"You've Got Mail!" The Effects of E-Mail Messages Sent By Undergraduate Teaching Assistants on Students' Exam Performance

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“YOU’VE GOT MAIL!” THE EFFECTS OF E-MAIL MESSAGES SENT BY UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS ON STUDENTS’ EXAM PERFORMANCE
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Students in PSY 235 were divided into two groups based on their performance on the semester’s first exam and then randomly assigned to one of two experimental groups. These groups were sent e-mails roughly one week prior to the second unit exam in the course. One group received an e-mail message from the undergraduate teaching assistants suggesting concrete study/exam preparation techniques. The second group received a “pep talk” e-mail, in which the undergraduate teaching assistants provided words of encouragement. Following the exam, students in the course completed a brief survey in which they estimated how well they had done on the exam. The results of analyses comparing the mean exam scores as well as degree of change over the first exam as a function of which type of email was received will be presented and discussed.