

MASAM - Multivariable Adults' Statements Assessment Method

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Abstract

MASAM is a useful tool discerning between memories of self-experienced real - life events and fabricated or fictitious accounts.

The theoretical framework of MASAM are four assumptions. First, it is necessary to consider the fact that in each statement, truthful and deceptive, true and false information can be found. Moreover, if a witness' intention is to give untruthful picture of actual events, certain differences appear in form and content of the given statement; the truthful parts will differ from lies.

Furthermore, it is necessary to refer to the course of statement formation, that is to analyze circumstances of the event (what happened?), to establish witness' characteristics (who gave the statement?) and to assess the course of the interview (how was the witness interviewed?). In accordance to MASAM assumptions high evidential value of a statement is based on and proven (supported?) by coherence between (1) the content and form of a statement, (2) the object and event features (i.e. complexity and observation conditions), (3) observer's characteristics (i.e. witness' prior experiences, age) and (4) interviewing circumstances (i.e. how detailed was the interview, when was the witness interviewed). MASAM does not assume that in witness's statement which describes one's experiences, certain elements should be found.

There are 21 MASAM content criteria, divided into three categories: general features, details and deposition. Each of the content criteria is assessed separately with respect to object and event features (what happened?), observer's characteristics (who is the suspect?) and interviewing circumstances (how was the witness questioned?). Verbal cues are supposed to assist analysis of respective areas related to formation of statements as well as to be a kind of a guide to direct attention to areas that require more detailed analysis.

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Protocol

Content analysis techniques

Step 1.