

Recommendation 5: Use Technology For Developing Conceptual Understanding and Analysis Data.

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This article focuses on the use of a website in a statistics course. The authors emphasize the fact that a website should be more than just a place where students find the course syllabus and homework assignments. A statistics course website should “help facilitate student-instructor and student-student interaction outside of the classroom.” The use of a course website allows for student-instructor interaction outside of the traditional classroom. As the authors note, this additional interaction allows for students to get feedback quickly from the instructor and allows for shy or intimidated students to ask questions that they may not feel comfortable asking during class time. A website also promotes interaction between students that may not occur during class time. On a message board, students can view a classmate’s post and post their own reply.

The authors support the GAISE recommendation by giving suggestions for how a statistics website can be used to promote conceptual understanding and analyze data. The message boards and chat rooms the authors suggest can give students a deeper understanding of statistical concepts through postings by the instructor or other students. The use of a statistics website also allows for the instructor to easily give students access to large data sets by posting them on the website. Instructors can also post prompts or discussion questions that can be used to facilitate discussion during class time. By giving the students the prompts ahead of time, the students can be ready to discuss as soon as they get to class.

One thing I found very beneficial in this article was the idea of having online office hours where the instructor was online and available to answer questions, just like during traditional office hours. This can be very beneficial to students because they can ask questions from any location. A downside to online office hours is that some questions or explanations may be difficult to adequately communicate through an online posting. I think online office hours would be a great supplement to a class but should not replace traditional office hours where students can interact with a professor in person. One thing that came to mind when reading this article was that much of the purposes of a website (i.e. class announcements, discussion questions, giving students access to data sets) could also be accomplished through class emails. However, a website is much more efficient because all of the information is in one location. Students do not have to worry about keeping track of emails, all of the information can be found in one location. Although a website may require a bit more work for the instructor, a well organized statistics website can certainly enhance a student's conceptual understanding.