

## Experimental Design, Method Sections and Summarizing

**Instructions:** Pick a topic in the field of psychology and find empirical papers describing different experimental tasks used to address the same research question.

### Before class:

Divide students into groups. Each group is sent 1 experimental task/excerpt from the Method section of an empirical paper and has to bring a 150-word summary of the experimental task to class.

### In class:

**Part I.** Get students into their groups based on assigned experimental task. These are the expert groups. In their group, students have to go over their summaries answering the questions below. Then each group has to pick the most informative and accurate summary/paraphrase. (5 min)

Questions for student to consider:

- What is the Independent variable?
- What is the Dependent variable?
- What aspect of ToM/mental state is the task testing?
- Is this specific aspect of ToM more or less important than false belief (assessed with the Sally-Anne task)?
- Go over each step of the task: is the scenario acted out with props? Is the child looking at visuals/booklet?

**Part II.** Next, take the best summary/paraphrase from each group and give it to another group. Each group now has to discuss the summary they have received and answer the same questions as in Part I. (10 min)

**Part III.** Each group presents to the whole class on the activity, whose summary they have received, by going through the questions above. The instructor and the expert group correct any misconceptions. If possible, ask students to act out the task. (5 min per group)

**Part IV.** Discussion about summarizing and the amount of detail that should be included in a Method section of a paper. (10-15 min)

Some questions to ask:

- Did the paraphrase you read provide you with enough information to replicate the task?
- What makes for a good paraphrase?
- What are the key components?
- Why is it important to include enough information in the Method sections of your paper?

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- What is the purpose of replication?