

## Class Activity: Deciphering Experimental Research Reports

### Introduction

You have been given a copy of a fairly dense research paper that may or may not conform exactly to the ideal form described in class. Several individuals in the class have copies of the same paper. You will be working individually and in groups to deconstruct your articles and determine their meanings.

### Tasks

Please carry these out in the order described.

First, individually, *scan* your papers and ascertain where the four major sections begin.

Now write a one-sentence summary of the question the research addresses. If there are more than one question, write a summary of each one. Try to finish this task in fewer than ten minutes.

Form groups based on the papers you read. Compare notes, and reach consensus on the questions and subdivisions of the paper. Assign one group member to keep a record of your findings. Try to finish this in fewer than eight minutes.

Now, working individually again, identify the hypothesis (or hypotheses), the independent variables, and the dependent variables. Ascertain if possible how many subjects (participants) were included in the experiment, and how the results were measured (what instruments were used). Allow eight minutes for this task.

Once again, form consensus in groups about the hypotheses, variable, and instrumentation. *Try* to do this within ten minutes.

Now, still working as groups, discuss how the research question fits into the broader background. Does it seem important? Does it relate in any way to multimedia? Scan the *Discussion* section, whatever it may have been called, and ascertain whether the researcher is making sensible recommendations.

Finally, try to summarize each section of the paper with a fairly short paragraph. Make sure the hypotheses and variables are included, as well as some indication of the relative value of the research. We will discuss your progress on Monday.