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Are personal cues more effective than provided cues for remembering a set of tasks?



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A person's memory is a vital component in every day life, as it allows people to organise their lives in a systematic way giving them the ability to plan future events and recall past events as if they were chapters in a book of their life. The importance of a person's memory seems to be taken for granted and research on such topics appears to be limited for a topic of such societal importance. Previous research indicates that cues help a person's prospective and retrospective memory as it reinforces their intention to execute a task. This research project focuses on a person's ability to recall events which they are going to perform in the future, with the aid of personal or provided cues. The cues were recorded with the aid of visualization techniques. This study found that participant's personal cues were more beneficial than provided cues in aiding remembrance of a prospective task.

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For more than two decades there has been an abundance of research regarding strategy instruction. Originally, most of this research focused on the effects of strategy instruction on students with learning disabilities. Researchers are currently looking at how strategy instruction affects all learners. What is a strategy? Often, more than one cognitive strategy is used with others, depending on the learner and his / her schema for learning. In fact, research indicates that successful learners use numerous strategies.

- Learning Strategy: a set of steps to accomplish a particular task, such as taking a test, comprehending text, and writing a story. A first-letter mnemonic is often used to help the learner follow the steps of the strategy. In 'event-based' tasks, an environmental cue indicates that the prospective memory action should be performed (in the above example, the word coffee is an event-based cue). Real-world event-based prospective memory tasks include remembering to deliver a message (intention) when you see your friend (cue) and remembering to turn off to go to the grocery store (intention) when driving by a particular intersection (cue). Once in retrieval mode, a set of metacognitive evaluative processes takes place, designed to assess the likelihood a memory would be available given the cues and context. Proximal environmental cues involve manipulating the layout within a space or a room so that cues are permanently provided concerning the location of objects and procedures that should be attended to.