Title of Resource | Activity: Dissecting an Abstract
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Brief Description: | This activity has students read and breakdown the abstract of a published research study. It is intended to help them learn the key elements of an abstract for an APA style research report.
Keywords: |Communicating Science, Writing APA style Research Reports, Abstracts
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Additional Information:
**Instructors:**
This is a quick activity to help students learn the key elements of an APA style research report. The activity should help prepare them to write an abstract themselves. An answer key is included.

This activity is best to do after you introduce how to write an abstract and cover what this section should include. Please see below for a brief overview of the key elements. Students may work on this activity individually or in pairs.

An abstract is provided but any well-written abstract may be used for this activity. Students may benefit from dissecting an abstract for an article they have already read for class. You can talk about reading the article for content versus reading it for writing elements.

**An abstract should include the following elements:**
- the problem under investigation in one sentence  
  - hypotheses, purpose, or research questions  
- the research method  
  - participants pertinent characteristics  
  - data collection process  
  - manipulations and/or measurement  
- the research findings  
  - results without numbers  
- a discussion (extremely limited)  
  - conclusions, implication and/or applications

Note: The abstract used suggested for this activity is from:
Dissecting an Abstract

Instructions: A well-written abstract includes several key elements. Please read the following abstract and identify where each of the following elements begins and ends.

1. the problem under investigation
2. the research method
3. the research findings
4. a discussion

Abstract

The current research examines the effect of self-regulation on the likelihood of committing infidelity. Thirty-two college students in exclusive romantic relationships interacted through a private chat room with an opposite-sex confederate. Prior to this interaction, a food-restriction task depleted half the participants of self-control. As predicted, depleted levels of self-regulation increased the likelihood of infidelity. Specifically, depleted participants were more likely to both accept a coffee date from and supply a personal telephone number to the confederate than non-depleted participants. Weakened self-control may be one potential cause for the levels of infidelity occurring in romantic partnerships today.

Keywords: infidelity, interpersonal relationships, self-regulation

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