Reviewer’s report

Title: A qualitative exploration of student perceptions of the impact of progress tests on learning and emotional wellbeing

Version: 0 Date: 14 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Win May

Reviewer's report:

The abstract was clear and concise. The authors stated that there was a gap in the literature as to the learners' perspective with regard to the value and impact of progress testing, and this study aimed to bridge this gap.

This is the qualitative part of a larger study and this should be clarified in the Introduction. There are 5 questions that the authors asked in the Introduction, and it would be clearer to the readers if after stating those questions, they then hone in on the two questions that their study focuses on: i.e. (1) What is the impact of progress testing on student approaches to learning? and (2) What is the impact of progress testing on perceived stress associated with more frequent tests? I did not see that the other two questions on "unanticipated consequences" and "mitigation over time" were answered by the study. If the authors feel that these questions were answered, they should highlight those statements relating to those questions.

The methodology is sound and lend credibility to the study. The qualitative data was well organized into the two themes of "Impact on learning" and "Emotional Well-being".

The authors in the Discussion, referenced the results from the quantitative study to explain their findings, which may muddy the waters somewhat.

Regarding the conclusions drawn from the study, the first paragraph is spot on. I am not certain the second paragraph is totally accurate, since in the Discussion, the authors have stated that "Student views were often polarised". Also the data for Year 5 as a whole showed that "student perceptions of progress testing was more negative than the other year groups". So be the Conclusions drawn should reflect those findings as well.

The limitations of the study are accurate and well-described.
I have a question for the authors: You stated that you were examining the student "perspective" but the title states "Student perceptions"; also throughout the paper, the terms "perspectives" and "perceptions" have been used interchangeably. Is that accurate? I did not think they were exactly the same. If they are indeed the same, you may want to use one or the other consistently throughout the paper, or provide an operational definition of each and state that they are the same.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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