Some R Help Hints

1. **Finding Help with R.**

   A. When you know the function name, you can find details of the syntax and options as well as examples. This is usually the kind of help students will be looking for during the semester.

   To find help on a specific function (for example mean) just type ?mean or go to Help and search for "mean".

   If you attempt to use a function and get a message like "Error: could not find the function "mean"", check that you have the required package loaded. Searching the help in RStudio can give information about the package associated with a particular function. See below for more information about packages.

   B. When you want to do something, but don't know the function name.
      - Rseek.org
      - Quick-R: www.statmethods.net
      - Just google it!

   C. You want to work from a reference manual. R manuals are available r-project.org under Documentation, Manuals. Note the link for Contributed Documentation.

2. **Checking the data and object type.**
   ALWAYS look at the data! The View() and str() functions are very helpful.

   A common problem that new (and old) users run into is object-type problems. For example, a function only accepts a matrix as input, but you are using a data.frame. Try using str() and help for the function.

3. **Installing and loading packages.**
   R comes with a standard set of packages. Others are available for download and installation. Before using a package for the first time, you may need to <u>install</u> it. This step only needs to be done once! If a package is already <u>installed</u>, you will still need to <u>load</u> it during the R session when you want to use it.

   From RStudio, use the "Packages" tab to install and load packages. The list shows which packages have already been installed. When installing additional packages through RStudio, be sure the "Install dependencies" box is checked! To load a package through RStudio, just check the box next to the package name. Packages can also be loaded using the library() or require() functions.

   The sessionInfo() function will give you information about R and package versions and which packages have been attached/loaded.