Reading Research Papers - An Educator's Guide

Introduction

To successfully present a research toy interpretation, it is helpful for interpreters to read and understand the original paper researchers wrote to share their study findings with scientific peers. This document helps to break down a research paper for non-scientist readers.

Article Title and Citations What journal was it published in? Who are the authors? What lab(s) and institution(s) do the authors represent?	
Research Question What question were the researchers interested in trying to answer? Why was it an important question to ask?	
Hypothesis What did the researchers think participants would do in the study? Why?	
Methods Who were the participants (age, demographics, geographical location, testing site)? What did participants do? – What were the stimuli like (pictures, toys, stories, etc.)? – What did researchers do with the stimuli? What did they ask children to do?	

Methods cont. – Were there different conditions (the different ways researchers presented the stimuli to kids)? – What was the purpose of each condition? What did researchers measure? – What behaviors or responses were they looking for? – What information did they collect about these responses?	
Results How, on average, how did participants respond to the stimuli? Do the authors give quantitative (number based) or qualitative (description based) evidence? (e.g. What facial features did kids describe most often as pertaining to anger?) *Note- do not get weighed down by all of the statistics that researchers used. It is not important to know what each statistic means- it is more important to know what the "big picture" results are.	
Conclusions What did researchers determine from the results? Was the research question answered? Did participants do what the researchers expected?	
Implications Why is this study important? What audiences may be interested to hear about these findings?	

Tables/Charts/Graphs What information is represented? Is there a chart or table that summarizes all of the data?	
Future Work What new research questions may be examined due to this study's findings?	