

Can hypnosis give people extraordinary memory skills



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Ramakrishna Surampudi 14 May Can Hypnosis Give People Extraordinary Memory Skills? The twentieth century was pretty quick in the identification of new tools for better living, their development and application. Undoubtedly, a lot of research went into the subject of hypnosis to assess its potential and limitations. Had it been concretely established that hypnosis has the capacity to bring about extraordinary improvement in one's memory skills, today's schools and colleges would have as many hypnotists as teachers, if not more. Not only that, training in hypnosis would have been made mandatory for students and teachers. That it has not happened is in itself an indication of the limitation of hypnosis with respect to memory enhancement. Right now, there is a lot of ambiguity surrounding what hypnotism can do what it cannot. This is not to suggest that hypnosis is all fake (Kalat). It does play a role in helping one relax, concentrate better, put aside one's critical judgment temporarily and shed inhibitions. But it cannot be stretched too far. It does not drastically alter one's physical or mental capabilities. At best, it creates a platform for the manifestation of powers that already exist. To elucidate further, there is evidence to believe that change of context, congruency of moods and state dependency can affect one's performance in terms of memory (Thompson et al.). To some extent, hypnosis can help in context reinstatement or in creating a conducive mood or state for better retrieval. That is again subject to the meaningfulness of the information to be remembered or retrieved. Research suggests the scope for pseudo-memories and increased confabulation (Orne) in the state of hypnosis which means there is no guarantee as to the accuracy level of the facts recalled (Coon). Some researchers were of the view that hypnosis actually distorted memory (Heaton-Armstrong et al.). If at all hypnosis

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significantly improves the faculty of memory, it will be greatly helpful in improving the academic performance of the so called ' weak' students or slow learners. There are institutes taking the help of hypnosis in this direction. Some of them were able to produce satisfactory results. But the problem is that hypnosis is used by them as part of a multi-technique approach. It therefore becomes difficult to assess precisely the role of hypnosis alone in performance enhancement (Vernon). Some trainers are of the view that combining hypnosis with the techniques of mnemonics can improve memory skills remarkably (Jain). As of now, it is a possibility, suggestive but inconclusive. In the educational context, the common problems of slow learners have mostly to deal with poor concentration level, stress, anxiety and lack of motivation. In these areas, hypnosis can certainly be relied upon and an imaginative teacher can cleverly incorporate it in his/her methods so that the learners will be trained to organize their subject of study better (Yapko). Beyond that any tall claim about the power of hypnotism in inducing extraordinary memory skills has to be taken with a pinch of salt. Evolution of more stringent methods of research in future may throw light on the prospect of using hypnosis as a performance-enhancing tool. Works Cited Coon, Dennis. Psychology: A Journey. Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd, 2007. Heaton-Armstrong, Anthony & Shepherd, Eric. Analysing Witness Testimony: A Guide for Legal Practitioners and Other Professionals. London: Blackstone Press Limited, 1999. Kalat, James W. Introduction to Psychology. 9th Edition. Belmont: Wadsworth – Cengage Learning, 2008. Orne, Martin T. Hypnotically Refreshed Testimony: Enhanced Memory or Tampering with Evidence? Diane Publishing, 1985. Jain, Subhash. How to Excel in Examination. New Delhi: Ocean Books (P) Ltd, 2008. <https://assignbuster.com/can-hypnosis-give-people-extraordinary-memory-skills/>

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