Capstone Reflection

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My capstone project involved working with Dr. Kady Schneiter to analyze and report findings from a survey conducted to investigate the relationship between students’ attitudes, mindsets, and their success in a statistics course. Completing this capstone project was one of the most meaningful experiences I had during my time as an undergraduate student. It also gave me practical experience and helped me prepare to be a graduate student and future employee.

Working on the capstone was exciting and meaningful because it was original work. Every other data set that I worked on in my coursework was either a data set from a textbook or from a professor. It was data that had been analyzed and processed repeatedly by the professor (or textbook author) and hundreds of students. In the case of my capstone project, however, the data we collected from our survey had never been explored by anyone else. This was an exciting thought. There was no predetermined “right answer” and no one “correct” way to analyze these data. However, having new data like this did present some challenges. Because it was not associated with a certain course section or textbook chapter, I had to rely completely on my own critical thinking, knowledge, and research to understand how to analyze these data. This was very good practical “real world” experience that I will reflect on in future work and research.

Another valuable aspect of this project was learning better time management. I have always been rather organized and disciplined when it comes to managing my time. However, with this project and everything else I needed to have accomplished, I had to take my time management to a new level. I also learned some practical skills using RStudio, and Sweave, two software packages that will be used heavily in my graduate research and course work.

Working with Dr. Kady Schneiter was a great opportunity and privilege. Her mentorship and advice helped guide me through the research and paper-writing process. She found a good balance between sharing her own experience and guiding me through the project, while still allowing me to have ownership of the project. I learned a lot from her, and it was a pleasure to work with her.

Overall, this capstone experience was the capstone of my undergraduate education. The knowledge and experience gained will be invaluable in future academic and life pursuits.