

A stylized, minimalist illustration in the background. On the left, a person's head and shoulders are shown in profile, facing right. On the right, another person's head and shoulders are shown, facing left. Between them is a large, light-orange speech bubble with a grey outline. The entire scene is set against a light blue background with faint, darker blue outlines of the figures and the speech bubble.

Effective explaining

PSYC 11: Laboratory in Psychological Science

April 8, 2024

Jeremy Manning

jeremy@dartmouth.edu

Empathy: the core of (most) effective explanations

- Think about your intended audience
- What do they already know and what do they need to know?
- What sort of language will they respond to best?
- What tools (resources, data, etc.) does your audience need to carry out your instructions?
- How much time/space will you have to explain?

Necessary and sufficient details

- Our (stated) goal in scientific research is often to enable others to **exactly** reproduce our study
- But what does “exact” really mean?
- Some aspects of your study will be critical to reproducing your procedure— that’s what you need to communicate
- Other details are unimportant— you can leave those details out

Drawing lab

- Goal: understand and explore how to effectively communicate written procedural instructions (i.e., methods sections)

Drawing lab

- Today: each group draws a picture and writes out instructions for reproducing it
- Wednesday: follow each others' instructions and evaluate performance
- Friday: analyze data

Drawing lab

