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**Edwin P Herman\*** (eherman@uwsp.edu), Department of Mathematical Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, WI 54481. *Papers? - in a math class? Using essays and online discussion groups to improve an Introductory Statistics course.* Preliminary report.

For many years I incorporated a capstone project in my Introductory Statistics sections: student groups would design a statistical project, gather data, then analyze and report their conclusions. These projects tied course ideas together well, but I gradually realized that most of the students would become consumers rather than creators of statistics.

In the summer of 2008, I took advantage of a curricular grant to hybridize my course. Instead of a single capstone project, students now have online readings and discuss contemporary topics such as global climate change and the economy. Each topic culminates in a short paper, using statistical arguments to support the thesis.

Based on student feedback, I have made modifications to the course format, including the amount of in-class time and the use of daily online quizzes. Although student feedback is mixed, I believe students at this level benefit more from critically interpreting existing data than from creating their own. (Received September 21, 2010)