

# Reading analysis of the article memory flexibility by sadie f. dingfelder, monito...

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Reading analysis of the article “ Memory Flexibility” by Sadie f. Dingfelder, “ Monitor on Psychology”, Sep. 2005.

The article mainly discusses the part our working memory plays in our day to day affairs and dealings with others. This working-memory or short term memory plays a significant part in our lives, whatever the scenario, ranging from our interaction with the bystanders on the street, or with the salesperson in a shopping mall or with our class mates or the teacher in the class room. This article classifies memory into short-term or more appropriately called working memory and the long-term memory.

The broad types of memories that the psychologists have divided memory into are the short-term memory: a place where we hold information while we are working on it; and the long-term memory: a vast depository that contains all the knowledge that we are thinking about at that moment.

The normal way in which our mind functions is first the acquisition of facts followed by the storage of facts and finally as and when needed or require them the retrieval of facts. This capacity of acquisition, storage and retrieval is hugely dependent on a number of stimuli

Writer 2

and on the inherent abilities and/or disabilities of individuals concerned. For example, these processes may be enhanced in case of certain individuals and may be hampered in case of other individuals who have had an accident involving a head injury or a brain surgery or suffer from some illness like the attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder in children (ADHD) inducing retrograde amnesia.

According to the research conducted by modern psychologists the

functioning of the working-memory is flexible because its capacity can be enhanced and/or increased by undertaking certain custom designed tests or experiments. These experiments especially “ nback” practices can help the ordinary individuals and those suffering from ADHD considerably improve their short-memory or working memory. This is not a mere assumption but something that has been proved beyond doubt.

In the older context working memory was considered as a loading dock while according to the modern approach it is not a place but instead a status.

Similarly, it is a confirmed view that working memory is limited as compared to long-term memory which is vast, but this limited capacity of working memory can be increased considerably by the process of chunking.

A routine technique that is resorted to by psychologists while carrying tests on subjects to improve working memory is referred to as mnemonics: a technique which helps organize complex information into a small number of memory chunks much easier to retain and to retrieve.

Writer 3

Further most of the psychologists agree that “ tip of tongue (TOT), retrieval cue specificity, contextual reinstatement and encoding specificity are additional psychological techniques that help improve working memory.

In words of Dingfelder:

If psychologists could help people expand their working-memory capacity or make it function more efficiently, everyone could benefit, from chess masters to learning disabled children (63).

It is a well-known fact that there are many areas of our brain that have yet to be accurately mapped out by the psychiatrists and psychologists. Our brains

are no less intricate and infinite as the cosmos we inhabit and there are many questions that are yet to be answered and many mysteries that are yet to be solved, and this functionality of our working-memory is one such question that needs much research before reasonably satisfactory answers can be found.

Most psychologists after much painstaking research still have not been able to clearly define how our brains function, especially concerning the acquisition, storage and retrieval of memories. Psychologists are confounded by the facts that why and how our brains retrieve some incidents that have taken place decades ago and yet we cannot remember a phone number just some seconds after we stop chatting and put down the receiver. Similarly it is amazing that after the occurrence of an accident or a crime all the eye witnesses have a different and often opposing and/or contradictory version of the same event.

Writer 4

Further the psychologists have been able to identify the triggers that can help us remember some insignificant details of events that took place years ago while we cannot recall with accuracy what we had for dinner the last night.

It is striking that , scientists while carrying out experiments have come up with the strange phenomena that some individuals have been able to record with minute accuracy incidents that did even take place ever, premonitions, visions and hallucinations all are examples of such mental tricks that our brains play on us.

In conclusion the only thing that can be said with any degree of certainty is that memories form an integral part of our conscious and unconscious living and much research still needs to be done before we can arrive at any sound and comprehensive study of the brain and by extension of the whole human psyche.

Writer 5

Works Cited

Dingfelder, Sadie F. "Memory Flexibility". *Monitor on Psychology*.  
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