

Comparative Judgement

Education

Marking by picking the better of two scripts, rather than against a rubric.

Judges are shown two pieces of work and pick the better. Many such pairs are combined statistically into a single scale of quality across the whole set.

BASIS

Thurstone, 1927

OUTPUT

a scaled rank order

- People compare more reliably than they score.
- No rubric is needed, and none is applied.
- Reliability rises with the number of judgements.
- Well suited to essays, art and open problems.
- It produces a rank, not a criterion-referenced grade.
- It gives no diagnostic feedback by itself.

LOOK FOR IT

Ten teachers making 300 quick pairwise choices can rank a class set of essays more reliably than the same teachers marking to a rubric.

Educational reference. The trade is reliability for explanation: a rank tells you the order and nothing about why a piece placed where it did.