Name: _____ Date: _____

BLM 2–9

Chapters 2 and 3 Literacy Connect

Before Reading

Your teacher will give you the Internet addresses for two organisations that provide information about diabetes. Log on to both Web sites. Read the definitions of diabetes. Look at the statistics about the numbers of people affected by diabetes. What risk factors affect a person's chance of developing diabetes? Why are the rates of diabetes increasing?

During Reading

Read the article Statistics, Probability, and Diabetes, and then compare the diabetes surveys on the two Web sites. Discuss these questions in small groups.

1. What are the similarities between the two surveys? What are the differences?
2. Which Web site helps you better understand the factors that affect the risk of developing diabetes?
3. If you were a Web designer, what advice would you provide the two organisations to help them better communicate the probabilities and statistics related to diabetes?

After Reading

If so much is known about the risk factors for diabetes, why are people not taking steps to reduce the risk of developing the condition? Write a brief paragraph that provides a possible explanation of why knowing about a risk does not change human behaviour.

Statistics, Probability, and Diabetes

Statistics, like probability, help predict the outcome of future events.

Medical research relies on probability and statistics to inform people if they are at risk of getting a disease. For example, it is known that older people are at greater risk of developing diabetes than younger people. There are many other factors that need to be considered to determine the level of risk for someone getting a disease. This is why doctors ask questions about eating and exercise habits, and use measurements of height, weight, and age to help them determine the probability that their patients are at risk. Doctors and researchers hope that an understanding of the statistics might lead people to change their behaviour and lifestyle to lower their risk.

The challenge for researchers is how to communicate the risk to the public. For example, how do you communicate the probability and statistics of developing diabetes? There are so many factors to consider.

One method of communication is to make a checklist of risk factors that people can fill out to determine if they are at risk. Do you think this method is effective?