Randy Christensen

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Poster Project Reflection

 Creating, designing, implementing, analyzing and presenting a group project on Transaction Times helped me understand the challenges, difficulties and insights that can be had in such an endeavor. I also relearned the importance of a great team and using good communication skills to accomplish a large group project with many different elements.

 As I began by working to come up with a possible study and research question, I had trouble thinking of one that would be interesting, fit the criteria and would be manageable to create within the scope of the class. I had many ideas come to me, but as I thought about the details of the question, it was difficult to figure out how to phrase the question and I was unsure we would be able to perform the study using our basic knowledge of statistics. I finally settled on one and felt it was a worth-while and meaningful research question. Luckily, mine was the chosen study for the group and we were able to refine the question even further. It was difficult to let go of some of the elements of what I had thought could be included, but this process created a better, more focused project.

 As for the team and the challenges and triumphs during the project, I found that this was one of the best groups with whom I have ever worked on a project. Right from the start, I could tell that the others were team players and knew how to work on something as a team. I have always felt a little apprehensive about team projects due to the usual communication difficulties and problems that arise between team members because of personality, pride or power, but this group helped me be at ease. We almost immediately agreed to a solid communication and collaboration plan using an online “cloud-based” system for our poster and project documentation and email and phone messaging. Throughout the project, there was continuous, productive and positive communication. Each member of the team seemed to bring to the group just the right focus, expertise and abilities to make the project run smooth. We complemented each other nicely and were able to assess and assign the various elements of the project to a team member and we felt confident we would each follow through.

 Gathering the data fell on me due to the nature of the study being at the Credit Union I work for and the fact that the information we were gathering may include sensitive and confidential information. As I collected the data, I found it was difficult to ensure there were enough data and observations for each time segment. After several hours of observing transactions, it became apparent that how often the observations were made would need to be changed so as to ensure I would have enough data to analyze. Also, doing what I could to do the observations without the other tellers knowing and changing their routine was also a small challenge. They were all aware I was there, but didn’t know which transaction for which I was observing and collecting data.

 Creating the poster was another challenge because I wanted to ensure it included everything that was required and yet looked appealing and understandable to the readers. This proved to be a difficult and sometimes tedious task. After setting up the overall look and feel of the poster, adding the content was somewhat of a challenge. Knowing what to include, how much to include and how to demonstrate each element depended greatly on the audience and the available space on the page. Each team member was assigned to create and upload to the poster a specific portion of the poster and as the page filled up, it was found to have too much information or very little information.

One of the most challenging parts was that of the test analysis and description. The study required an ANOVA test, which had not been covered in class at the time. This proved to be extremely difficult to understand, analyze and describe the data with an unfamiliar statistical test. We were able to get help from the instructor though we were left to analyze, scrutinize and explain the information on our own.

We finally came up with what we needed to place on the poster, which was a relief. Then came the challenge of making sure it all fit, which was solved in a few days and quite a lot of work. We continued to refine the talking points and made the poster look nice. One of my expertise is that of making sure the details of the layout and content were just right. I spent a good deal of time to ensure the poster was a nice reflection on our hard work throughout the study.

Lastly, the presentation before the visitors and judges at the Science, Mathematics and Engineering Symposium was a great way to finalize the project. This allowed our project to be seen by many people beyond our statistics class. The questions that were raised and the expectations of being able to explain what our study entailed along with the analysis of the study proved to be enjoyable and eye-opening. I was impressed with how all the team members attended the Symposium which further illustrates the idea that this was a great team effort from beginning to end.