

An Initial Look: Taking ACT Subject Tests on Different Days Doesn't Result in Higher than Expected Scores

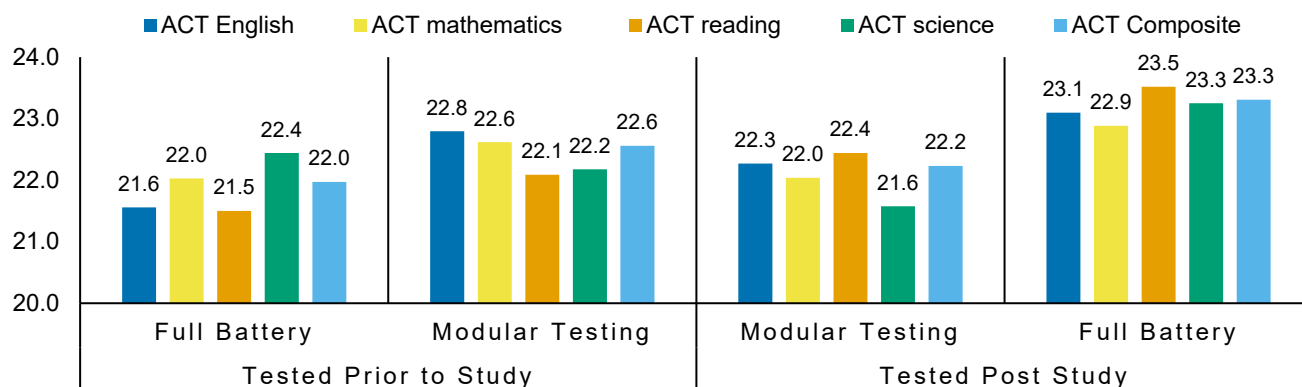
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As part of a series of studies examining the impact of changing how the ACT® test is administered (e.g., modular testing/section retesting), one study had roughly 100 students take the four ACT subject tests over the course of four days (i.e., one test per day; Monday through Thursday). The majority of these students also had official ACT scores from an operational test administration; 34 students had taken the ACT prior to the study, and 52 students took the ACT post completion of this study. We have compared students' ACT scores when completed as part of a full battery versus when taken in a modular setting. The results indicate that the scores students earned when taking one ACT subject test at a time were in line with what would be expected if they had taken the full battery, taking into account the number of instructional months that lapsed between the two testing events.¹

In Figure 1, the results for the 34 students who took the full ACT battery prior to the study are plotted on the left. On average, there were 2.5 instructional months between the two testing events. Students tended to increase their scores from full battery testing to modular testing with the exception of the ACT science test (ranging from -0.26 for science to 1.24 for English). The score gains are in line with what would be expected based on typical retesting gains over 2.5 instructional months.²

On the right side of Figure 1, the results for the 52 students who took the full ACT battery after the modular study are plotted. On average, there were 6.1 instructional months between the two testing events. Students tended to increase their scores from modular testing to full ACT battery testing (ranging from 0.83 for English to 1.67 for science). The score gains were consistent with what would be expected based on typical retesting gains over 6.1 instructional months.³ In other words, students taking ACT subject tests on different days don't earn higher than expected scores. Concerns that modular or section testing would lead to artificially inflated test scores were unfounded based on these data.

Figure 1. ACT Subject Scores on Full Test Battery and Modular Testing by Testing Order (Pre- and Post-Modular Testing)



Notes

1. Camara, W. J., & Allen, J. (2017). *Does Testing Date Impact Student Scores on the ACT?* Iowa City, IA: ACT.
2. Expected scores gains after 2.5 instructional months were 1.10, 0.57, 0.93, 0.73, and 0.77 for English, math, reading, science, and Composite, respectively.
3. Expected scores gains after 6.1 instructional months were 1.38, 0.82, 1.20, 0.90, and 1.15 for English, math, reading, science, and Composite, respectively.



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