

Evaluating Shallow and Deep Listening Techniques and the Effects on Memory

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Alternative Hypothesis

A psychologist is interested in knowing if our memory is effected by the way we process information. To determine if there is a link between processing information and recalling that information our class held an experiment to evaluate the effects on memory based on two separate information techniques. The first technique involved listening to words that held either an "E" or "G" in the spelling and the second technique involved listening for words that were pleasant. After each technique the participants were asked to write down all the words they could recall from the list. According to the "Levels of Processing Theory," there is a link between the way we process information and our short and long term memory. (Craik & Lockhart, 1972) The prediction or alternative hypothesis, says there will be a significant change in the participants scores in the recall of information based on the level of processing or technique used to process information, deep or shallow. Those who put meaning to information will process said information better than those who simply listen for a detail in the information and memorize it. (Craik & Lockhart, 1972)

Method

Participants

There were 128 participants in the study: 70 female and 58 male. Participants were volunteers; invited to participate by the students in the “Experimental Methods in Psychology” class at Washington State University Online. The average age of the participants was 34.38 ($SD = 12.82$). The sample consisted of 128 people who willingly volunteered to participate in the study. Participants were simply asked if they were willing to take 15 minutes to participate in a study for both a listening and a writing task. (Craik & Lockhart, 1972) There was no compensation for this study.

Materials

Participants were given a paper entitled “Listening Task” with two columns headed “YES” and “NO” and 24 spaces in each column for the first task. The second paper the participants were given was entitled “Writing Task” and had 4 columns each containing 12 blank spaces for the second task. Each participant signed a “Participant Consent Form” before the onset of the experiment. A quiet setting and a stop watch were used for this study. (Craik & Lockhart, 1972)

Procedure

This is an incidental learning study; the participants will not know beforehand they are in fact, having their memory tested. Participants were asked first to listen to and second to recall words from a list based on a pre-determined technique chosen by the student but not revealed to the participants; whether it was shallow or deep listening which was picked at random by a toss of a coin by the student. Condition 1 was referred to as shallow listening and condition 2 was