

Selling Statistics” to school children on university Open Days

Delia North*

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, northd@ukzn.ac.za

Though statistics is now part of the school syllabus in South Africa, it is generally not recognized by learners as a discipline in its own right as it is called “Data Handling” at school and is taught within the mathematics class, not identifiable from the other mathematics topics. There are further many schools in South Africa where statistics topics are not taught due to teachers having inadequate or zero training in statistics.

A real danger, which has been well documented, is the negative attitudes to statistics, harbored by many school teachers, which could spill over to learners in the class room, thus providing a further blockage to statistics capacity building at tertiary level in South Africa.

The idea place to create awareness of statistics and to showcase it as a “fun and funky” subject is at university Open Days. This is the perfect opportunity for future first year students to become aware that statistics is not “boring” and “difficult” , but offers many exciting and above all, offers graduates varied and interesting job opportunities.

The author shares some best practices, including examples of aids, posters, models and fun activities that have had very positive feedback from school children attending university Open Days in South Africa.

Key Words: Statistics Capacity Building, Developing country, Statistics awareness at school level, job opportunities for youth