

Understanding Research for Evidence-Based Practice

Yes, I said, but I must first come to an understanding with you, and remind you of what I have mentioned in the course of this discussion, and at many other times. I understand you, he replied; not perfectly, for you seem to me to be describing a task which is really tremendous; but, at any rate, I understand you to say that knowledge and being, which the science of dialectic contemplates, are clearer than the notions of the arts, as they are termed, which proceed from hypotheses only: these are also contemplated by the understanding, and not by the senses: yet, because they start from hypotheses and do not ascend to a principle, those who contemplate them appear to you not to exercise the higher reason upon them, although when a first principle is added to them they are cognizable by the higher reason. You have quite conceived my meaning, I said; and now, corresponding to these four divisions, let there be four faculties in the soul—reason answering to the highest, understanding to the second, faith (or conviction) to the third, and perception of shadows to the last—and let there be a scale of them, and let us suppose that the several faculties have clearness in the same degree that their objects have truth.

We may call these two active and passive understanding respectively. It is not necessary, in order that a man should "understand" a word, that he should "know what it means," in the sense of being able to say "this word means so-and-so." Understanding words does not consist in knowing their dictionary definitions, or in being able to specify the objects to which they are appropriate. ** On the understanding of words, a very admirable little book is Ribot's "Evolution of General Ideas," Open Court Co., 1899. To illustrate what is meant by "understanding" words and sentences, let us take instances of various situations. Such "understanding" may be taken to belong to the nerves and brain, being habits which they have acquired while the language was being learnt.

His face wore that expression when his dry hands clenched with vexation at her not understanding a sum in arithmetic, when rising from his chair he would walk away from her, repeating in a low voice the same words several times over.

Reference

[Research Methods for Psychological Science](#)

[A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Eighth Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers \(Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing\)](#)