

# The experiment research study: craik and tulving (1975)

[Psychology](#), [Psychotherapy](#)



Aim: To investigate depth processing by giving participants a number of tasks requiring different levels of processing and measuring recognition.

Participants:

Controlled condition (3 males and 3 females)

Experimental condition (3 males and 3 females)

Independent group design

Method: This was a repeated measures design experiment with three conditions. Participants were given a list of 60 words, one at a time and were required to process each word at one of three levels (the independent variable). At deep level they might be asked a question, such as 'Does this word fit into the sentence...?' At an intermediate level, they might be asked 'Does this word rhyme with...?' At shallow level, they might be asked, 'Is this word in capital letters?'

Following the task, participants were (unexpectedly) given a list of 180 words, which contained the original 60 words processed and 120 'filler' words, and were asked to identify the ones they recognised from the original 60 (the dependent variable).

Measurement: The two conditions create room for accurate comparison and results. Participants are referred to with numbers.

Results: Significantly more words were recognised if they had been processed at deep level (approximately 65 per cent) than either phonetic (37 per cent) or shallow (17 per cent) levels.

Conclusion: As deeper processing resulted in better recognition, then the level at which material is processed must be related to memory.

Evaluation: This study relies on incidental learning (the participants did not know they would be asked to recall the words), rather than intentional learning, which is the advantage of being more true to real life. This means participants are unlikely to engage in extra processing which could invalidate the results. However, there is a necessary level of deception required in such a design which raised ethical issues.