

Becoming an Independent Learner

The most successful students in this and many other classes have made a quiet transition that few notice but that soon becomes evident in superior performance. They have accepted responsibility for their own learning.



Bamboo branches, Ni Zan (1301-1374)

In this class, students interested in designing for success might concentrate on two parallel activities: read the text and work through a fair number of exercises.

The text

The text by Peck is exceptionally clear and complete. It is a lucid and comprehensive display of the statistics we will be studying this semester. Making steady progress through the text is essential. One way to make that progress nearly automatic is to read on the weekend each chapter to be covered during the following week. This is already a major step towards mastery and will quickly distinguish you from all other students who are doing less.

Exercises

Complement your reading by working through the classwork and homework exercises. The principal tool for actually doing statistics in this class is the R programming language and facility with it is largely a function of the time you spend working with this new language. Explaining steps to others and listening to their explanations helps a lot. The collection of Rmd files we use in class becomes a library of solved examples that you have already thought through, so consolidate that experience with frequent review.

The larger view

This class is a blend of statistics, mathematics, and computer science. It is a reflection of an increasingly digital and evidence-driven world. The progress you make in absorbing these trends will help prepare you for a dynamic future, and becoming an independent learner will change the rest of your life.