



II2202: Writing the Method section

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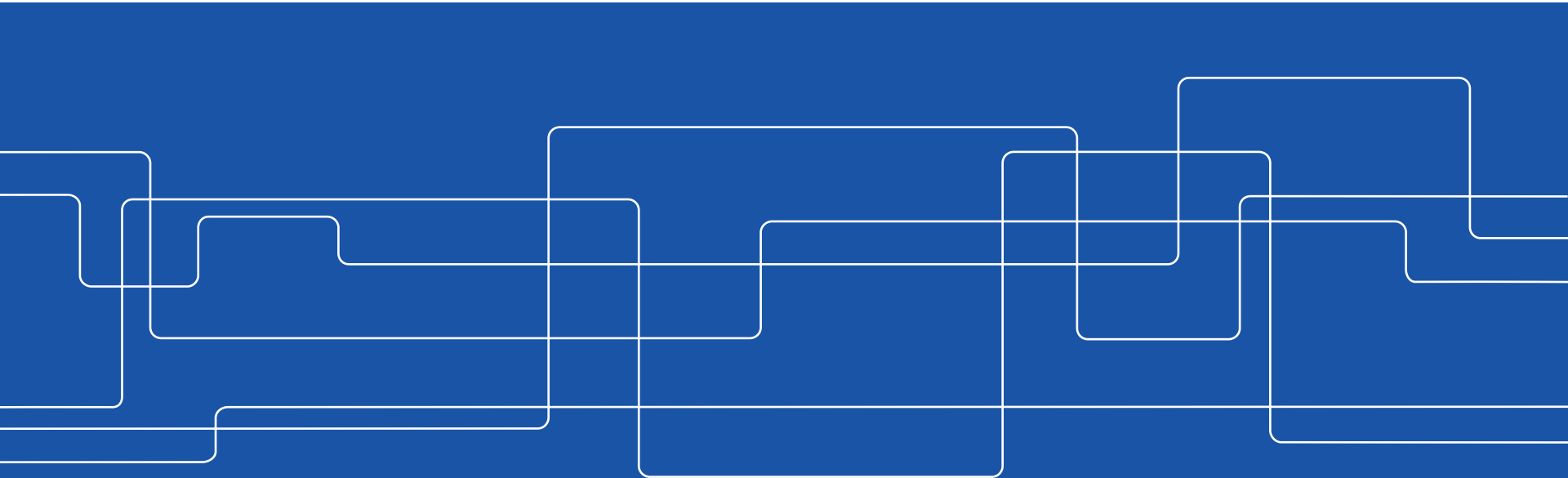
<http://people.kth.se/~maguire/>

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What is the purpose of the method section?

Provide the information needed to enable the study's validity to be judged

⇒ You must describe:

- How your research was conducted
- Why you chose this method (i.e., rationale)

Goals:

- **Clarity and precision** in your writing
- Details must be such that someone else **can replicate** your complete study, hence tell what you did
- To convince the reader of the validity of your results and conclusions

Components of the methods section

[write in past tense]

Potential subsections:

- **Subjects/participants/...** (if relevant) – Who/What was involved
- **Ethical considerations** (if relevant)
- **Preparations/materials/testbed/hardware/software (for data collection)/...** - What you used
- **Procedure/research protocol/experimental design/...** - these are the sequence of steps that you did; identify your independent, dependent, and control variables
- **Measurements & Calculations** – How did you make your measurements and perform your calculations
- **Data Analysis** – describe how you will do your analysis (for example, which statistical tests and what p value)

Avoiding common mistakes

Do not bury your reader in details from the start of the section:

- Write the most important things first – proceed toward the least important – in some cases you need to present what you did in chronological order (when this **order** is important)
- Use subsections – to bring out the structure of your presentation and to organize the topics

Do not mix your methods with your results (you will have a results section later in your report)

Do not leave out details of the hardware and software that you used – with complete information about vendor, make, model, version, configuration, ... - This can often be placed in a table

Do not leave out demographic details of your participants and how/why they were selected – Details can be placed in a table

If you have a IRB or other ethics approval document – be sure to specify this in this section.



Useful tips

Give each aim/hypothesis/question – its own subsection in the introduction, then refer to these as you describe your method(s)

References

- [UW 2014] The Writing Center@The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 'Academic and Professional Writing: Scientific Reports: Methods Section', 29-Aug-2014. [Online]. Available:
https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/SciRep_Methods.html.
[Accessed: 04-Oct-2015]
- [Kallet 2004] Richard H. Kallet, 'How to write the methods section of a research paper', *Respir Care*, vol. 49, no. 10, pp. 1229–1232, Oct. 2004.
<http://rc.rcjournal.com/cgi/pmidlookup?view=short&pmid=15447808>

¿Questions?