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Term Project Part 5 – Reflection

As I struggle to write this paper about what I have learned, I realize that I didn't know as much as I thought I did about statistics. I honestly had no idea what was involved in gathering, studying, verifying and displaying information about various subjects. My personal experience with statistics has mainly been with reading news articles about politics, or hearing about various research studies on the news. I would read about how a percentage of people that took a certain medication would experience certain side effects or the percentage of people that were going to vote for a government official but I never knew how these statistics were garnered. I usually would not question their findings or spend more than a second glancing over the margin of error. This meant nothing to me. I now understand why they have to list a margin of error and what a 95% level of confidence means, when I hear various statements made.

I now understand how statisticians work with sample groups, drawing up hypothesis and how they were able to support or reject their initial interpretations. Also, it has taught me to be more cautious when reading about certain statistical findings, instead of taking them for face value.

I have always shied away from anything that was beyond my initial understanding, when it came to numbers and complex math problems. I still do, as I have to push myself to comprehend story problems and remember what formula goes with what. I actually love Algebra and plugging in a formula, figuring it out and coming up with the right answer. But this class has terrified me from the beginning. It is why I have attempted to take it twice before and dropped it shortly after. After persevering through several complex chapters, I believe my views have changed. Not only do I have a better understanding of

general statistics but I believe it has taught me to keep going regardless of the challenge, which I hope sets a good example for my children. I believe this is the most rewarding thing I have gained from this class.