

Informal statistical inference at school level education

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University students find statistical inference a challenge, and yet “prediction” is a fairly natural and everyday activity for people from a young age. Researchers across the world have successfully introduced an accessible form of statistical inference—informal statistical inference—with primary school children (5-12 years old) and non-specialists (such as factory workers). Informal statistical inference has been described as having three characteristics: a claim beyond the data; data as evidence for the claim; and articulation of uncertainty about the claim. In this talk, I will outline each of these three basic characteristics of informal statistical inference and provide examples of their use in the primary school years. I will discuss the benefits of informal statistical inference for teaching statistics in schools and the potential it has to improve students’ statistical reasoning from a young age.