Psychology – ATAR Year 11

Task 3 – Unit 1

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**Assessment Type:**

Investigation

**Conditions:**

Period allowed for completion of the task: 1 week – including 3 sessions in class.

*One session is for data collection and to start writing the report and the other two to write the report under teacher supervision.*

**Date Due:**

**Task Weighting**

20% of the school mark for this units

**Marks:**

This assessment is marked out of 43.

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The Cocktail Party Problem – Selective vs. Divided Attention

This task requires you to investigate Cherry’s (1953) phenomena of selective vs. divided attention. You will be provided with the materials and procedures to conduct an ethically approved investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation, you need to write a 1000-word report using APA conventions.

Your report should be composed of the following components:

* Abstract [100 words]
* Introduction [250 words] (7 marks)
* Method [200 words] (8 marks)
* Results [150 words] (8 marks)
* Discussion [300 words] (13 marks)

You will also be allocated marks based on

* Citations and references list using APA conventions (3 marks)
* Communication skills, including using APA conventions for tables, graphs and written format (4 marks)
* You must use a range of references.

The report must be in .pdf format and e-submitted via CONEQT.

REFERENCE

Cherry, E. C. (1953). Some experiments on the recognition of speech, with one and with two ears. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, *25*, 975-97

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**Background**

The term ‘attention’ is used to describe the process of focusing on one or more specific stimuli while ignoring other stimuli that may be present (van Iersel et al., 2005). Attention may be paid to internal stimuli, such as thoughts, feelings and memories, or to external stimuli, such as sights, sounds or smells (Gray, 2007). Individuals have the ability to choose to focus a high level of attention on a particular stimulus, such as listening to a news item. Psychologists call this *selective attention.* Individuals also have the ability to divide their attention between two or more sources of information, such as hearing the phone ring while talking to someone. Psychologists call this *divided attention.*

The aim of this investigation is to compare selective and divided attention. Specifically, you will investigate which form of attention—selective or divided—allows a listener to pick up more auditory information.

**Your role**

Your role in this investigation will be to:

* participate in the data gathering activity for this investigation
* contribute to small group and whole class discussions about this investigation
* provide a critical analysis and interpretation of the data that has been collected
* produce your own investigative write-up in the style of an investigation report.

**Data collection**

The class will be divided into groups of four (or five) with two (or three) students in each group allocated to the role of participants and two students (or three) allocated to the role of experimenters. In your group, use random allocation techniques to assign the participants to either condition 1 or condition 2 and then assign the experimenters to the role of either experimenter 1 or experimenter 2.

Each student should then carefully read the relevant instruction sheet that has been provided for him or her before conducting this activity. When this has been done, the group should conduct the activity based on the roles and instructions they have been given.

The total number of correct responses given by each participant will be collected from all participants, collated and calculated to form a set of results for the class to use.

**Timeframe**

Data collection will take about 30 minutes and the required write-up, which will be completed in class time, will take about 3 hours.

**Support**

Your completed report will consist on an abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion and a list of references used.

You will be supported through this process in the following ways:

* by your teacher,
* by students in your group,
* being guided by the assessment criteria and the Investigation Skills Handbook.
* by using information resources you have access to.

**The Endpoint**

You will need to **submit your completed report** at the end of the designated session.

Your report will be marked and contribute to your overall assessment for Psychology (ATAR) Unit 1.