COGS 153/253
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HW5: Research method
Assigned: February 17, 2011
Due: February 25, 2011

The goal of this assignment is to help you develop a method that will allow you to answer a research question. This could be an early version of the method in your project proposal, but it doesn't have to be. In working on this assignment, please feel free to consult your classmates, or anyone else for that matter. But everyone should have their own distinct research question. Please double-space all work and use a font size no smaller than 12. The homework is due at the beginning of class on the due date.

Begin with a research question, one that has the target properties from HW4 (interesting, answerable, unanswered). Your job is to describe a method to address this question.

A method description is a very formulaic type of writing. To do it right, you'll need to learn a new, very technically precise, way of writing. In a methods section, you want to describe the method in enough technical detail for someone else to exactly replicate what you did (or in this case, intend to do). I'd recommend that you take a look at the methods sections from papers that you've read for this class or others to get an idea of exactly what technical vocabulary is used for research like what you're going to be writing about. If there's vocabulary you don't know, look it up.

There are a couple parts to an effective method description:

1. The overall logic of the method. What is your research question, how are you testing it, and what do you predict the result will be?
2. Participants. How will they be recruited, what population will they be sampled from (what are their expected demographics), and how many will there be (in each condition, if the design is between participants)?
3. Materials. What will the stimuli be like, how will they be developed (including norming if relevant), and how many will there be?
4. Design. This includes the number and type of independent and dependent variables which will be within and which between participants and items, as well as any other design details, like whether controls will be included, counterbalancing, and lists.
5. Procedure. What will happen over the course of the experiment? At the global level, this includes instructions, training, and the actual experiment. Also include detail about what will happen in each trial.

Do your best to write succinctly, clearly, and using the technical vocabulary and normal formulations that you see in other methods sections.

You should be able to do all of this in 500 words or fewer.