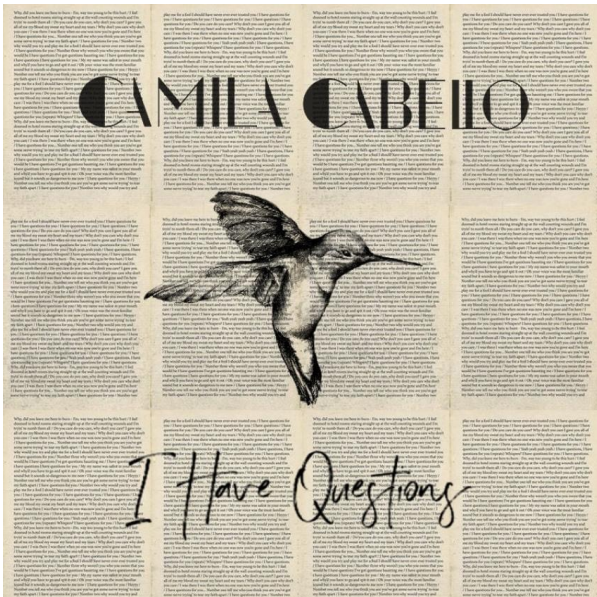Say hi in the chat! How's your summer going so far?

How do I ask a question?

SIPPS Research Skills Workshop

June 9th, 2021

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Welcome to research skills workshops!

- Tips for formulating a good research question
- Breakout rooms + work in a collaborative document
- Share time

Thinking of a research question

Sources of ideas
- Common sense
- Observation
- Theory
- Past research
- Practical problems

(and many more)

Protip: Just write ideas/questions down! Think about what area of psychology you are interested in for now
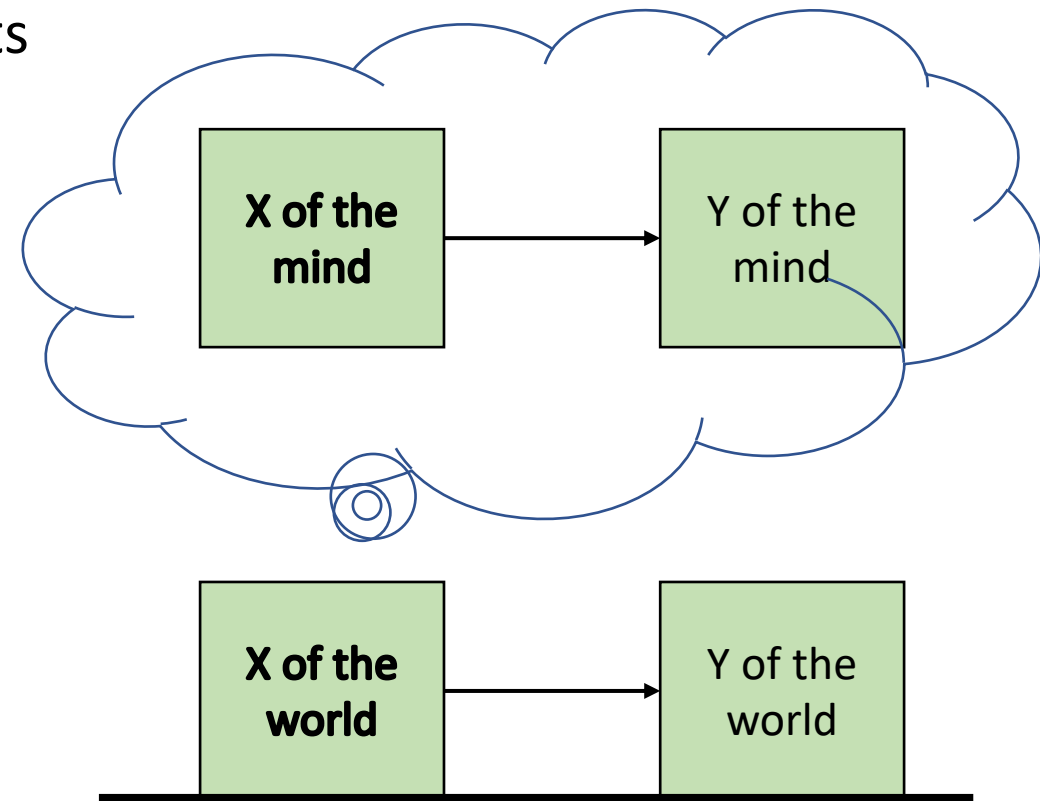

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Structure of a research question

- What are the most important components of a research question?
- Research is all about *effects*, as in: What is the effect of X on Y?
  - A research question: What is the effect of not showering for three weeks on how I smell?
  - Not a research question: Where can I buy soap?
- X is the independent variable, or what you manipulate
  - Amount of time without showering
- Y is the dependent variable, or what you measure
  - My body odor
- Does X have an *effect* on Y, or is it simply related to Y?
  - How can we determine causality in research?

Operationalizing variables

- What does operationalizing mean? Why is it important?
- If we can't measure something specific, then we are speaking abstractly and cannot say much about whatever it is that we wish to discuss
  - In this case, we're philosophers, not psychologists
- How would we operationalize the following variables?
  - Body odor
  - Feline stress
  - Brain activity
  - Morality

X of the mind → Y of the mind

X of the world → Y of the world

Things to keep in mind

- Start big, work towards a point

- Know what you are manipulating and what you are measuring
  - This is your X and Y
  - Otherwise known as independent and dependent variables
- Be careful with direction. Does X cause Y, or is it associated with Y, or is X related to Z which happens to cause Y?

Let's practice

- Collaborative document: http://bit.ly/SIPPS-RQ
- Instructions (will also post in the chat):
  - Find your group's section of the document
  - Introduce yourself and write your general research interests
  - One person should volunteer to share a potential research question, and the rest of the group will help refine it
  - If there's time, do it again with another group member's question
- We'll come back together at the end to share

Share group discussions