As someone who specializes in grading and analyzing writing I always wonder how other professors grade their students writing? Is it based on personal opinion, if they like the essay or dislike the essay due to the content and political beliefs being in tandem with theirs? Or is it based on objective criteria. Hopefully, the latter. Maybe the professor is looking at the improvement in complexity, accuracy and fluency to make a non-biased judgement on the student's writing. There is an issue with this objective corpus driven approach, however, and it relates to how to measure complexity, accuracy and fluency and the amount of effort and difficulty needed. Out of the three measures, that are usually known as CAF, fluency is the easiest to measure. Just by giving students a time limit on an essay, the professor can see how many words per hour can be written. If the student writes more, fluency is improving; however, the improvement in fluency could be at a detriment to accuracy and complexity. Thus, a form a trade-off could take place. It has been argued that learners cannot attend to all areas of CAF performance, especially when a task is demanding, due to the processing demands being greater than learners' capacity. Skehan's (2009) trade-off hypothesis states that the dimensions are interdependent such that increased performance in one area might occur at the expense of performance in the other areas. This means that a higher performance in one component, for example accuracy, corresponds to lower performance in another, for example fluency, and a competitive relationship between CAF may therefore exist. Skehan (2009) also notes that adult learners prioritize meaning over form, which may hinder further language development. Therefore, there can be trade-offs between accuracy and complexity. Accuracy is usually considered as the most straightforward construct of CAF, and refers to the degree of conformity to language usage norms. Usually professors look at accurate word and grammar usage. Accuracy is more difficult and time consuming to measure, unlike fluency that can be easily measured on a computer, accuracy needs to be measured by hand. One of the easier ways to measure accuracy in writing is by the number of error-free T-units or errors per T-unit. Accuracy is not very controversial as most educated people agree on grammar usage. However, out of the three proficiency measures, complexity is usually said to be the most controversial and has been defined in various ways. SLA researchers most often focus on syntactic or grammatical complexity (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). These measures of complexity can be measured using software programs and thus is can be easily seen if a student's writing is improving in complexity over time. In theory these three ways to measure writing performance should work, however, it is very unlikely a professor would use these CAF measures when grading student writing. There are a few reasons why; the student would not understand the measure easily, the measurements are controversial and very time consuming to quantify. Even if a student improves on all three CAF measures, their writing could be off topic, the wrong rhetorical mode, the wrong register and the content could be weak. So, this issue sadly leaves these CAF measures in the hands of researchers rather than teachers and graders of writing and a semi-objective way of grading essays using rubrics is most commonly used.

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