

Virginia Tech: Learning with Minitab® in the Classroom and on the Factory Floor

When it comes to teaching statistics, G. Geoffrey Vining, past head of the statistics department at Virginia Tech, says it's easy to choose the best software. "When the call is mine to make," he says, "we use Minitab® Statistical Software."

Vining has made that call many times in the course of his distinguished career. He's used Minitab to teach undergraduate and graduate classes, to teach professional workshops for companies and industry groups, and to prepare his award-winning statistics textbooks. Those experiences have made very clear what makes Minitab such a good fit for a wide variety of tasks and audiences.

"Minitab offers a good balance between ease of use and appropriate functionality without a steep learning curve," Vining says. "It's intuitive, has great graphs, and prepares students for the real world. Many of my students have gone on to have successful careers at Six Sigma companies where Minitab is the corporate standard."

Vining became acquainted with Minitab as a Ph.D. student in the 1980s, and he knew companies like GE and DuPont used it. But it was Minitab 12 in the mid-90s that really caught Vining's attention. While teaching at the University of Florida, he became increasingly aware of the sophistication that Minitab offered. Once he began incorporating it into his courses, he was won over.

Today, Vining always encourages undergraduate students to invest in a 6-month rental of Minitab, available for academics at OnTheHub.com. "My students like the fact that they don't have to program a computer in order to perform analyses in Minitab," Vining notes. "They also favor Minitab graphics and appreciate how easy the graphs are to export for use elsewhere."

Vining sees the same appreciation for Minitab when he teaches professional workshops. "When I teach industrial short courses on DOE, regression, or reliability," Vining says, "My default is to use Minitab. There have even been times when class participants know more Minitab shortcuts than I do, and I'll let them drive in the software while I instruct and explain theory."

Vining loves being able to interact with both students and front-line industry engineers, and appreciates being able to use the same statistical software with both groups. Like so many other educators, Vining has come to trust Minitab for providing a powerful package that makes statistics easier for him to teach—and for his students to learn. "For me, Minitab delivers a superior value that effortlessly balances ease of use with functionality."



Torgerson Hall Bridge over Alumni Mall on the Virginia Tech campus.