

quiz. This could be because the level of the book is different from the student's level setting, they have taken a quiz within the past 24 hours, or they have already taken this quiz before. It might also be because a student has opened a quiz accidentally, or finished taking a quiz, and exited the page without taking the post-quiz survey. This survey must be opened or completed in order for new quizzes to be made accessible again.

When students read a book at a level above their settings, they must request the teacher to change their account setting. This could delay the test and result in failure. They may also fail a quiz for a book they have read because the level is too high. Teachers can permit a retake or grant extra credit at their discretion. To avoid this, however, either the level could be enforced more strongly, or students could be encouraged to check the level before reading the book and request a change of level setting in advance. Students should also be advised that they are more likely to fail a test if they wait too long after reading the book.

On very rare occasions, a quiz exists, but some questions are blank. MReader will fix such issues immediately when notified. In the meantime, teachers can advise students to take a screenshot of the empty field, then choose a random answer. If this causes them to fail the test, they may speak to the teacher, providing the screenshot as evidence, and request a retake. Finally, in the case where a student has been enrolled in a class in a previous year, they must remember to select the correct class name/number on their homepage before searching for and taking a new quiz. If they fail to do this, the quiz data will be registered to their account, but allocated to the Reading Report of their former class.

Conclusion

MReader offers an accessible platform for teachers to monitor reading progress, holding students accountable for their reading practice without needing to collect and collate paper reading records. It is also a motivating and meaningful way to develop a culture of talking about reading, raising awareness of the benefits of selecting books at an appropriate level, and encouraging students to develop a healthy habit of regular reading for fluency. The limitations detailed above show that MReader requires careful scaffolding and monitoring to ensure that students face as few obstacles as possible in using the system. Small issues do arise from time to time, but none of these are insurmountable, and there are a variety of ways for teachers to deal with them, given a little patience and discretion. For teachers who are will-

ing to invest a little time and attention to introducing their classes to MReader, their students could become more motivated and engaged with their ER practice in general.

Further Reading

- Bamford, J., & Day, R. R. (2004). *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Hedgcock, J. S., & Ferris, D. R. (2009). *Teaching Readers of English*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kipling, L. (2017). Using MReader to track and motivate Extensive Reading. *KUIS LMLRC Annual Report 2017*. 139-148.
- Nation, P. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing*. New York, NY: Routledge.

References

- Krashen, S. (1989). We acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading: Additional evidence for the Input Hypothesis. *The Modern Language Journal*, 73(4), 440-464. doi: 10.2307/326879.
- Milliner, B. & Cote, T. (2014). Effective extensive reading management with Xreading. *The Language Teacher*, 38(6), 32-34.
- MReader. (n.d.). Information about the MoodleReader/ MReader Project. *MReader*. Retrieved from <https://mreader.org/info/index.html>
- Nation, P. (1997). The language learning benefits of Extensive Reading. *The Language Teacher*, 21(5). Retrieved from http://jalt-publications.org/old_tlt/files/97/may/benefits.html

ZipGrade: Scan Response Forms with your Phone

Stephen M. Paton

Fukuoka University

ZipGrade is a mobile application that uses your device's camera to scan and grade multiple-choice answer sheets. For teachers who give paper-based multiple-choice tests, or researchers who want to collect multiple-choice responses on paper, the time-saving benefits of marking and collecting data by simply pointing a camera at an answer sheet are enormous. I can attest that as a university teacher who was last year faced with five

TOEIC preparation classes in one semester, discovering ZipGrade made a world of difference to my mid-term and end-of-semester marking workload. In fact, I kept records, and found that marking each of the over 400 TOEIC Bridge answer sheets I collected took, on average, just 2.3 seconds to score. I have become somewhat evangelical about ZipGrade, and it is my pleasure to share this excellent solution to the tedium of multiple choice marking and data entry with *TLT Wired* readers.

Setting Up

ZipGrade is available on both iOS and Android and is used in conjunction with a desktop-optimized website (www.ZipGrade.com). You will need both to try it out. The ZipGrade website has downloadable answer sheets that feature the precise layout and alignment guides that the camera will search for when scanning. Three templates are available for tests with up to 20, 50, or 100 questions. Each question item has five answer options available, labeled A to E. The first step for teachers interested in using this tool is to download and print an answer sheet from the ZipGrade website. Next, download the ZipGrade mobile application, and create a ZipGrade account with an email address and password. (It is free to use ZipGrade to mark up to 100 answer sheets per month. To use it more frequently than that, there is an annual fee of US\$6.99.)

After creating an account, you will be prompted to create a new quiz by tapping the “New” button. Give the quiz a name, such as “Week 8 Review Test,” and select the appropriate answer sheet format (20, 50, or 100 questions) so that the app knows which alignment guides and layout to search for when scanning. Next, input the answers to the test by tapping the “Edit” key. A screen will come up with a row of selectable ABCDE options for each question. As you enter the correct option for each question, it will change colour. Alternatively, there is an option to enter the answer key by scanning an answer sheet that shows the correct answers, but I have preferred to use the first method so as to save a step. Once the quiz’s answer key has been entered, you are ready to scan students’ completed answer sheets.

There are spaces on the answer sheet for students to write their names, and (optionally) the date and the class designation. On the two longer test format answer sheets, students are asked for their ZipGrade ID, a numerical identifier with a bubble option for each numeral. Rather than assign any new identification number to students, I have utilised this by simply asking them to enter their university student

number without the department-identifying letters, for example, student EP16534 enters 16534. Students then carry out the test, using pen, pencil, or marker to darken the answer option of their choice for each question.

Scanning

Collect the answer sheets, and the fun can begin! Tap the “Scan Papers” button on the app. This will open your device’s camera, with four alignment guide squares appearing near the four corners of the screen. Simply align these with the four markers at the corners of an answer sheet. When they come into alignment, the device will suddenly vibrate or make a sound to indicate that the sheet has been scanned and marked, and the responses recorded. The image of the student’s name, ID number, score, and percentage will appear on the screen (Figure 1). It is incredibly fast. Scan the next paper, and the next, and before you know it, your marking is done. You will immediately regret ever having marked a multiple-choice quiz any other way!

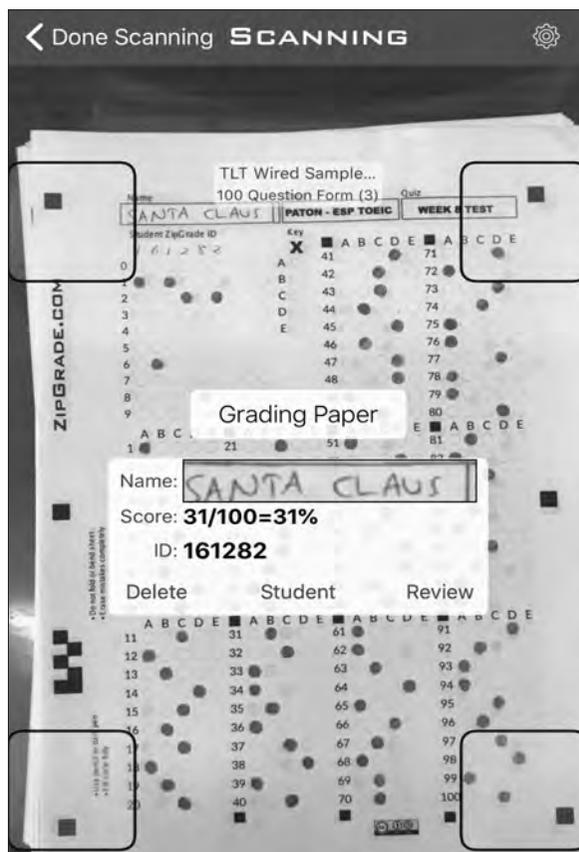


Figure 1. Screenshot of an answer sheet having just been scanned with name, score, and student ID visible.

Analysis

From within the mobile app, immediately after scanning all the answer sheets, it is possible to see a list of student names and their corresponding scores (Figure 2). This makes it possible to give feedback immediately, potentially within seconds of the student handing in their test. A photograph of each scanned paper, with a green circle around a correct answer and a red circle around an incorrect answer, is accessible with a tap on the student's name. It's also possible to see a rudimentary item analysis that shows what percentage of students answered each question correctly, and which answers were the most popular (Figure 3). A PDF or CSV spreadsheet file of all the collected data can be created and exported directly to email or cloud storage drives.

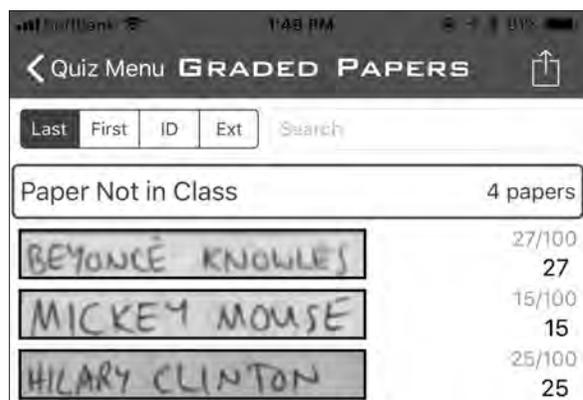


Figure 2. Summary view of names and scores from within the app.

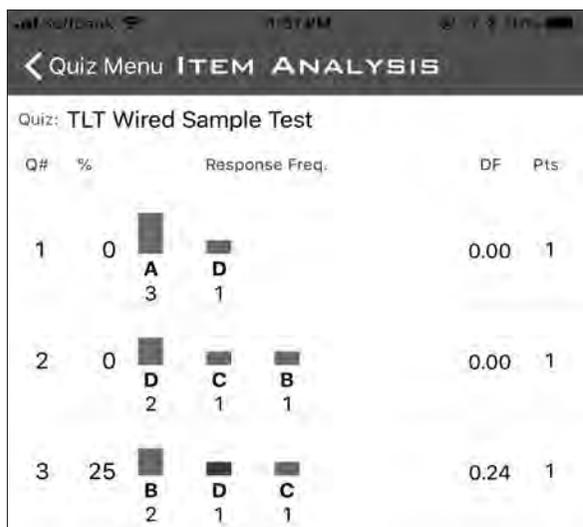


Figure 3. A rudimentary item analysis showing the percentage of students that selected each answer to each question.

A more detailed look at the results is possible on the ZipGrade.com website. When an internet connection is present—which is not necessary to create quizzes or scan answer sheets—data is synced from the mobile device to the website automatically. When you log in to the website and click on the quiz you just administered, you will find additional reports already compiled detailing the number of papers marked; maximum, minimum, and average scores; a score distribution chart; and links to downloadable PDF or CSV files (Figure 4).

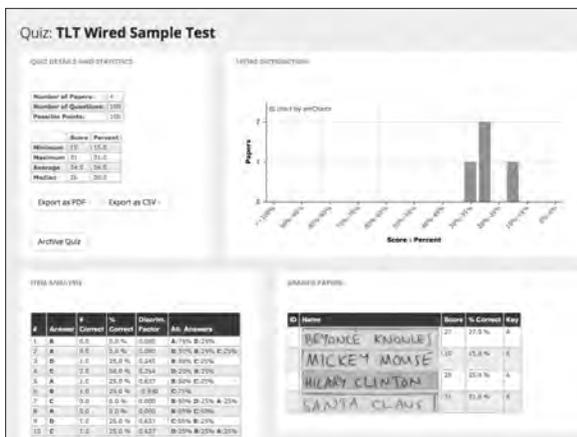


Figure 4. A detailed analysis of the quiz response data.

Research Purposes

In addition to finding and scoring correct and incorrect test answers, ZipGrade can also be used to gather survey data for analysis. The five answer options might be used as a Likert scale, with respondents perhaps being asked to select how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement.

The ZipGrade website advises that in this case, the software does still need an answer key, but only so that it knows to gather data on that question item. The app will not scan or record answers on items that do not have an answer key assigned. This allows for a 70-item test to be administered on the 100-question answer sheet. It is possible when entering the answer key to assign one point for a “correct” item, and one point also for any “incorrect” answer, thus rendering all responses equally valid. Item analysis will then show which respondents and what percentage of respondents selected each answer option.

Additional Functions

ZipGrade has far more complicated functions and uses than only scanning answer sheets and compiling spreadsheets of results, but doing only that has been enough to make me a passionate user and fan! I have not needed to venture further than marking one test at a time and exporting the data to my class Numbers spreadsheet. The website provides information on more complicated applications and customisations that users may find useful:

- classes can be established, with results of multiple tests being attributed to students by name, and record-keeping carried out across a longer timeframe.
- custom answer sheets can be created.
- tests can have multiple answer keys.

Conclusion

ZipGrade is a fantastic, time-saving tool for teachers and researchers who need to collect and process multiple-choice data. Completed tests for a whole class can be marked within seconds with scores being saved and synced automatically. Students can be told their scores even before they leave the classroom. Using ZipGrade is simple for anyone who is familiar with mobile devices. For me it has meant that the daunting task of concentrating through a great deal of tedious marking and data entry has been simply eliminated. Feeling my phone buzz each time it scans an answer sheet is a joy, and I can't recommend ZipGrade strongly enough.

[JALT PRAXIS] BOOK REVIEWS



Robert Taferner & Stephen Case

If you are interested in writing a book review, please consult the list of materials available for review in the Recently Received column, or consider suggesting an alternative book that would be helpful to our membership.

Email: reviews@jalt-publications.org

Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/book-reviews>

This month's column features Winifred Lewis's review of *Smart Writing: Active Approach to Paragraph Writing* and Chumei Huang's evaluation of Keynote 1.

Smart Writing: Active Approach to Paragraph Writing

[Miyako Nakaya, Manabu Yoshihara, & Ruth Fallon. Tokyo: Seibido, 2016. pp. x + 91. ¥2,000. [Includes Teacher's Manual and audio CD.] ISBN: 978-4-7919-6032-3.]

Reviewed by Winifred Lewis Shiraishi, Nihon University College of International Relations

Smart Writing: Active Approach to Paragraph Writing is an academic skills textbook for beginner-level EFL students. This is a bilingual Japanese-English text that is designed to aid students in developing basic English paragraph writing skills.

Smart Writing explains the key parts of a paragraph for the purpose of communicating with unity, coherence, and cohesion. The textbook helps students write a variety of academic paragraphs, with opportunities for both classwork and homework activities. It includes units on how to write Narrative, Process, Description, Compare-and-contrast, Cause-and-effect, Problem-and-solution, and Opinion paragraphs. There are also additional sections on Data Analysis and Email Writing.

Each chapter begins with pre-writing that covers key concepts. For example, *Chapter 3: Process* has a set of instructions for how to use a train ticket machine which students must put in the correct order. Students then read sample paragraphs to use as models for a writing section that comes later in the unit. There is also audio of the example paragraphs. Each unit has two of these model paragraphs, with the second generally being more advanced than the

