

### ***Agreement Among Raters (Table A.2)***

In order to ensure that all readers conform to the standards presented in the scoring guide, 20 percent of the 1996 responses were scored by a second reader to provide information on interrater agreement.

The **exact agreement** category shows the rate at which both the first and second reader awarded the same score to an essay. Exact agreement rates in the 50s are typical for holistic scorings using six-level rubrics. **Adjacent agreement** shows the rate at which scores given by the first and second readers were no more than one score point apart (e.g., the first reader assigned a score of 4 and the second reader assigned a score of 5 or 3). The criterion for an acceptable level of adjacent agreement for six-level holistic scorings is usually 80 percent. **Interrater reliability** correlation demonstrates the extent to which readers agreed with one another overall. Interrater correlations of .80 or above are usually accepted as indicating a sufficient degree of reliability for six-level holistic scorings. Thus, the data in Table A.2 indicate that the holistic scoring met reasonable criteria for interrater reliability for a holistic scoring using a six-level holistic rubric (C. A. Gentile, personal communication, January 25, 1999).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Most testing programs do not publish their rates of desired or acceptable interrater agreement. However, most state testing programs that use holistic scoring to evaluate students' writing achievement strive to have adjacent agreement percentages at 80 or above and interrater correlations of .80 or above.