**Class Activities**

Chapter One: The What and Why of Statistics

Class Activity #1 (Group)

Have students work in small groups to complete the following activity:

Select a GSS module from the text. Have each group member select a set of variables and identify the level of measurement for each. For categorical variables, record how each variable in the GSS has been coded (i.e., what categories are used to capture the information). For non-categorical variables, record the unit of measurement for each variable (e.g., years, dollars, etc.)? Combine your work with the work of other group members and use this information as a reference sheet as you work through the exercises involving the GSS modules in this and subsequent chapters.

Class Activity #2 (Group or individual)

Have students work individually or in small groups to complete the following activity:

Search one of the following scholarly journals: The American Journal of Sociology, Criminal Justice and Behavior, Youth and Society, or the Journal of Applied Gerontology. Choose an article of interest and have each student read the article.

Discuss the following questions as a class or small group:

1. What variables were included in the study? For each variable, indicate its level of measurement and whether it is discrete or continuous. Discuss how you might improve how some of these variables were measured.
2. What is the author(s)’ hypothesis? What are the dependent and independent variables? Describe the theoretical considerations that informed these hypotheses.
3. Were descriptive statistics used?
4. Are there any hypotheses that the authors did not test? If so, what might these be and how might these be informed by theory?

Class Activity #3 (Group)

Give each group a summary of a job opening that asks for skills in statistics, SPSS, survey creation, evaluation, program assessment, or data gathering. Ask the group to answer the following questions:

1. How can statistics be used in various employment positions?
2. What types of agencies and job positions utilize statistics?
3. How many years of statistics experience do most of the jobs prefer?

Class Activity #4 (Group or individual)

Provide abstracts of various journal articles to individual students or small groups of students. Ask students to identify the following components of the article, based on reading only the abstract:

a) Topic of research study

b) Independent Variable(s)

c) Dependent Variable(s)

d) Hypothesis

e) Theory

f) Method

g) Source of data

h) Sample

Class Activity #5 (Group)

Have each group select a research question. Ask students to describe how they would go about answering their question, including how they would operationalize the variables.

Examples of research questions from the chapter include:

1. How will the Affordable Care Act influence the quality of health care?
2. Has support for gay marriage increased during the past decade?
3. Does race or ethnicity predict voting behavior?
4. What factors affect the economic mobility of female workers?