Cumulative Exams (with a twist)

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I use cumulative exams to (a) evaluate learning and (b) promote retention.

When first hearing about cumulative exams, students generally have a negative reaction – their impression is that cumulative exams are more difficult because knowledge has to be retained for longer periods of time.

To make cumulative exams more palatable to students, I came up with a unique administration method:

1) Because each exam is cumulative, I set it up so that a later exam gives students a second chance to demonstrate their understanding.

2) Students can replace their score on the previous exam if they score higher on the next one; however, if they perform worse, their original score remains the same.

Microsoft Excel

- In Microsoft Excel, I first create one set of columns with students' original percentages for each exam (i.e., one column for Exam 1, Exam 2, etc.).

- In a second set of columns, I insert a formula for each exam for each student that compares the original percentage to the one that followed it. If the later exam had a higher percentage, then that higher percentage replaces the original exam percentage; otherwise, the percentage stays the same.

- Feel free to contact me for an example Excel spreadsheet that contains these example formulas:

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References

