Primary Research Paper Instructions

**Topic and Research:** You will survey 20 people in two different groups (about 10 people in each group). The groups should differ from each other in some way related to social connection. For example, you could survey people who have siblings versus people who are an only child, or people who have roommates versus people who live alone.

When you survey these people, you will be asking them questions about their emotional health. You should choose some aspect of emotional health to focus on specifically. For example, you could ask questions about self-image, about culture shock, about test anxiety, and so on.

Specifically, you are doing this survey research in order to find out answers to this research question:

**Is there a relationship between people’s social connection and emotional health?**

In your paper, you will explain the motivation for your study, explain how you collected data, explain your results, and then make a tentative claim about…

1. why you think your two groups answered the way they did, and

2. your opinions of your survey (e.g., how effective or ineffective it was, what we can learn from it or not learn from it, etc.)

IMPORTANT!!! Note that you will not give your own opinion about the value of social connection. You are the researcher, not one of the participants. Therefore, you will not answer your own survey questions in this paper. You will just report on your results and what we can learn from them.

You do NOT need to do secondary research (from books and articles) for this paper. If you do choose to use secondary research material, you will be graded strictly on your APA citations, but we will not talk about APA citations until later. So I recommend that you wait to do secondary research until we talk about it in class first! 😊

**Organization:** Your paper should include five sections: introduction, methods, body, discussion, and appendix. We will talk about each of these sections in class next week.

**Length:** 3-5 pages + appendix, according to the formatting requirements in the syllabus

**Dates:** Survey questions due on ICON Tuesday, May 22nd
Survey notes due on ICON Tuesday, May 29th
Outline due on ICON Thursday, May 31st
First draft due in class Monday, June 4th
Second draft due in class and on ICON on Friday, June 8th
Third draft (optional) due in class and on ICON Wednesday, June 13th
Before you start, you need to make some **important decisions** about . . .

I. **Your research question:** Which groups of people do you want to survey, and which aspect of emotional health will you focus on in your survey? You can put these together in a number of different ways to individualize your research question. For example:

- Do people with siblings make friends more easily than people who are an only child?
- Do international students with roommates deal with culture shock better than international students who live alone?
- Do students who call their parents daily/weekly have more self-esteem than students who never talk to their parents?
- Do students who volunteer regularly in the community get over breakups faster than students who don't volunteer?
- Do students who spend more than 5 hours a day online have more depression than students who spend less time online?

These are just some examples to get you thinking. You must choose your own individualized research question and report to the class on Monday.

II. **Your participants:** How will you find people to survey?

a. You should include at least **two groups** of people in your survey and compare their answers.

b. Try to **balance the number of people in each group** (i.e., you don’t want to interview 17 only children and 3 people with siblings).

c. Ideally, you should also try to **balance the other characteristics** of the people in each group (for example, if you interview 10 people who live alone and 10 people who have roommates, but 9 of the people who live alone are female and 8 of the people who have roommates are male, it can be hard to tell if the difference in answers is related to having roommates or gender). However, this kind of balance may not be perfectly possible in such a small survey; just try to aim for it as much as you can.

III. **Your survey questions:** Your questions will determine how you measure a person’s level of self-esteem, or culture shock, or text anxiety. What information do you need to know, and what **question formats** will you use?

a. e.g., multiple choice, true/false, or open response

b. Multiple choice and true/false are easier to analyze after you collect data

c. Open response allows you to get information that you might not be expecting

d. Ideally, you might want to include at least one of each type of question to get a variety of data

IV. **Your survey methods:** How do you want to **survey** these people?

a. e.g., in person, by email, over skype, etc.

V. **Your reporting methods:** How will you represent the data in your paper?

a. e.g., through charts, statistics, quotes, etc.

Start thinking about these decisions over the weekend. The more ideas you have, the more prepared you will be to jump into your research design next week! Don’t worry; we will have time for questions next week in class.