## SASSY Good Habits

1. Check the codebook for the dataset that you are using.
2. Be clear about the research question you are attempting to answer. What is your outcome and what are the key predictors you are interested in? Are there potentially important variables for which you should control?
3. Take some time before you open SAS to sketch out your analysis: How are you operationalizing each part of your research question?
4. Check the SAS log after each time you run code.
5. Save the SAS log after your final run with a code file.
6. Come up with a file naming convention and stick to it. I have successfully used the date followed by a one word description of the file. For example: 07_14_09log or 07_14_09output
7. Print your logs, code, and output to pdf files so you can view these files even when you are using a computer that does not have SAS.
8. Draw the graphs and tables that you want before you write your SAS code; this is particularly important for PROC TABULATE which is not an intuitive piece of code.
9. In PROC GPLOT and PROC PLOT the y-axis comes before the *
10. The round option uses normal rounding rules.
11. Before you conduct any goodness-of-fit tests using difference in -2LL statistic, make sure the models you are comparing are nested (that is are identical except for the addition or one or a set of predictors whose effect you are testing.
12. Make sure you have the same N (number of cases) included in all models in a hierarchy. Without identical N, your models are not comparable.
13. In regard to point 12, it is very important to take care of missing values for key variables in your analysis. There are several strategies for taking care of missingness.
14. With dichotomous variables, recode so that the values are 0 and 1 where 0 stands for the absence of the state, condition, or characteristic and where 1 stands for the presence of the state, condition, or characteristic. For example, 0=not depressed and 1=depressed or 0=not employed and 1=employed or 0=male and 1=female
15. Determine a naming convention for variables that will make sense to you overtime. For example, with the above dichotomous variables, the name should be equivalent to the value represented by 1: Female is a good variable name for the variable with the values 0=male and 1=female.
16. There are several different kinds of hypotheses you can test with a series of hierarchical models. These are:
17. Domain vs. Range
18. Use language carefully: identify, significant, specify, likelihood, probability, estimate, calculate, fit, run, PROC vs. procedure