

# New Content From *Perspectives on Psychological Science*

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## [What's in a Task? Complications in the Study of the Task-Unrelated-Thought Variety of Mind Wandering](#)

*Samuel Murray, Kristina Krasich, Jonathan W. Schooler, and Paul Seli*

Research on task-unrelated thought (TUT) has shed light on the consequences of mind-wandering, but there are still gaps in our ability to conduct research on this topic. Murray and colleagues suggest that there is a need to (a) clearly define what constitutes a task and the difference between tasks and goals, (b) address that daily-life tasks are different from laboratory tasks, and (c) disentangle TUT from daydreaming and other forms of mind-wandering that can occur in the absence of TUT. Addressing these challenges will likely produce a more mature scientific account of TUT.

## [The Implicit Association Test: A Method in Search of a Construct](#)

*Ulrich Schimmack*

Schimmack argues that the Implicit Association Test (IAT) might not exactly measure individual differences in implicit attitudes, as it is usually claimed. He reanalyzes previous attempts to validate the IAT and shows that the validity of the IAT as a measure of attitudes varies across different attitudes (e.g., low validity for self-esteem, medium validity for racial preferences, and high validity for political orientation). Schimmack highlights that explicit measures tend to be more valid than the IAT, but notes that the IAT, when used together with explicit measures, may reduce measurement errors.

## [Can the Implicit Association Test Measure Automatic Judgment? The Validation Continues](#)

*Michelangelo Vianello and Yoav Bar-Anan*

Vianello and Bar-Anan comment on Schimmack's reanalysis of their (2018) data regarding the validation of the Implicit Association Test (IAT). They say that Schimmack's reanalysis is insufficient to cast doubt on the IAT as a valid measure of automatic judgments. However, they also highlight some limitations of the original analysis and note reasons why the validation of the IAT is still incomplete.

They conclude that, nevertheless, the IAT is still the best available tool for measuring automatic judgments.

### [Mystical and Other Alterations in Sense of Self: An Expanded Framework for Studying Nonordinary Experiences](#)

*Ann Taves*

Taves proposes that the study of mystical experiences can help to assess whether researchers can develop a framework for studying unusual experiences, such as reported out-of-body and near-death experiences, across disciplines and cultures. She examines the usual measures of mystical experience and the research on alterations in sense of self, induced by psychoactive drugs or meditation. These experiences seem to be a type of “ego dissolution.” To understand the mechanisms through which these experiences are represented and differentiated, she suggests that self-report measures distinguish how these experiences are evaluated in different contexts.

### [What Do Theory-of-Mind Tasks Actually Measure? Theory and Practice](#)

*François Quesque and Yves Rossetti*

The measures used to study theory of mind (i.e., the ability to understand others’ mental states such as intentions and emotions) might lack specificity, according to Quesque and Rossetti. The researchers concluded that most of the tests of theory of mind—rather than measuring a representation of others’ mental states—measure lower-level processes that do not test for theory of mind (e.g., facial expression discrimination). To overcome this problem, the authors encourage a paradigm shift in the study of theory of mind, including more attention to the methods used and the adoption of a clearer terminology.

### [Health in the United States: Are Appeals to Choice and Personal Responsibility Making Americans Sick?](#)

*Cayce J. Hook and Hazel Rose Markus*

Appeals to “choice” and “personal responsibility” that pervade policymaking, advertising, media, and social norms in the United States might contribute to ill health, Hook and Markus propose. These appeals appear to encourage: (1) worry and stress over health, (2) blame and stigmatization of the unhealthy, (3) widened health disparities, and (4) failure to adopt policies that could improve health. Psychologists can help to expand appeals to reflect current science about health’s physical, cultural, and social factors, thus promoting the effective communication and implementation of health-supportive policies, the authors offer.