**Class Activities**

Chapter 4: Measures of Central Tendency

Activity #1 (Group)

Have students do the following activity in small groups:

Scholars who study social movements such as war protests, peace marches, etc. find it helpful to count the number of movements over a defined time interval in order to get a sense as to the seasonality of these movements. For example, U.S. war protests may be more common in the fall and spring when the temperature in most U.S. cities is more moderate. Work in small groups and select any U.S. newspaper and any one-year time frame between 2003 and 2011. As a group, examine the number of times that this newspaper reported on the Iraq War during your selected time frame (i.e., between October 1, 2007 and October 1, 2008). Collect your data and compute all measures of central tendency. Compare your results with other groups who collected data from other newspapers in other regions of the country. What similarities and differences do you notice? (Note: Be sure to save these data for use in group exercises for Chapter 5).

Activity #2 (Group or individual)

Have students do the following activity, individually or in small groups:

Make a list of variables pertaining to your classmates (e.g., height, eye color, major, etc.). Develop your list so that it includes a range of nominal, ordinal, and interval/ratio level variables. Next, define your response categories. Remember, these categories must be both exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Thus, for example, eye color could be categorized according to the following: blue, brown, green, hazel, and other. Survey each person in your class and proceed to compute all appropriate measures of central tendency. Finally, write a brief report about what you observed and either present or circulate your report to the class.

Activity #3 (Group or individual)

Have students do the following activity, individually or in small groups:

Take the data collected from Activity #2. Begin by entering the data into a new SPSS datasheet. Save your work. Next, use SPSS to compute the various measures of central tendency computed by hand in the previous group exercise. Are these answers the same as those you calculated by hand? They should be. If not, revisit your work from the previous group exercise. Find any problem spots and redo your work as needed

Activity #4 (Group or individual)

Provide the students with the measures of central tendency and histograms with an imposed curve for 10 variables using SPSS. Make sure the variables are something like 3 nominal, 3 ordinal, and 4 scale. Have the students decide:

1) Which measures they would examine for each variable

2) Whether or not the data for the variables is skewed

3) Whether or not they would keep all variables in their statistical analysis

Activity #5 (Group or individual)

Have students come up with examples of variables that might be more likely to have skewed data than others (i.e., income, age, etc.). Students should come up with 3-5 examples of variables with potentially skewed data. Next, have students draw what they expect the shape of the distribution to look like and explain why. Their drawings should be labeled as positively skewed or negatively skewed. Have students present their variables and drawings to the class.