

Learning Technology Helps Students to Prepare for the GMAT

by Jason Paneque

Prepping students of all ages to do well on tests has been big business for years now, and more and more companies are emerging to provide components designed to improve student performance.

Manhattan GMAT, for example, was created in response to increased competition among M.B.A. programs and the growing demand for high scores on the GMAT – the Graduate Management Admission Test, taken by students hoping to enter business school. Founded by Zeke Vanderhoek, a New York public junior high school teacher, Manhattan GMAT focuses exclusively on the GMAT, employing both academic and test-taking skills.

Led by a team of expert teachers, all of whom have 99th percentile official GMAT scores, the company offers intensive prep programs worldwide, including advanced GMAT courses (on-site and live online), one-day workshops, two-week boot camps and free GMAT preview classes. Manhattan GMAT also teaches on-site GMAT prep courses at a number of Fortune 500 companies, and its Strategy Guide books are available at Barnes and Noble and Amazon.com.

McCann Associates, founded in 1959, a provider of online assessment tools for higher education, corporate and certification organizations, has licensed Manhattan GMAT to offer students McCann's GMAT Write program, designed to help prospective M.B.A. students prepare for the GMAT while improving their writing skills.

GMAT Write aims to help students evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and build confidence in their writing skills. It identifies and analyzes flaws in essay structure; critiques essays; provides examples that demonstrate how to build stronger, more persuasive arguments; and demonstrates how to use language effectively. This includes explanations of diction, syntax and conventions of standard written English.

At the core of GMAT Write, says McCann, is Vantage Learning's IntelliMetric technology, said to be recognized by the standardized testing industry for its accuracy.

Vantage Learning, which delivered more than 193 million online test transactions last year, provides scalable online assessment and instructional programs for K-12 and higher education, leveraging technology such as artificial intelligence, natural language understanding and Web-based learning objects. Based on scoring quality, consistency, reliability and scalability of automated essay scoring using its patented IntelliMetric engine, Vantage Learning has received accolades ranging from the prestigious CODIE Award for best instructional technology to recognition by Eduventures as one of the eight most innovative educational technology companies.

IntelliMetric, based on research and development stemming back to the 1980s, has been used successfully to score open-ended essay-type assessments since 1998. It was one of the first commercially successful tools able to administer open-ended questions and provide immediate feedback to students.

The technology offers varied instructional applications. Teachers can control the number of revisions student should be allowed to make, or allow students to make unlimited revisions to essays.

To score essays, IntelliMetric is "trained" with a set of responses with known scores as determined by experts. These papers are used as a basis for the system to "learn" the rubric and infer the pooled judgments of the human scorers. The IntelliMetric system internalizes the characteristics of the responses associated with each score point and applies this intelligence to score essays with unknown scores.

"McCann Associates began licensing GMAT Write through Manhattan GMAT several months ago, and nearly 1,000 students have prepared for and taken the GMAT Exams using GMAT Write 1 and 2," says John Zoccola, public relations manager, Vantage Learning. "Based on the overwhelmingly positive student reaction and performance, we are looking forward to extending our partnership with Manhattan GMAT and expect thousands of additional prospective grad school students to succeed through our partnership.

GMAT [®] GRADUATE MANAGEMENT ADMISSION TEST [®]		SCORE REPORT EXAMINEE COPY				PRINT DATE	REGISTRATION / ID NUMBER				
						02/03/99	88000000120922				
NAME		DATE OF BIRTH	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER		TELEPHONE NUMBER						
LAST	FIRST	M.	SEX	Month	Day	Year					
GARCIA	CARLOS	M	M	04	08	70	47887732				
DATE OF GRADUATION	SELF-REPORTED UNDERGRAD. GPA	UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR		CITIZENSHIP COUNTRY		UNDERGRADUATE INSTITUTION					
06 Mo	92 Yr	3.0		ENGINEER		USA					
INTENDED GRADUATE STUDY		SCORES*									
FULL TIME		TEST DATE		SCALED SCORES							
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE		Month	Year	VERBAL SCORE	% BELOW	QUANT SCORE	% BELOW	TOTAL SCORE	% BELOW	AWA SCORE	% BELOW
MASTERS		01	99	44	98	48	96	740	99	5.5	95
* "No reportable score" may indicate that all sections of the test were not completed.											
CODE		Your scores have been sent to the GRADUATE SCHOOLS OF MANAGEMENT listed below.									
0707		INSTITUTO DE EMPRESA									
0798		ERASMUS UNIVERSITY									
0982		UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO									
2582		NEW YORK UNIVERSITY MBA									
3514		MASSACHUSETTS INST TECH MBA									

"We are also incredibly excited that our McCann portfolio of products includes Correct English, a writing improvement and productivity tool for use in everyday business writing that provides grammar and spelling feedback in over a dozen languages along with revision tips, models of exemplar business memorandums, letters, proposals, reports and much more."

Clients as diverse as General Electric and the American Board for the Certification of Teaching Excellence and hundreds of municipalities and higher education institutions use McCann's platform for online delivery of certification and licensure exams; entry-level and promotional personnel tests; employee life cycle management; online training, assessment and surveys; writing improvement in the workplace and classroom; and skills development.

Pam Kirby, vice president of McCann Associates, says, "Manhattan GMAT is an innovator in education and test preparation. Our test-prep products matched with their instructors offer students the finest test prep in the world. We see this as a natural fit into their curriculum."



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