

Race and Poverty in the United States

Learning Objectives

Skill

After using this module, students will gain skills in:

- Using software to access and analyze census data
- To learn to identify variables and to read marginals, and a crosstab table percentaged in two directions.
- To give beginning practice writing about data.
- To provide a brief homework assignment beginning to graphically illustrate data.
- To use collaborative learning techniques.

Substance

- To clarify common misperceptions about the racial distributions in the US population.

Class setting, Equipment, and Materials

In class, with projection from a Macintosh. Full lab is not necessary.

Materials:

- In-class Exercise: Quiz and grid for answers
- Transparency of In-class Exercise, enlarged and omitting column 1.
- Instructions and grids for the homework assignment.

Faculty steps:

- Distribute In-class Exercise: Race and Poverty in the U.S. for individual completion. Remind them that the numbers should be percentages of the U.S. population.
- Form students into groups of 4-6 and instruct them to arrive at one group guess.
- Briefly, have the groups report their answers, and record them on the board.
- Open WebCHIP, **CPS05**, and the **HHPOV05** dataset. You can access WebCHIP through the SSDAN website. Use these instructions:
 - <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts/data/>
 - From there, click "Browse" on the left sidebar. Find "CPS05" in the drop-down box and select it.
 - Scroll down through the list of data sets until you find "HHPOV05. Highlight and click "submit." This will bring up the data set in the WebCHIP program and it is ready for analysis.
 - You can also click [here](#) to open the dataset in WebCHIP.
- Use the *Marginals* function to see the variables in the dataset. This screen gives the answers to the quiz. Ask students to fill in the correct answers on their copies of the In-class Exercise. Note

that "NLWhite" or non-latino white, should be added at the top of the first table. (The Census Bureau has separate categories for race and ethnicity, and Latino are included as an ethnic group. This dataset combines the categories, although it is awkward.)

- Ask students to speculate on the relationship between race and poverty. Are blacks or whites more likely to be poor? Are there more white people or minorities in the US who are poor? Make it clear that these are two different questions. We can ask "of all the blacks, what percentage are poor, compared to of all the whites, what percentage are poor?" And we can ask "Of all the poor people in the U.S., what percentage are white?"
- Create a *Percent Across Crosstab* to make a table with RaceLat in the rows (click first) and Pov in the columns (click second.) Spend some time asking students to read the table. The form should be "Of all the whites, ...% are poor, while of all the blacks, . . % are poor."
- Then create a *Percent Down Crosstab* and interpret the second table. This will take the form "Of all those in poverty, ...% are white, and% are black."

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- Discuss the reasons the answers seem so different. Go back to the marginals they recorded on their In-class Exercise sheets to see that there are many more whites than blacks in the U.S.

In-class activity:

Ask each student to choose 3 numbers from either of the tables and write an interpretative statement about it. Suggest the form, "Of all the % are" Have them work in pairs to check their answers, and clarify any confusion in class. Collect the papers.

Homework Assignment: Graphing race and poverty in the U.S.

This assignment does not require them to use a computer, as the answers will be on their handout of the two tables from class. However, encourage them to try to enter WebCHIP and the HHPOV data set, and to see what else they can discover in it. They should form teams of two.