

Thinking About Research

"The data of an experiment consist of much more than a mean and its standard deviation. The user of the results in order to understand them may require not only the original data, but also a description or reference to the method of investigation, the date, place, the duration of the test, a record of the faults discovered during the test, the amount of nonresponse by class, and any side-effects observed.

That Statistician has an obligation to help his client to perceive in advance the limitations of any study that is contemplated.

An important question to ask before the plans for a study go too far is this: What will the results refer to? How do you propose to use them? The answer(s) sometimes can bring forth drastic modification of the plan."

"Some Contributions to Statistical Inference and Practice", by W. E. Deming, Ch. 20 in Quantitative Techniques for Evaluating the Behavior of Psychiatric Patients. Burdock, 1979