

The Value of an Education
An introductory module using Student CHIP
and data from the U.S. Census

This packet includes the following teaching materials:

- **In-Class Exercise** (one-page handout to distribute to students. It involves individual guesses, group consensus, and then demonstration of census data.)
- **Homework Assignment** (handout to distribute at the end of class: it includes graphs for them to make and brief writing assignments.)

This module has the following objectives:

Skills

1. To orient students to WebCHIP, by in-class demonstration
2. To learn to identify the contents of various datasets, read marginals, and read a percentaged crosstab table.
3. To give beginning practice writing about data.
4. To provide a brief homework assignment beginning to graphically illustrate data.

Substance

1. To clarify common misperceptions about the frequency and value of a college education.
2. To use collaborative learning techniques.

This module was developed by Susanne Morgan, Department of Sociology, Ithaca College. It uses datasets and materials from SSDAN, Social Science Data Analysis Network, directed by William H. Frey of the Population Studies Center, The University of Michigan. The idea for the module comes from Tony Catanese, Department of Economics, DePauw University.

In-Class Exercise
The Value of a College Education

In the first column below, please write your guess as to the percentages of the adult (over 25) U.S. population which has completed the following levels of education:

Table 1

<i>Education</i>	<i>Your guess</i>	<i>Group consensus</i>	<i>Census Data</i>
<9 years			
10-12 years			
HighSchoolGrad			
Some College			
College Grad			
Master's Degree			
Ph.D./Professional			

Now please write your guess as to the percentages of the adult, full-time employed U.S. Population which earns the following amounts per year.

Table 2

<i>Earnings</i>	<i>Your guess</i>	<i>Group consensus</i>	<i>Census Data</i>
<15 K			
15-25K			
25-35K			
35-50K			
50K+			

When you have completed your guesses, meet with a group of 4-6 and arrive at a group guess. Enter that guess in the second column.

After the groups report on their guesses, fill in the actual data from the data sets in the CEN1990 file, which will be projected or handed out. To find this information, create a Marginals table in each of the datasets.

To open the datasets in CEN1990 in WebCHIP. To load the dataset:

1. Go to <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts>
2. Click on the "Data" in the menu bar
3. From there, click "Browse" on the left sidebar. Find "**census1990**" in the drop-down box and select it.

4. Scroll down through the list of data sets until you find the specified dataset
Highlight and click “submit.”

Table 1 Data: EDOCC9.dat

(You can also click [here](#) to open the dataset in WebCHIP)

Table 2 Data: EARN9.dat

(You can also click [here](#) to open the dataset in WebCHIP)

Homework Assignment

The Value of a College Education

This assignment uses WebCHIP and the WORK9-25 data set in the CEN 1990 folder.

To load the dataset:

1. Go to <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts>
2. Click on the "Data" in the menu bar
3. From there, click "Browse" on the left sidebar. Find "**census1990**" in the drop-down box and select it.
4. Scroll down through the list of data sets until you find "**work9-25.dat**" Highlight and click "submit." You should now be in a window that shows a description of the dataset.
5. You can also click [here](#) to launch the dataset in WebCHIP.

Then make tables using these steps:

- Creating a *Marginals* table to see the variables and total percentages.
- Creating a percent across crosstab with EDUC as the first variable (the first selected goes in the rows) and EARNING as the second variable (for the columns.)

See what you can discover in the tables.

Before beginning to fill in the graphs, be sure to be clear about the statements you want to make. The form is "Of all the, % are " where the ad refers to the variable in which you have percentages, the variable in which all the percentages add up to about 100%.

Make a bar graph of Earnings by Education, contrasting the percentages of people earning less than 15K and over 50K in each education group. Use a pencil and indicate the percentage of each in the appropriate bar. Label the graph appropriately, indicating the variables, the sample, and the source.

Write a short paragraph describing what you have learned about the value of a college education. Make general statements, and illustrate them with examples from the tables or from your graph.

Earnings by Education

