

Title:

Relationships Between Various Adult Theory of Mind Measurements

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Abstract

Theory of mind refers to one's ability to attribute mental states to oneself and others. Most research in this area has focused on theory of mind development during the preschool years, yet less is known about theory of mind development in later childhood and adulthood. Approaches to assessing adult theory of mind understanding include both open-ended and closed-ended measures. In the open-ended measures adults are told a story and then asked to explain the character's behavior. Closed-ended measures also include stories, but participants are asked to select the correct answer from the options given. The present study examines the degree to which performances on these different tasks are related. If they each assess theory of mind understanding then people who perform well on one task should also perform well on the others. Data were collected from approximately 100 undergraduate college students (79 women, 21 men). Participants were tested individually in single one-hour sessions. Initial analyses indicate that though some of the measures are intercorrelated, all are not. This suggests the possibility that different measures of adults' theory of mind performance are not assessing the same underlying construct. Implications of these findings will be discussed.