Full instructions for Correlation Assignment
Alice Frye, Department of Psychology
University of Massachusetts, Lowell

STEP 1: **CHOOSING A TOPIC**   Email by____   1% of grade

1. You will need to focus on one area of child psychopathology symptoms, such as autistic symptoms, depressive symptoms, ADHD symptoms, anxiety symptoms and etc. Choose something you are curious about or interested in, since this will form the basis of your analyses and your paper. So state which area of symptoms you are interested in.
2. You need to choose another common variable (besides age or gender) that could be related to those symptoms, and this variable should also be measured on a rank ordered or continuous scale in the studies you review.   The other variable could be something such as another type of symptoms (for example, autistic and depressive symptoms) a measure of income or socioeconomic status, a measure of stressful life events (which could also include abuse history events), academic achievement, or some other common variable.
3. Choose which age group you are interested in, and if you are interested in one or another gender, or both.

STEP 2: **8 ABSTRACTS**   Email by ___   1% of grade

For your paper you will need to review four articles that are specifically about, or include some focus on the two variables you have chosen. So to begin with you should **find 8 abstracts** that appear to meet these criteria. Create a word document and copy and paste the abstracts into it. (all INTO ONE DOCUMENT—I DO NOT WANT 8 DOCUMENTS and I DO NOT WANT AN EMAIL WITH YOUR ABSTRACT COPIED DIRECTLY INTO THE EMAIL), and email them to me. This way I can look at your abstracts and make sure you are on the right track.

STEP 3: **4 ARTICLE REVIEWS**   Email by ___   10% of grade

Please note, for <u>each article</u> you review, your review should be about <u>2 single spaced pages</u>. <u>Not answering the below questions thoroughly and clearly will result in losing points on this assignment.</u>

1. Review the four articles you choose which all include the two variables you have chosen for correlation.
2. For each article note the:
   a. Sample size
   b. Type of sample (clinical sample, a community-school sample, some other type of sample?)
   c. The sample diversity (race, ethnicity, gender)
3. Note and describe how each study measured your two variables of interest:
   a. What scale did they use to measure ADHD & bipolar symptoms?
   b. What was the range of the scale?
   c. How was the scale scored?
   d. Note if the study was cross-sectional or longitudinal.
4. What did each study hypothesize about the relationship (correlation) between these two variables?
   a. Why? (Theory or explanation)
   b. Did the authors believe the variables would be related?

     c. In which direction did they believe the variables would be related?

5. What did each study actually find about how the variables were related (correlation)?

    a. What was the direction of the correlation?

    b. What was the strength of the correlation?

    c. Was the correlation significant or not?

6. Finally, after reading these four articles, if you had data representing these variables, what would you hypothesize about how they are related?

    a. Would you hypothesize they are differently related for males and females?

    b. Do you have a hypothesis about how these variables would be related to age, based on what you have read?

STEP 4: ANALYSIS, SUMMARY, REFLECTION   Email by ____,   10% of grade

1. Using the data I provide you with, in SPSS, run a correlation between your two variables. You will graph the correlation, and interpret the graph. Then look at the output and interpret the correlation. You may find it necessary to review the posted documents about running and interpreting a correlation, and understanding correlation to complete this assignment.

2. Answer these questions, in complete sentences. How strong is it? What direction is it in? Is it significant? Is it what you hypothesized, based on your reading?

3. Finally, in a page, sum up the findings from the four articles you reviewed in some detail (you may find it helpful to refer to your original reviews), and reflect on what your own data findings mean, in terms of the literature you reviewed. Be sure to reflect on what additional variables that you did not measure, might be important to examine in a future study, and speculate about how those variables might influence the correlation you examined. Speculate on how the samples in your original readings might differ from the sample you have by age or gender. Assume that the sample for your analyses is a school based community sample.

How to graph a correlation in SPSS

1. In the toolbar at the top of the database page Go to GRAPHS

2. Click on CHARTBUILDER

    A dialogue box will appear, click "OK."

3. A large dialogue box will appear. In the upper half on the left you will see your variables. In the lower half on the left you will see a choice of graph types.

    Choose "scatter/dot." To the right, still in the lower half, several graphic choices for types of charts will appear. Click on the first one in the top row: simple scatter.

    Then in the upper half of the dialogue box you will see that a scatter plot has appeared. Drag and drop one of your correlation variables onto the X axis, and the other one onto the Y axis. Then, below, click "OK." A graph will appear. You can (and should) copy and paste this graph into your word document for this assignment. This is the graph you are looking at for your interpretation. Consider how the graph reflects the numerical correlation coefficient. Again, you may find it helpful to refer to the slides on "understanding correlation."

SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

Finally, in a page, sum up the findings from the four articles you reviewed, and reflect on what your own data findings mean, in terms of the literature you reviewed. Be sure to reflect on what additional variables that you did not measure, might be important to examine in a future study, and speculate about how those variables might influence the correlation you examined.

STEP FIVE: **MINI PAPER**   Email by _____,   13% of grade

1. Title page—you will get a template for this which you fill in with your own info
2. Abstract—you will get a template for this which you fill in with your own info
3. Introduction—you write 3 or 4 paragraphs based on your article review
4. Method—very brief template which you fill in
5. Results—fill your results in—just a brief paragraph
6. Discussion—2 or at most 3 paragraphs about your findings, whether they were expected, how they relate to your original literature, and what future studies might examine
7. References—your references (APA format)
8. Table—your correlation (APA format template provided)