Types of Distraction Effects on Memory Performance
By Nicole M. Paredes

Welcome!
Research Question
Procedure
Discussion
Thank you!
Facts
Method
Results
References
The following presentation is based in a study on memory performance.
Memory

There are many applications, ranging from making study more efficient and effective, to helping individuals retain memories.

Important aspect of learning that has been the focus of much research over time, but still requires more study.
Thompson and Allen (2013) found that visual imagery tends to be a strategy used by participants at the moment of recalling backwards, with the purpose of facilitating the completion of the test.

McKelvie (2001) noticed that confidence was affected by false recognition. One of the variables able to cause a change in the level of confidence was forced retrieval, which decreased confidence among the research subjects.

Tan, Ward, Paulauskaite, and Markou (2016) established that research subjects had a bigger inclination to use different recall strategies in cases where the amount of words on the list was imitated.
Is memory changed more after reading fiction or nonfiction? In other words, will subjects remember more words from the initial list of random items after reading a fiction paragraph or after reading an instructional paragraph?
There was a total of forty-two subjects from Reading Area Community College who participated by trying to recall as many words as they possibly could from two different lists while reading two different short paragraphs as a distraction method.
Participants were divided into two groups: experimental and control group. Research subjects completed a survey through survey monkey that was available at the time for their voluntary participation.
First, there were two different lists composed of five random words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay</th>
<th>Pen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>Ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Oranges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coat</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiss</td>
<td>Phone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These items showed before had no relation whatsoever with the two short paragraphs that served as distraction.
Instructional Paragraph

Here is the perfect system for cleaning your room. First, move all of the items that do not have a proper place to the center of the room. Get rid of at least five things that you have not used within the last year. Take out all of the trash, and place all of the dirty dishes in the kitchen sink. Now find a location for each of the items you had placed in the center of the room. For any remaining items, see if you can squeeze them in under your bed or stuff them into the back of your closet. See, that was easy! (Pattern Based Writing, n.d.).

Fictional Paragraph

It was very early in the morning, the streets clean and deserted, I was walking to the station. As I compared the tower clock with my watch I realized that it was already much later than I had thought; I had to hurry, the shock of this discovery made me unsure of the way, I did not yet know my way very well in this town; luckily, a policeman was nearby, I ran up to him and breathlessly asked him the way. He smiled and said: “From me you want to know the way?” “Yes,” I said, “since I cannot find it myself.” “Give it up! Give it up,” he said, and turned away with a sudden jerk, like people who want to be alone with their laughter (Nataf, 2018).
Participants had to study the first list composed of five random items. Next, they had to read the fictional paragraph. Finally, participants had to recall as many words as they could possibly remember from the initial list and type them in a comment box in SurveyMonkey. This process was repeated a second time for the second group. The only difference in this case was the order in which the paragraphs were placed.
The way the results were scored by points, which was established that as for every right word the participant got a total of one point added to their score. After data was gathered, Stat Disk was used to perform a t-test for each of the possible differences between groups.
The two variables tested were distraction and recall performance. The results showed that people who were part of the experiment group in which the fiction paragraph was used at the initial distraction method had better recall performance compared to those who were part of the control group.

| Test Statistic, t: | 0.35387 |
| Critical t:       | 2.08597 |
| P-Value:          | 0.72714 |
Findings

- Findings included an increase on research subject’s performance when the initial distraction method was the fictional paragraph.

- There was not a statistically significant difference in memory between fiction and non-fiction distractions.

- Research subjects were more likely to recall at least two words as they were in the original order.
References


This study was important because there are a lot of different factors that can influence memory, and it is important to establish a clear connection between the factors that were already tested and the ones waiting to be discovered. Thank you!
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