Effective Figures that Contain Graphs--Preparatory Exercise

CENG340 Fall 2013

The following two figures are taken from a document created by Prof. Malusis, called “DOs and DON’Ts for Creating High-Quality Figures that Contain Graphs.” (You will receive a copy of this document after we complete this exercise). Both figures show the same data and model fits, but the graphs were created with different software packages and were formatted differently.

In groups of three, discuss which figure is more effective and why. One member of your group should take notes so you can report back to the rest of the class. As you discuss the figures you might consider the following: Can you understand the point the author was trying to make with the figure? Does the figure stand on its own? Are the numbers and labels on each axis clear and easy to understand? Can you easily differentiate between the data and the fitted models? How would you improve the figure?



Figure 1. Measured water retention curves for clay soil and a geosynthetic drainage net (GDN). Circles represent data points and lines represent fitted models.