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Seven Basic Principles

SUGGESTED COURSE EXTENSIONS

■ A. REVIEWING

Find a journal article in your field. Use it to answer the following questions.

1. Is the context (W's) of the study specified? If not, which W's are missing?
2. Who is the intended audience for that journal, and what is their expected level of familiarity with the statistical methods in the article?
3.
 - a. Are definitions provided for all technical terms unfamiliar to the audience?
 - b. Are all acronyms used in the paper spelled out and defined?
 - c. Are methods or concepts named using terms familiar to that audience?
4. List the major tools (text, tables, charts) used to present numbers.
 - a. For one example of each type of tool, identify its intended purpose in that context (e.g., presenting detailed numeric values; conveying a general pattern).
 - b. Use the criteria in chapter 2 of *Writing about Numbers* to evaluate whether it is an appropriate choice for that task.
 - c. If so, explain why. If not, suggest a more effective tool for that context.
5. Find a numeric fact or comparison in the introduction or conclusion to the article.
 - a. Is it clear what question those numbers are intended to answer?
 - b. Are the raw data reported in the text, a table, or chart?
 - c. Are the values interpreted in the text?
 - d. Revise the paragraph to address any shortcomings you identified in parts a through c.
6. Find a description of an association between two variables. Are the direction and magnitude of the association specified? If not, rewrite the description.
7. Find a description of a pattern involving more than three values shown in a table or chart. Is the pattern summarized or described piecemeal? Use the GEE approach to revise the description.

■ B. WRITING PAPERS

1. Describe a bivariate association among variables in your data, including the *W*'s, units, direction, and magnitude.
2.
 - a. Write an introduction that integrates the concepts and methods used in your study.
 - b. Use the criteria in chapter 2 of *Writing about Numbers* to assess use of jargon.
 - c. Revise your introduction to fix any problems you identified in part b.
3. Graph the distribution of a continuous variable and describe it using an analogy.
4. Use the GEE approach to describe a three-way association among variables in your data.

■ C. REVISING PAPERS

1. Repeat questions A.1 through A.7 for a paper you have previously written.
2. Have someone who is unfamiliar with your research question peer-edit the answers to question C.1, using the checklist from chapter 2 of *Writing about Numbers*.