

“What do you want me to write?”

Improving Students’ Verbal Descriptions and Interpretations

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Here are some of the topics that the planned activities are designed to investigate:

- 5 pervasive principles for guiding Exploratory Data Analysis
- 3 key features to note in the distribution of a quantitative variable (and hence to compare in the relationship between a quantitative variable and a categorical variable)
- 3 key features to note in the relationship between two quantitative variables
- characteristics of good and bad confidence interval interpretations
- characteristics of good and bad p-value interpretations and significance test conclusions

Here’s a quick summary of the promised pedagogical technique for using peer writing to improve student writing and thinking:

- Describe criteria and standards for responses.
- Solicit and compile student responses.
- Share archived (scored) responses, to norm student scoring.
- Students critique/rate each other’s responses.
- Grade students on the quality of their critiques, and/or on the consistency of their ratings with your own ratings.

Here are some of the advantages to using this technique:

- There’s low pressure on the (ungraded) initial submissions of interpretations.
- Students see their responses among mixture of good and bad responses.
- Students are forced to reflect on what makes for stronger and weaker responses.
- Afterwards, students are less likely to kid themselves about how much they really understand.
- Establishes expectations for homework responses, exams, project reports, etc.