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Teaching Introductory Statistics through big data projects – reflections from a mathematician’s first statistics course.

Statistics is unlike any other math class in most undergraduate curriculums. Most of the math is buried, unnecessary for the use of statistics, and is often too complex for intro students to understand. But students want to be able to use statistics in their areas of study after only one course. As a mathematician, I struggled with teaching statistics for the first time while attempting to teach a one-semester terminal intro stats course. I wanted to prepare students to perform statistics competently on real data and chose to have my students learn statistical computations in R on big-data and based my course around student-directed individual projects. In this talk, I will discuss my misadventures in teaching statistics last spring, what I learned, and what I am excited to try this spring. (Received September 16, 2014)