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Incorporating Real Data Sets and Writing into an Introductory Statistics Course Focused on Sports and Games.

The ability to reason statistically is critical to becoming an informed citizen and intelligent consumer (Aliaga, et al., 2010). Despite its importance, research indicates that students struggle to reason statistically and that students typically enter introductory statistics courses “under sufferance, with levels of resistance related to their beliefs of the relevance of statistics” (Howley, 2008).

One approach for helping students make sense of complex mathematical ideas is to situate the ideas in real-world contexts that have meaning for students. We contend that the context of sports and games might be particularly promising, because: 1) it is a rich site for studying statistical ideas (e.g., probabilities in card and board games; correlation of player and/or team statistics); and 2) it is likely of interest to a wide range of students.

In this talk, we describe writing assignments that use real data sets in a general education elementary statistics course focused on sports and games, and discuss student reflections on the efficacy of such assignments. (Received July 19, 2012)