

1014-H1-1529

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This action research combined qualitative and quantitative techniques to investigate two different types of writing assignments in an introductory undergraduate statistics course. The assignments were written in response to the same set of prompts but in two different ways, homework journal assignments or posts to a discussion board in Blackboard. A survey at the end of the semester elicited student reactions to writing in a statistics course, and to the two different types of writing they were asked to do. A majority of the students felt that the addition of writing to the course was beneficial to their learning. Student writing was analyzed to identify the types of writing found. Both forms of writing allowed students to engage in reflective thinking about statistics, and communicate their questions to their instructor. Both forms of writing helped students to improve their understanding of mathematics and their ability to communicate mathematically. The discussion board, however, engaged students in a dialogue, which allowed them to build on one another's thinking. The identification and classification of types of writing found in different kinds of student responses will allow future instructional decisions, and point to further research. (Received September 28, 2005)