Teaching Statistics in a Community College – Connections

Presenters:
Mary Parker, Austin Community College
Brian Smith, McGill University

In this session, participants will consider introducing new topics into courses they teach. The session will begin with two presentations.   Mary Parker will discuss how she includes regression in a freshman math elective course.   Brian Smith will discuss how he includes time series analysis into an elementary statistics course. Both will focus on which aspects of the topic they chose to include at that level and why.

Most of the time in this session will be devoted to small groups discussing how they might introduce a particular topic into a particular course. A list of possible topics for discussion will be provided as well as some suggested questions to use in deciding how much detail should be included.   In small groups, participants will choose a particular topic and discuss how they would include it as a new topic in a course.   If time allows, the group may discuss a second topic as well.

While the main focus of this session is for each participant to consider how they would make choices about which aspects of the topic to include, we will also have available examples from various collections of teaching modules, articles with discussion questions, and other resources that teachers could adapt.

Resources for this session are available from http://www.austincc.edu/mparker/uscots/

We who teach in community colleges spend most of our days working with colleagues who are not also statisticians or statistics teachers. That brings us some special opportunities to enrich our courses and increase the number of students who see statistics as useful in making sense of the world.   Some of us are well-connected with the public schools and aware of how the mathematics and science curricula in K-12 include more work on data analysis than in the past. Students and faculty members in college business, science, social science, and vocational classes work with data frequently. How can we use our connections to enhance our statistics courses and to bring more statistics into the other courses we teach?   In this breakout session, we'll discuss strategies for choosing topics and the appropriate depth. In small groups, we'll consider and critique some examples of statistics in non-statistics courses. Participants will receive a handout discussing strategies for choosing topics and the depth, some examples, and a list of resources (mostly web resources.)