

Additional Activities/Suggestions for Instructors

Chapter 2: Data Coding, Entry, and Checking

One of the activities that we have used for several years it to have students develop their own questionnaire for use in the classroom. We used this process in an earlier version of this book and it worked quite well. The students enjoy asking questions about themselves.

We don't like to make the questionnaire too long (10-20 questions) depending on the size of the class. If you have a large class, we recommend breaking the class up into groups of around 20 so data entry is not too time consuming. We have included two appendices to this document (Appendix A: Developing a College Classroom Questionnaire and Appendix B: Codebook and Data File). This was the information used to develop the College Student Data file on the CD Rom that comes with the text.

If you do this activity as an in class development instead of using the one we developed, here is how we recommend proceeding. Ask the students develop the questionnaire on the board. Be sure they select (or help them select) a variety of scales of measurement, so they can practice with different statistics throughout the length of the book.

In the past we have used the following to get students started:

- What is your sex?
- What age category do you fit into this? (the scales will vary on this one depending upon whether it is a graduate or undergraduate class).
- What is your height in inches?
- What is your same sex parent's height in inches?
- How many hours do you study a week?
- How many hours do you work a week?
- How many hours of TV do you watch a week?

See appendices for more examples.

We have two cautions here. The students like to select broadly categorical questions, which is OK, but more than one or two nominal questions can be problematic. For example, a common question is something like – “What is your favorite car?” Obviously this can be difficult to use in quantitative data analysis if 30 different car names are selected.

We also like to include at least one Likert scale item. This of course comes in handy when you talk about scales of measurement, normal distribution versus ordinal.

The reason this method of instrument or survey development works well, is that students know or understand the data well. For example, one question might be: “Is

there a difference between the height of males and females?” Students know that the difference is observable in most classes. This allows the instructor to discuss the meaning of effect size in a way that students can understand more clearly, for example if $d=1.5$, then there is a one standard deviation between the two groups and a one standard deviation is usually observable (height, weight, IQ, etc.) by our senses.