

Here, you will apply ideas about threats to internal validity to actual research studies, some real and some hypothetical. For each scenario, give the general category (unless given) *and* specific type of threat implied.

1. In a study on kids' ideas of romance, boys & girls reacted differently to male & female interviewers.
2. In the middle of a study assessing the effectiveness of a public information campaign to communicate information about HIV & AIDS, Magic Johnson announced that he had the HIV virus resulting in ton of press stories. The researcher is faced w/ what threat in assessing the efficacy of the campaign?
3. Children are observed on a playground as part of a study designed to assess media and aggressive behavior. What type of researcher-related threats are most important to consider? What's the principal threat due to research participants?
4. A researcher is measuring how much young people learn from the media about politics during election campaigns. The researcher is planning to study young people several times over the course of a mayoral campaign. The central dependent measure is "political knowledge", an index comprised of many questions such as about who the mayor is, who the candidates are, what they stand for, etc. Right before the second survey session, a child runs up to the research and says, "Guess what? Now I know who the mayor is. I didn't know last time, so I went home and asked my mom. It's.... " What is the major threat to validity (and reliability) that this example illustrates?
5. A program to increase racial tolerance is being tested in two different workplaces. Participants go to a central location (in one, a cafeteria that is always open for coffee/snacks; for the other, a private conference room). After the program, attitudes are measured, and researchers find a difference between the two groups of employees. What threat might have been the true cause of the difference?
6. In a panel study at Overfelt High School, students were measured at three points in time. From the first to the last survey period, however, the number of students surveyed declined by 30 percent. What threat is represented by this scenario?
7. A study of responses to print advertising was undertaken to see how males and females would respond to imagery of beautiful people of the same gender. One research question was whether self-esteem would drop after seeing the imagery of these idealized figures. The researchers gathered images from popular magazines, scanned them into the computer, and had the participants observe them and respond to a number of measures of self-esteem. What threat to validity is possible here?