

Design Considerations
Article 5

Stover, Del, (2005), Computer-Graded Essays Gaining a Foothold, *2005 National School Board News*,
National School Boards Association

West Virginia is recognized as a state that is in the forefront of “automated essay-scoring” with the grading of 44,000 writing samples in the spring of 2005. Being aware of the limitations of computerized grading of essays, West Virginia will evaluate the state’s pilot project and review samples of this year’s essays to validate the process. Indiana is also assigning a confidence rating to each essay and if the program indicates a problem with a writing sample it will be referred to a human scorer.

Those who challenge the computerized grading of essays are concerned that the computer cannot recognize the subtle creative styles or quality of an essay’s intellectual content of writing but is based on rigidly structured writing samples. The result would be teachers teaching a “formulaic” writing style that the computer would assign a high score. Again, recognizing the limitations of computer-graded writing states have implemented a safeguard of human scorers to recheck and validate sample papers or those referred by the computer at this stage of computer-grading.