

Time perception in an altered state of consciousness assignment

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The hypothesis that there was no difference in the mean estimate of relaxation reported by those who are skilled at relaxation and those who are not was unsupported, as a significant difference was found. It was concluded that those who are skilled at relaxation would report a higher level of relaxation and those who were not skilled at relaxation would report a lower level of relaxation.

The perception of time during an altered state of consciousness This study explored how time was perceived during a relaxed state; more specifically, it investigated whether people who said they were skilled at relaxation reported a deeper level of relaxation than people who said they were not so skilled.

Relaxation can be viewed as an altered state of consciousness as it is a state that is dramatically different from ordinary responsiveness and awareness.

The standard state of consciousness is defined as being alert, awake and responsive to the environment and one's own mental activities (Lepton and Brannon, 2006). This study has been adapted from Gravitas & Laurie (1991), who in turn adapted it from Volcano & Volcano (1938). They too looked at the effect that an altered state of consciousness had on time perception, but did not delve into the question of whether those who were skilled at relaxation were more adept at achieving it.

Button (2004) also investigated time perception and found that time seemed to pass slowly when an individual was highly conscious of themselves and their environment, whilst time speed up when an individual was in a more relaxed state when the individual's consciousness of the situation and of themselves is low. Vital et al. (2005) believed that relaxation was a

psychologically induced state which reduced autonomic and central arousal, but gain did not delve any further to how the participants who were skilled at relaxation and those who were not experienced it.

Assign (1988) discussed the different states of mind and consciousness, whilst Graff & Grinding (2006) looked at time perception not in relation to relaxation, but to time-based prospective memory. Although there has been no evident previous research on how skilled and unskilled practitioners of relaxation experience relaxation, this study can extend on and expand the 'Common-sense' belief that those who are skilled at relaxation would be better at achieving it and would report a deeper level of relaxation than those who are not skilled.

The aim of the present study is therefore to investigate whether or not there is a difference in the reported level of relaxation by those who are skilled at relaxing and those who are not. It is hypothesized that there is a difference in the mean estimate in personal relaxation level between those who are skilled relaxation practitioners and those who are unskilled relaxation practitioners. Method Participants The participants were undergraduate students studying introductory at University in and in There were 174 participants in total (M = 20 years,

R = 16 - 45 years), 37 men and 137 women, who were participating as it was a required task in the course. Each class was randomly allocated to a group and a set of instructions. There were 57 participants in the control condition, whilst there were 63 in the experimental 1 condition (which involved meditative relaxation) and there were 54 participants in the

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experimental 2 condition (which involved doodling). Each group had a varied number of males and females in it. Design The dependent variable was perception of time, whilst the independent variable was the method of relaxation.

The designs for the experiment are the following; 1. Between groups experimental design (v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) 2. Correlation design (v. 1, 2 and 4) 3. Qualitative survey (v. 6) The variables in this experiment are; 1. Estimate of time elapsed whole number of minutes 2. Estimate of personal relaxation loophole number from 1 to 10 3. Sex Male / Female 4. Age 17 to ? In whole years 5. Skilled at relaxation yes / no 6. Preferred relaxation activity (description) Materials The experimenter needed a clock or watch to be able to keep a track of how much time has passed, but the participants did not have access to either of Hess.

The experimenter also needed three different sets of instructions (see Appendix B, C & D) to give to the participants that detailed what they were meant to do and how they were going to relax. A quiet room free from distractions (such as external noise) was needed to hold the experiment in, one that would preferably be carpeted and have furniture that could be moved around. Each participant was also supplied with pen and paper, and a survey (see Appendix A) which was to be filled out at the end of the experiment. Procedure The participants were told that they would be learning a method for relaxation, ND were asked to remove their watches.

Each class was assigned a different group and given a different set of instructions. One class was Condition 1, an experimental group, and given

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Instruction Set 1 (see Appendix B), which had authentic meditative relaxation instructions. Another was Condition 2, the control group, and given Instruction Set 2 (see Appendix C), which had basic quieting instructions. The last class was Condition 3, experimental group 2, and given Instruction Set 3 (see Appendix B), which had instructions to do an active but relaxing task- free doodling.

Once the instructions were distributed, Condition 1 (experimental group) and Condition 2 (control group) were asked to move the furniture to the perimeter of the room, sit comfortably on the floor, and follow the instructions they were given. Condition 3 (experimental group 3) did not move the furniture; instead, they were seated at their tables and asked to follow the instructions they were given on free doodling. The experimenter gave the start signal for the participants to begin, and after 14 minutes, gave the stop signal.