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A discussion of the effect of open-book and closed-book exams on student achievement in an introductory statistics course.

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Summary: The use of open-book tests, closed-book tests, and notecards on tests in an introductory statistics course is described in this article. A review of the literature shows that open-book assessments are universally recognized to reduce anxiety. The literature is mixed however on whether deeper learning or better preparation occurs with open-book exams. This article reviews the Math 300 Statistics course testing policy which evolved from closed-book exams to open-book exams to closed-book exams with notecards. Our experience led to increased student enjoyment of the course while continuing to encourage deeper student learning.

Classification: D65 C75

Keywords: open-book assessment; closed-book assessment; probability; statistics; notecards; student achievement

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