

DIFFERENT  
DRIVERS &  
VEHICLES.  
SAFETY FOR  
ALL



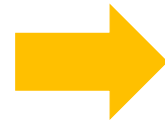
**PRACTICAL DRIVING TEST ANXIETY: A TRAINING PROPOSAL**

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# Italian Driving Test

After the theory test



“pink paper”



Driving under the supervision of one expert driver (at least 10 years)  
and a driving school instructor  
(at least 6 hours with a driving school car and driving school instructor)



Driving test

# Italian Driving Test

Driving test with the:

- Driving school instructor
- Inspector of the Department of Transport

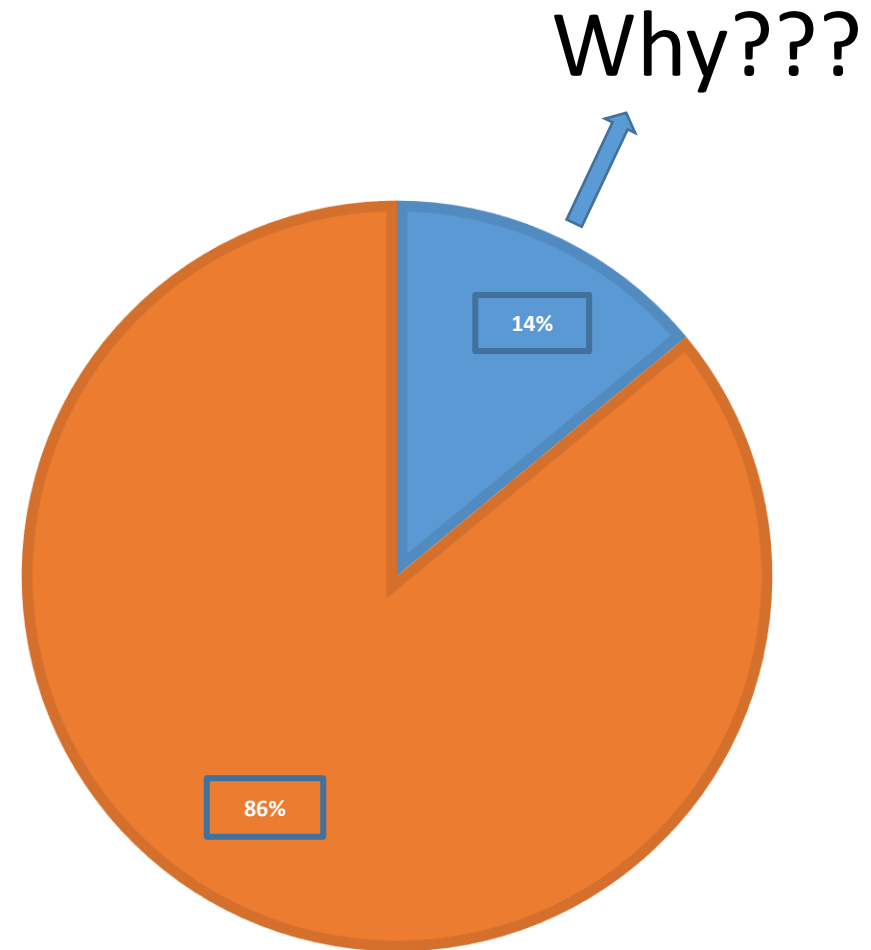
Three phases:

- Checking the drivers' ability to prepare for safe driving
- Reversing maneuvers, parking and emergency brakes
- Behaviour in traffic and risk perception (at least 25 minutes)

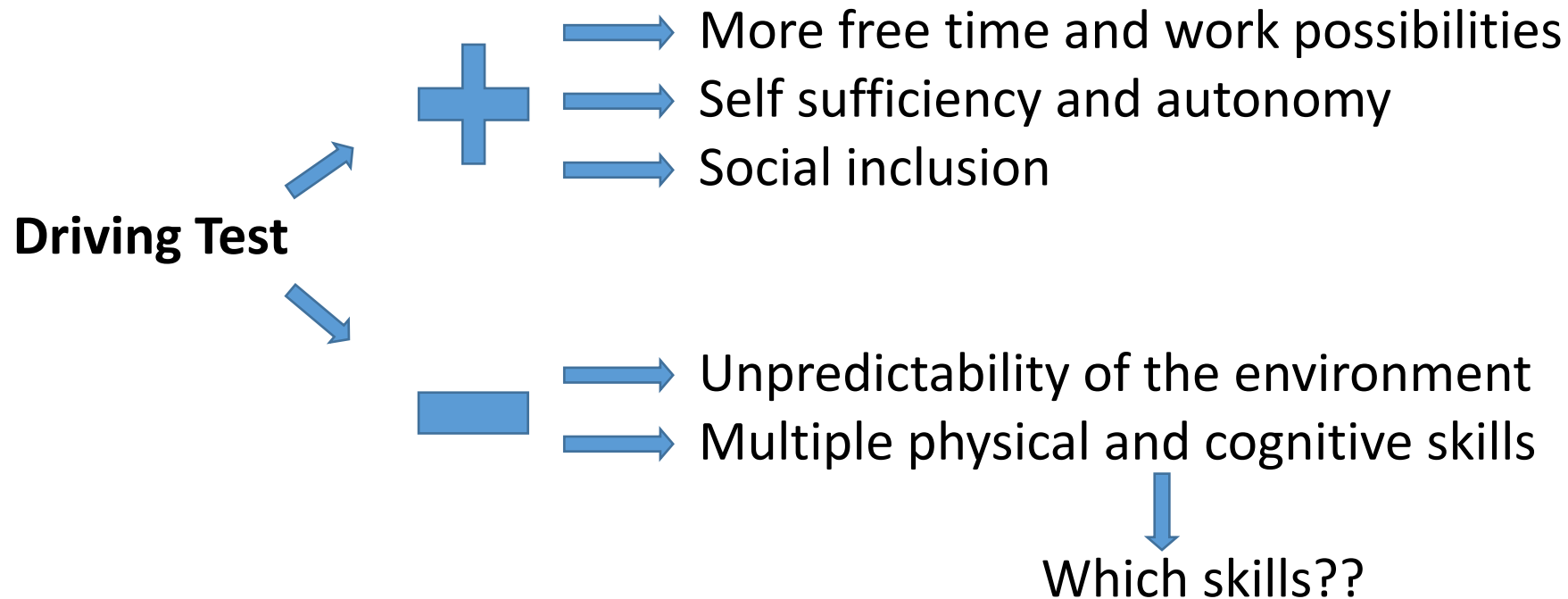
# Italian Driving Test

## Results Driving tests 2019

- 954,324 driving tests
- 85.98% passed
- 14.02% failed (north vs south)  
(Department of Transport, 2019)



# Driving Test Literature



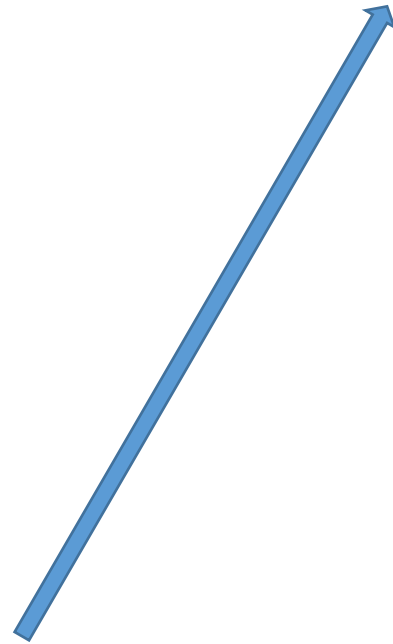
# Driving Test Literature

## Physical Skills

- Coordination
- Endurance
- Speed of the movement
- Stability
- Mobility
- Senses (hearing, sight...)

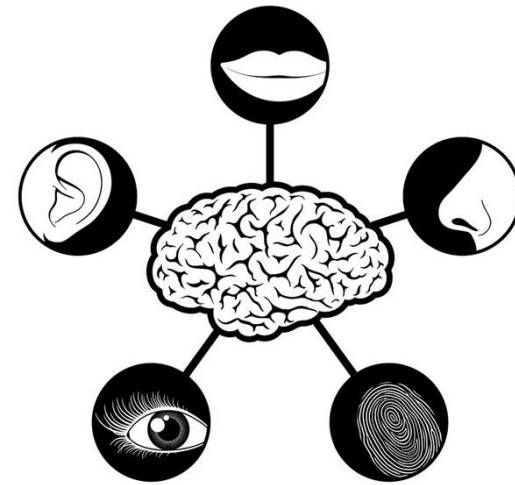


Physical Skills not enough  
for a good performance



## Cognitive Skills

- Attention and perception
- Memory
- Decision Making
- Learning
- Automatism
- Space awareness



# Driving Test Literature

Emotions can influence cognitive processes (Lazarus, 1991) and affect driving behaviour

And anxiety?

→ “apprehensive anticipation of a danger or a negative future event accompanied by concern and physical symptoms of tension”



# What are the main thoughts of concern of driving school students?

- Compare one's own performance with peers
- Consider the consequences of failure and fear of failure
- Excessive fear of evaluation
- Make your parents feel sorry (expectations and more pressure)
- Loss of self-esteem
- Not feeling fully prepared for the test
- Assess the situation as threatening (task's difficulty, examiner's fear)





# Driving Test Literature

Performance anxiety (Liebert & Morris, 1967)

Unpleasant state characterised by tension and apprehension, thoughts of concern and activation when an individual faces evaluative situations to be reached with difficulty

- Physical component → perception of physiological responses (sweating, heartbeat ...)

- Cognitive component → negative and intrusive thoughts of concern

# What impact on the performance?

Cognitive component: Mostly associated with a decline in performance (Hembree, 1988)



High levels can lead to emotional and physical stress, concentration of difficulties and fears, interfering with the ability to adequately prepare to take the test

# Training

Assumption: the practical driving test could lead to performance anxiety

Create an *ad hoc* training to be given to small groups of students (3-4) before their driving test in order to:

- Reduce the anxiety
- Increase wellness
- Optimise driving performance

# Hypothesis

Verify the following hypothesis:

1. All subjects who will take the same driving test are characterized by high levels of anxiety
2. The subjects, immediately after having participated in the training, have a lower level of anxiety
3. Subjects who participate in the training have a lower level of anxiety than subjects who did not participate
4. The subjects who participate in the training, and who have a lower level of anxiety, all achieve positive results (pass the test)

# Methodology

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Le mie aspettative sono state soddisfatte         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Nel complesso le attività svolte mi sono piaciute | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Mi ritengo soddisfatto                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Credo che sia stato utile per me                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. È stato divertente                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. È stato noioso                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. È stato difficile                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Sicuramente ripeterò alcuni esercizi anche a casa | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## SAMPLE:

- Experimental group: 14 students between 18 and 22 years old with declared anxiety towards the practical driving test
- Control group: same characteristics of the experimental group

## INSTRUMENTS:

State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger et al, 1983): measure how the subject feels at a given moment (20 questions)

Training satisfaction survey: built *ad hoc* and composed of 8 items

# Training for the Experimental Group

SETTING :

Driving school where the subjects held the theory lessons



Emotional and Mental asset useful for carrying out the activities

Duration: about 2-3 hours

9 activities: Active participation and group reflection

## Activity 1: Narrative technique

Expressing thoughts and emotions towards the practical driving test



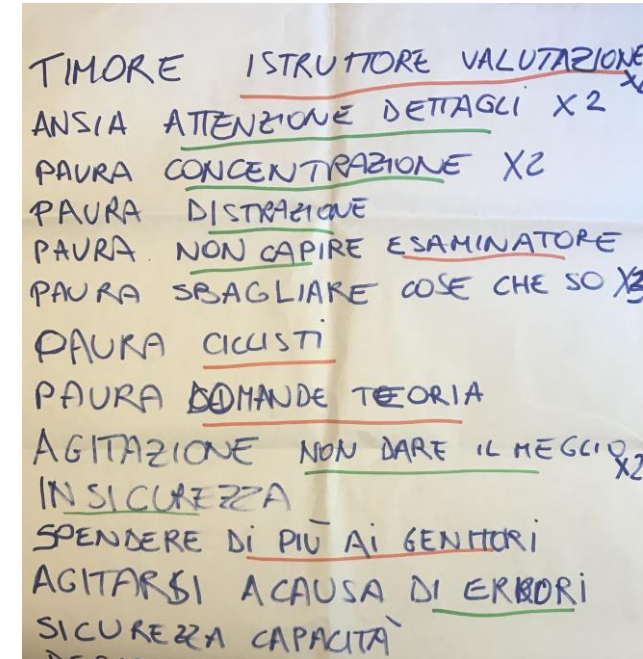
Focusing on personal control

## Activity 2: Experience recall

Thinking about one previous successful and one unsuccessful experience they lived



Increasing the sense of self-efficacy and self-confidence



## Activity 3: Visual Imagery

Creating the mental representation of an experience (Weinberg, 2008), representing some events in mind before they actually happen, so that people can be better prepared to cope with the event itself



Living the event in the mind

## Activity 4: Informative speech

Listening to some explanations and information about a selection of psychological processes, such as “performance anxiety” and self-monitoring



Increasing the self-consciousness about their consequences on the driving behaviour



## Activity 5: Self-Talk

Talking to themselves to control and manage their thoughts  
(Bull, Albinson & Shambrook, 1996)



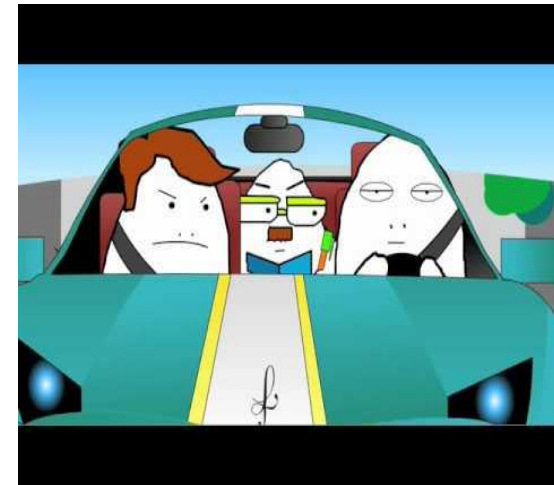
Reaching a positive influence on the behaviour

## Activity 6: Humour

Watching an ironic and funny short video about the practical driving test, totally based on humour



Enhancing positive emotions, minimizing the negative emotionality connected to the event and increasing self-confidence



## Activity 7: Relaxation

Experimenting and learning a relaxation technique called “square breathing”



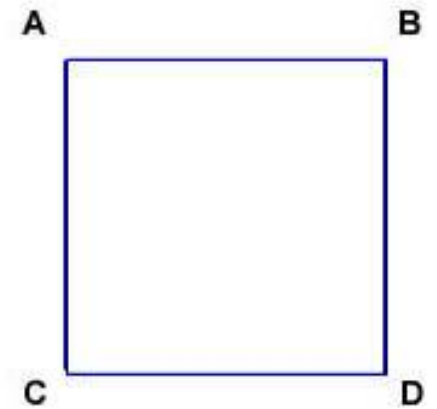
Helping to regulate the breathing and the physiological activation

## Activity 8: Driving simulator

Candidates were asked to imagine themselves during the exam, driving virtually for a few minutes, trying not to commit any mistake, while they were “evaluated” by a collaborator performing the examiner



Enhancing the familiarity towards the exam condition



## Activity 9: Focus on objectives

Increasing the focus on realistic, clear, specific goals needed to reach an effective driving exam training



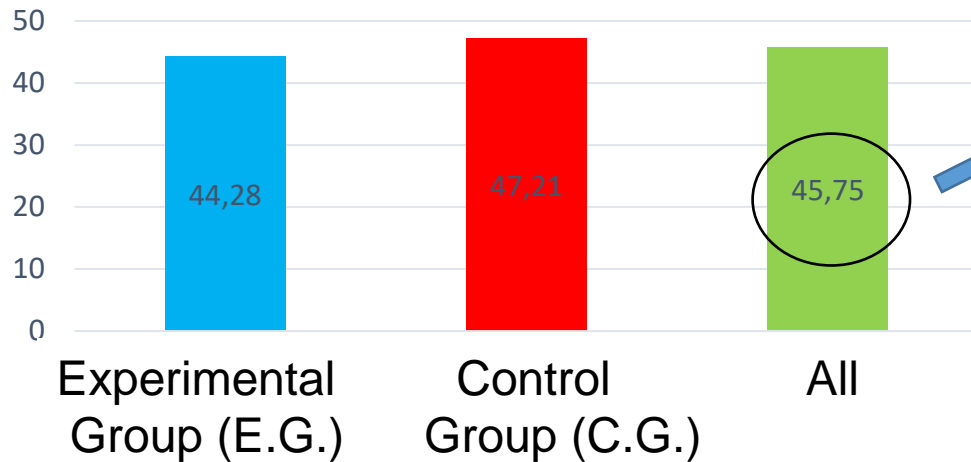
Fixing in memory the strategies to reach these objectives

# Results

**Hypothesis 1** All subjects who will take the same driving test are characterised by high levels of anxiety

STAI results given to both groups on the day of the practical test

Level of anxiety towards the practical driving test



Average anxiety towards the driving test exceeds the STAI score of 40 with which an anxious symptomatology is detected

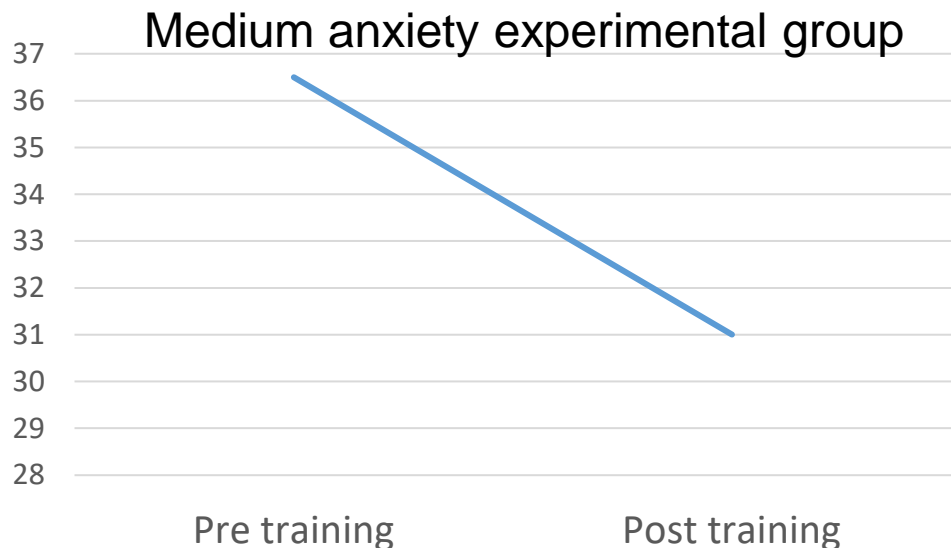


The score is in a range between 40 and 50 corresponding to a "mild" level of anxiety

# Results

**Hypothesis 2** The subjects, immediately after having participated in the training, have a lower level of anxiety

Comparison of the STAI results of the experimental group immediately before and immediately after the training

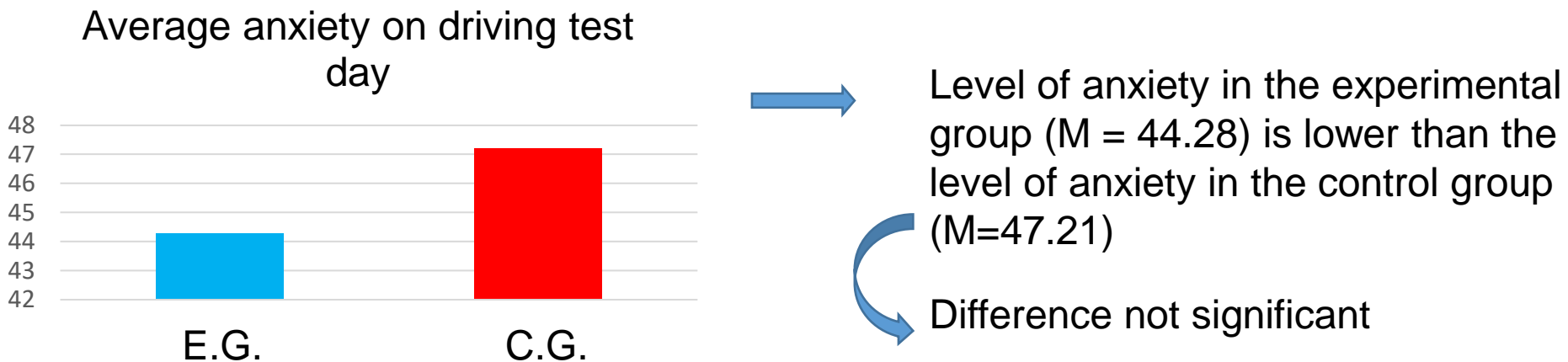


Level of anxiety after training ( $M = 31$ ) is significantly lower than the level of anxiety before training ( $M = 36.50$ )

# Results

**Hypothesis 3** Subjects who participated in the training have a lower level of anxiety than subjects who did not participate

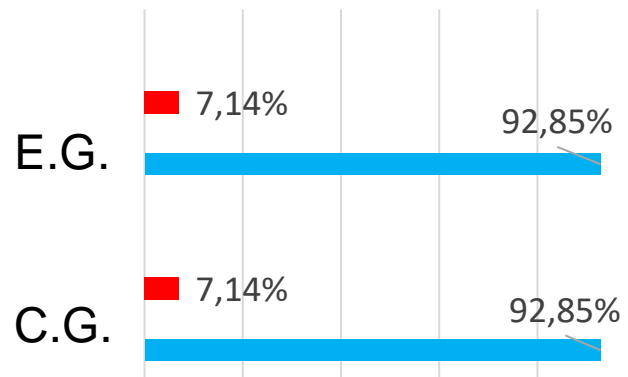
Comparison of the STAI results experimental group vs control group, administered immediately before the examination



# Results

**Hypothesis 4** The subjects who participate in the training, and who have a lower level of anxiety, all achieve positive results (pass the test)

Results of the driving test for both groups

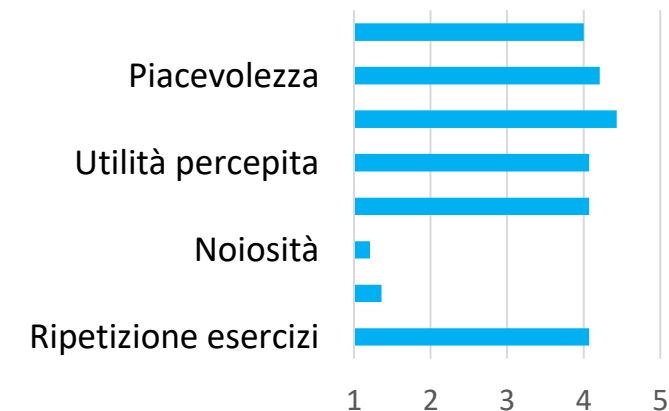


Failure is identified only in 1 case, in each of the two groups of subjects

# Conclusions

- Practical driving test arouses a certain anxious symptomatology even if "mild" → The creation of the training could be justified
- Training could be effective in reducing subjects' anxiety
- Only a tendency to reduce anxiety produced by long-term training has emerged (future research)
- The overall opinion of the students towards training was very positive

**FUTURE???**





Thank you

Grazie per l'attenzione

1921 — 2021  
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