The present study directly examines the role of executive function in a novel variation of a standard ToM task using dual task methodology. The secondary distraction tasks decreased performance on the memory control trials but not on the false belief trials, F(1,46) = 2.65, p = .05, but not on the false belief trials, F(1,46) = 0.47, p = .50.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Adults exhibited ToM errors on a novel, continuous false belief task.
- The secondary distraction tasks decreased performance on the memory control trials but not on the false belief trials.
- The Sandbox task offers a more process-pure measure of false belief reasoning than standard ToM tasks.
- Future studies should examine ToM in older children and adults using a continuous measure of ToM.
- Our findings have implications for models that examine component processes underlying mental state reasoning.

REFERENCES


RESULTS

- Without the secondary distraction task, participants exhibited significantly larger bias scores on the false belief condition than on the memory control condition, F(1,46) = 2.01, p = .05.
- A 2 (memory control versus false belief) x 2 (distraction versus no distraction) repeated measures ANOVA revealed a main effect for distraction, F(1,46) = 4.11, p = .05.
- Distraction significantly decreased performance on the memory control trials, F(1,46) = 2.65, p = .05, but not on the false belief trials, F(1,46) = 0.47, p = .50.

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