**Class Activities**

Chapter Seven: Sampling and Sampling Distributions

Class Activity #1 (Group or individual)

Although a sampling distribution is a theoretical distribution, have students try to construct an empirical sampling distribution. Have students select one interval-ratio level variable from the General Social Survey. Have SPSS calculate the mean of this variable. For our purposes, we will consider the entire sample of respondents in the General Social Survey as our “population.” Next, have each student or group draw 25 random samples of 10 cases and record the mean for each. For example, 4 group members would have 100 samples of 10 cases each. Take the recorded means and enter them into a new SPSS datasheet. Now, calculate the mean of these sample means? How close is it to the mean of our original “population?” What explains the difference?

Class Activity #2 (Group or individual)

Have each group or student select three newspaper or magazine articles that report on the results of a survey or poll. Have the group or individual students answer the following questions about each article:

a) How was the sample selected? Is it drawn randomly? Is it systematic or stratified?

b) From what population was the sample drawn?

c) Would you recommend that the article include additional information that would help the reader understand the sampling approach?

Class Activity #3 (Group or individual)

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

Your task is to estimate the proportion of students at your college or university who expect to take longer than 4 years to finish their degree. Develop a suitable sampling frame and sampling approach. Although you have much latitude, your sample must be a random sample . Document the process of data collection. Is it easy to define and collect information from a sample? Why or why not? What sort of problems did you run into and how often? Present your work to the rest of the class.

Class Activity #4 (Group or individual)

Have students brainstorm on when they have used the relative frequency theory in their daily lives. Have each group come up with two examples and share their examples with the class. For example, students may use their knowledge of what days campus parking lots are most full to estimate their chances of finding a parking space on any particular day.