

Statistical Literacy at Augsburg College

Milo Schield (2016)

"I really appreciate the opportunity to speak at Augsburg College. Milo Schield invited me to give a talk at a session at the American Statistical Association's meeting last August. I had not realized before that session that there was a Statistical Literacy movement or that Augsburg College was the intergalactic center of that movement. (Audience laughs) I was very excited to learn this and I'm really interested in seeing what comes of your efforts." [Joel Best \(2002\)](#)

Milo Schield, a tenured Professor of Business Administration, has created and directed the statistical literacy program at Augsburg College. He has a PhD in Space Physics from Rice University. He has devoted two decades to making statistics more accessible to students.

In 1998, Schield proposed a Quantitative / Statistical Literacy course. Augsburg approved it as a catalog course in General Education (GST 200). It has been taught every year since then.

In 2001, the [W M. Keck Foundation awarded Augsburg College a grant](#) "to develop statistical literacy as an interdisciplinary curriculum in the liberal arts" with Schield as the project manager.

In 2004, [Joel Best](#) cited Schield as the "leading voice" of the statistical literacy movement.

Schild has written more than 70 papers promoting statistical literacy. According to [ResearchGate](#) these have received over 400 citations. Here are some of his papers involving general education:

- [Statistical Literacy and Liberal Education at Augsburg](#) AAC&U Peer Review 2004, 16 citations
- [Statistical Literacy: Thinking Critically about Statistics](#) APDU Of Significance 1999, 11 citations
- [Understanding Confounding from Lurking Variables](#) ASA Stats Magazine 2004, 5 citations
- [Information Literacy, Statistical Literacy & Data Literacy](#) IASSIST Quarterly 2004, 31 citations
- [Quantitative Literacy and School Mathematics: Percentages and Fractions](#), a chapter in the MAA booklet *Calculation vs. Context: Quantitative Literacy and Its Implications for Teacher Education* edited by Lynn Steen and Bernie Madison. (2008, 4 citations)

In 2014, Schield established *Statistical Literacy for Managers*, a course for business students majoring in management and marketing. Schield is currently working on a textbook, *Practical Statistics for Decision Makers*, to be published by Wiley. It is designed for students in quantitative majors such as business. This text is the companion of [Statistical Literacy: Seeing the Story Behind the Story](#): Schield's textbook for students in non-quantitative majors such as English, Music, Political Science and Philosophy.

Schild is the editor of [www.StatLit.org](#): the #1 website dedicated to statistical literacy with over 300,000 visits in 2015. He is an elected member of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and he is the [VP of the National Numeracy Network](#). He is the US Representative of the International Statistical Literacy Project. In 2015, he was nominated for the US Conference on Teaching Statistics [Lifetime Achievement Award](#). He has travelled extensively: He has given [37 talks](#) outside the US in 18 countries on six continents.

Many – if not most – students dread statistics. Augsburg students see value in studying statistical literacy. They are surveyed anonymously on this claim: "Statistical Literacy should be required for all college students for graduation". Of the 57 students in Schield's classes in 2015, 68% chose Agree or "Strongly agree" (21% chose "Strongly agree").