to rate ESL writing. In addition to relevant research and study findings, attendees will receive an introduction to RDCJ, instruction in its use, and access to free online RDCJ software.