



Making Performance Assessment Possible

Georgia Center for Assessment College of Education – University of Georgia

From a Labor Intensive, Paper-Based System, to a Next-Generation, Online Distributed Scoring and Reporting Platform



**Mary Frances Early
College of Education**
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



GCA Client Team

Kay Elder, M.Ed.
Interim Associate Director

Tracy Robertson, Ed.S.
Assistant Director

Kevin Raczynski, Ph.D.
Assistant Director

Tyson Watkins
Program Manager

Background

The Georgia Center for Assessment (GCA) is a public service organization within the University of Georgia, College of Education. GCA functions as a bridge between research and practice with the goal of improving learning and achievement, while building relationships with leaders in education and business across communities. GCA's staff of experts provide comprehensive teaching, learning, and assessment solutions, including item and assessment development, performance scoring, professional learning, psychometric services, and formal assessment product delivery to K-12 organizations. GCA clients include, Departments of Education, districts, schools, individual teachers, and assessment organizations.

GCA began working with MZD in 2015 when GCA had a vision to deliver more efficient, accurate, and faster results to their performance scoring clients while enhancing their own formative product offerings. GCA also had a strong desire to eliminate the need for traditional brick and mortar scoring centers. This would allow staff the flexibility to score from anywhere with increased quality results and decreased turnaround times. MZD had just launched OSCAR, their online, distributed performance scoring and reporting solution, so the opportunity to partner and further the mission of both organizations made perfect sense.

GCA had a vision to deliver more efficient, accurate, and faster results to their performance scoring clients.

Prior to partnering with MZD, performance assessment scoring for several of GCA's clients was paper-based. The paper-based process was labor intensive, required long turnaround times, and made it difficult to access real-time data regarding the quality of the scores.

OSCAR Supports Expanded Use of Formative Assessments

One of GCA's fastest growing products, Assesslets, were designed for formative classroom use. A key component of any formative product is providing results to teachers quickly. The previous solution made it difficult to get results back to the classroom in time for teachers to inform instruction based on individual student results. GCA also needed access to a higher volume of raters to allow for faster turnaround of the Assesslet scoring which increased demand for recruiting and hiring raters. GCA looked to MZD to assist in transforming their assessment scoring by using the cutting-edge technology provided by OSCAR.

When GCA partnered with MZD to enhance their scoring processes, specific requirements of GCA's unique workflow were quickly introduced as new features in OSCAR and integrated with various online testing platforms already in use by GCA. After successful pilot testing with OSCAR, GCA was eager to implement the new system.

The paper-based process was labor intensive, required long turnaround times, and made it difficult to access real-time data regarding the quality of the scores.

Improved Quality Control

The quality control reporting features in OSCAR, such as validity, IRR and frequency distribution, are available in real-time, eliminating any delay in analysis. Being able to see live data, calculated in real-time, allows the GCA team to evaluate scoring activities quickly and clearly to determine if changes need to be made overall, or to individual items. Directors can now also quickly see if there is a scorer issue and quickly suspend that scorer and provide additional training before allowing them to resume scoring activities.

Having all responses digital, gives assurance that all of those responses are tracked and routed correctly, which inevitably ensures higher efficiency and accuracy of scoring projects.

Being able to see live data, calculated in real-time, allows the GCA team to evaluate scoring activities quickly and clearly.

Moreover, in the paper-based system, many of the quality control measures GCA provided to clients, such as validity, IRR and frequency distribution, were being manually calculated during the project, resulting in critical information being delayed due to the sheer number of responses being processed. Given this delay, when looking at data regarding the way an individual was scoring, by the time they received feedback from a team leader and made subsequent changes, scorers could have missed a day or two of scoring improvement or correction. The paper-based system simply took too long to produce acceptable results.

A Huge Efficiency Improvement

In a paper system, student responses had to be organized in a way to keep track of where they were being routed throughout the scoring process. Doing that successfully required a great deal of staff coordination. According to Tyson Watkins, "With OSCAR, staff efficiency has significantly improved; as an example, a large project generally requires about 2 ½ weeks of setup time and 20+ staff members just for the logistical aspects of creating and distributing paper scoring packets and managing the resulting score data. Now with the OSCAR, similarly sized projects require only 4-5 days of set up time, and only 5 or 6 staff members if paper assessments are involved and even fewer if not."



College of Education
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



MZD helps Georgia Center for Assessment transition to distributed online scoring with OSCAR, resulting in better data, greater efficiency and lower costs.

Scoring before OSCAR



20
FTEs



2.5 Weeks

Scoring with OSCAR Implemented



5
FTEs



4-5 Days



score results
provided 75% faster



real-time, dynamic
reporting

OSCAR Provides Easier Access to Information for GCA Clients and More Efficient Test Security

Under the previous system, when GCA needed to share occasional responses with clients for review, a scanning or faxing process would be used. With MZD, GCA can securely share images directly from OSCAR in real time, with the data clients are looking for. By ensuring access to secure test content is selectively granted to authorized users, test content security is significantly enhanced and better supports online distributed scoring adopted by GCA.

Access to Quality Scorers Gives GCA the Ability to Administer a Higher Volume of Formative Assessments with Efficiency

OSCAR enabled the transition to online, distributed scoring. Prior to that, GCA was reliant upon scorers that could commute to the GCA scoring centers during traditional working hours. "Staffing is very difficult when doing on-site work, especially in a low unemployment environment. We spent a lot of time and money on staffing and advertising," says Ms. Robertson. Now, with MZD's OSCAR Platform, the GCA team can access

qualified scorers from around the world and more importantly, they can keep their best team members regardless of their location. The flexibility of the system allows GCA to access a higher number of scorers and turn around results more quickly.

Faster, Higher Quality Results Back to the Classroom

Faster scoring turnaround time is key to GCA's ability to administer a higher volume of more frequent, formative assessments. With the previous system, GCA collected all of the scoring data separately outside of the platform, which caused a disconnect between the live project and the resulting data. Typical turnaround time, which was about one month, is now down to as few as four-six days or as little as one-two days.

This quick turnaround is extremely valuable to teachers in the classroom, so they can quickly inform instruction to address learning gaps. "OSCAR is a super intuitive platform that gives scorers great information," says Dr. Raczynski. Higher quality and faster results, means the opportunity for improved outcomes.



contact@mzdevinc.com



319-855-7694



www.mzdevinc.com

OSCAR

Online Scoring and Reporting



A Faster, Easier Tool Backed by a Team of Assessment Experts

MZD's OSCAR platform has a quick and easy user interface, so it's much easier for GCA to implement new features and functionality into existing workflow. The real-time data reporting and features are all integrated. In other scoring platforms, those things are often separate, which can lead to long delays in providing information and results. "I've worked with other systems that require three different technology systems to connect performance data to scoring. There is little time to do anything else but collect data in those systems. OSCAR not only allows project managers time to manage high level tasks, but also empowers more scoring staff to engage in monitoring quality assurance independently," says Mr. Watkins.

Increased Cost Savings

Traditional costs associated with hiring and training staff, travel, location rentals and the time involved with managing paperwork and analyzing and reporting data from multiple systems, can be significantly reduced by using OSCAR. With the improved efficiency that a fully online, distributed performance assessment scoring system brings, and access to quality scorers around the world, GCA is able to administer frequent high-volume assessments with fast turnaround results and better-quality control. Achieving all of this would have been incredibly challenging under the previous systems.

"We would have thought to improve turnaround time and quality, we would have had to increase our costs. With OSCAR we have actually saved..."

GCA will continue to improve its national profile by supporting educators and assessment companies within the state of Georgia as well as states across the nation. GCA is now capable of providing online distributed, high volume, quality scoring solutions with very little lead time. GCA has leveraged the OSCAR scoring platform over the last four years to help develop a diverse, experienced scoring staff and effective remote project management techniques, while continually improving our training and quality assurance methods. Clients can expect timely and cost-effective support with a high degree of transparency from the partnership of GCA and MZD.

More About MZD, Inc.

MZD, Inc. was founded in 2015 in Iowa by a group of individuals who collectively have over 75 years of experience in the online assessment and performance scoring industry. MZD is focused on a single mission: delivering solutions that make performance assessments a reality for organizations of all sizes. The first product, OSCAR, was launched in 2015 and is currently in use with leading districts and test assessment organizations throughout the country. In 2018 OSCAR won the Audience Success Award at the 2018 ATP Conference's Innovation Lab. Since then, MZD has expanded its product suite with ADAM™, an assessment authoring, delivery, and management platform, and OSCAR Classroom™, a collaborative teacher-based performance assessment management platform. More information can be found at <https://mzdevinc.com>.

Districts and organizations interested in MZD and its innovative assessment platforms can email contact@mzdevinc.com or call 319-855-7694.