

Review of: "The Positive Impact of Dropping the Lowest Test Score on Academic Performance and Stress Levels in MathBased Graduate Courses"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I'm quite taken by the empirical exploration of this strategy (I have seen the "drop one test" approach in many settings - and used it myself). The impact on performance is documented reasonably well in this study, and there are several reasons that this can occur (anxiety being one of them of course). However, these multiple possible reasons for raising the performance level overall are not fully explored. The focus on stress (which I appreciate as a researcher in that field) is interesting - but with no data to demonstrate that there was indeed a release of anxiety due to dropping exams, you cannot reasonably make that statement (and I would also indicate you should not have the term 'stress' in your title, as you have no evidence to support that relationship). One known action with the "drop 1" is the potential of the testing effect - a very durable effect known in education and psychology - where merely taking a second test should lead to higher scores, because (basically), the first test provided a strong training activity for the learner (see Roediger's work in this area, or Bjork's New Theory of Disuse to explain). Another reality is the fact that many students did NOT use the test...this probably happens when you have people who take the test and are "satisfied" with the score...some analyses on the performance differences for "test1" comparing those who did and did not retake an option would be instructive that way.

Overall - i think the paper has interesting merit, but the discussion centered around stress and anxiety is not supported by data. The focus I would take is merely as a method of boosting overall student performance.

Finally - there is a mention of suicide related to anxiety and stress (true)...but I see nothing here (or in the literature) suggesting that suicide is tied to academic anxiety directly. This is a bit of a stretch in my estimation.