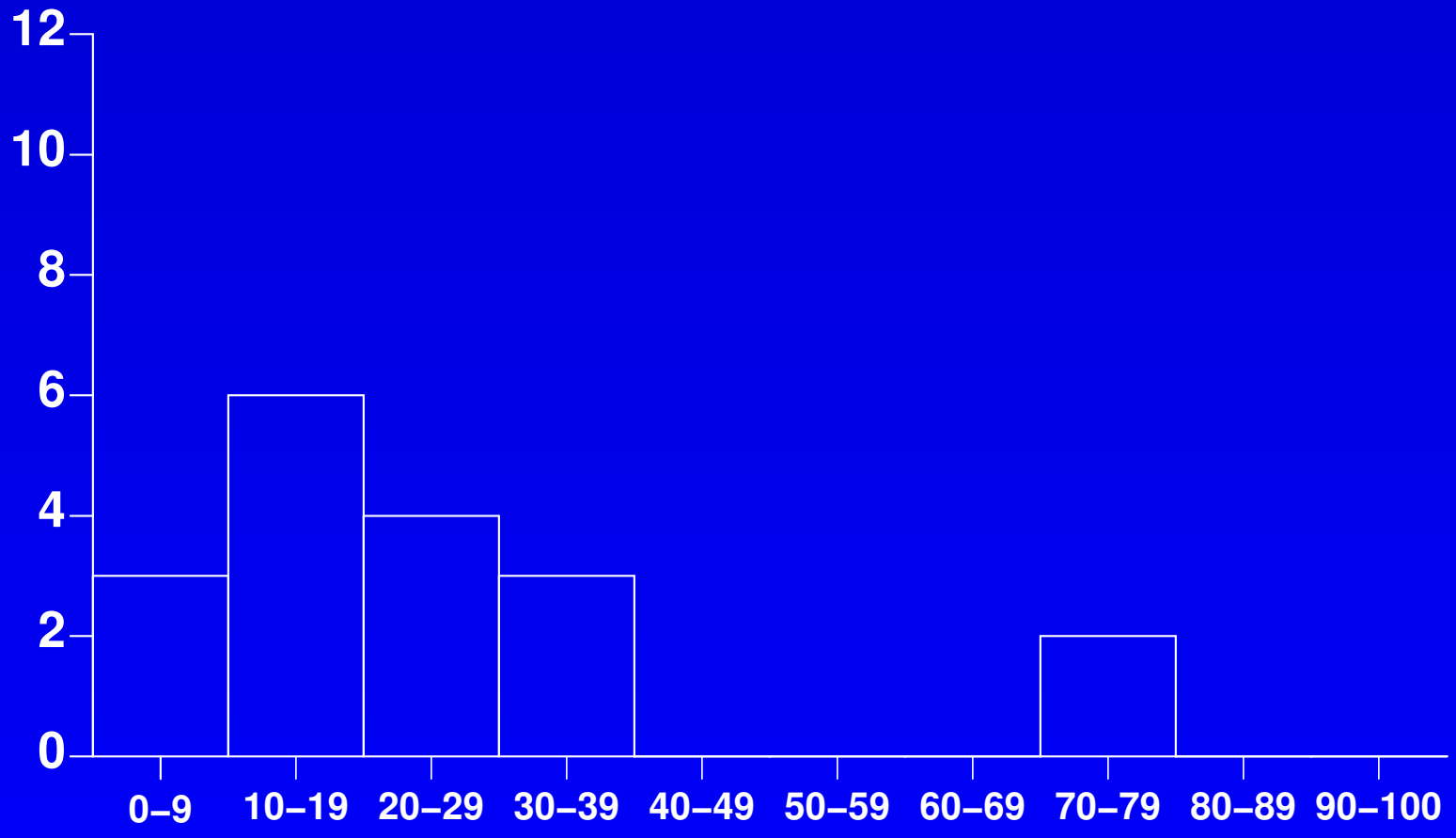
Guess Two-Thirds of the Average

- Choose a number between 0 and 100.
- A prize of $10 will be split equally between all students whose number is closest to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the average of the numbers chosen (the mean number). (That's $\frac{2}{3} \times$ the mean.)
- What should you choose?
- Write down your answer.
- What is the equilibrium choice?

Results:



Two-Thirds Of Mean vote, Term 1, SGTM, 2007

In detail:

- The mean of the 18 numbers chosen was 24.44
  Two-thirds of the mean was 16.3
  One person chose 16: and the winner is

  Gerald Lundgren

  who receives $10 from me. (The runner-up chose 15.)

- Two chose 50 or *above*; (50 is the random mean).
  Three chose about 33 (i.e., about $\frac{2}{3}$ of 50)
  Three chose about 22 (i.e., about $\frac{2}{3}$ of 33)
  Two chose about 15 (i.e., about $\frac{2}{3}$ of 22)
  Two chose about 10 (i.e., about $\frac{2}{3}$ of 15)
  One chose 7 (i.e., about $\frac{2}{3}$ of 10)
  One chose 1 or less.

John Maynard Keynes' "Beauty Contest":

"...professional investment may be likened to those newspaper competitions in which the competitors have to pick out the six prettiest faces from a hundred photographs, the prize being awarded to the competitor whose choice most nearly corresponds to the average preferences of the competitors as a whole; so that each competitor has to pick, not those faces which he himself finds prettiest, but those which he thinks likeliest to catch the fancy of the other competitors, all of whom are looking at the problem from the same point of view.

It is not a case of choosing those which, to the best of one's judgment, are really the prettiest, nor even those which average opinion genuinely thinks the prettiest.

We have reached the third degree where we devote our intelligences to anticipating what average opinion expects the average opinion to be."

(*The General Theory*, p.156, 1936.)