The statistical anxiety rating scale: a review and a new application

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Keywords: Statistics anxiety; student demographics; first year teaching

The Statistical Anxiety Rating Scale (STARS) is a 51 item, 5 point Likert scale developed by Cruise and Wilkins in 1980 to measure levels of statistics anxiety in students. Despite its age, and some American-centric and out of date items, the STARS is still commonly used as a measure of student attitudes towards statistics. In this presentation I will cover three aspects of the scale, and some experiences with administering it to a cohort of first year online students. Firstly, I will examine the relevance of the scale to 21st century statistics education and discuss whether collecting such information is useful for statistics educators. Secondly, I will discuss some STARS results from a sample of Australian students completing an online first year statistics unit. Finally, I will present an example of where the STARS was administered to students, but it inadvertently became a useful teaching example and created some insightful, student-lead discussions about bias and data collection.