**TITLE**

**Working Memory**

Working memory has been a critical component to human cognition studies in the literature. Robinson-Riegler, G. and Robinson-Riegler, B. describe working memory as a process in which a person intakes stimuli and examines those stimuli. Working memory plays its biggest role as part of your short-term memory (STM), as it works in a close interacting system that serves higher level mental processes. This process could be as simple as responding to a question or remembering a phone number. Baddeley and Hitch (1994) first proposed a working memory model in 1974. This model potentially has three separate uses in cognitive psychology. The first is using computation models (math, physics, etc) and a production system to explain the relevant productions. The second, is to see working memory (WM) as a system that uses the participants story and processing, while measuring it using tasks to find individual differences. Baddeley and Hitch (1994) were quick to point out that this second use of WM is more reliant on the way to measure reasoning and comprehension. The final use utilizes Baddeley and Hitch’s original 1974 WM model.

Their model included the idea of a phonological loop, visuospatial sketchpad, and central executive. The phonological loop (previously the articulatory loop) has two parts: phonological storage and subvocal rehearsal. Phonological storage is when a person holds a sound memory trace until this trace is then rehearsed by the subvocal rehearsal of the model by repeating the trace internally. Baddeley and Hitch’s memory model additionally includes a visuospatial sketchpad, which is primarily responsible for visual and spatial encoding. Baddeley and Hitch (1994) explain that the visuospatial sketchpad is a type of work space for incoming information. The final piece of their model is the central executive. The central executive is responsible for controlling when the phonological loop and visuospatial sketchpad are used, and how they interact with one another (Baddeley, 2002, p. 89).

**Measurement of Working Memory**

The best way to examine working memory is to use an operation task (OSPAN) created by Turner and Engle (1989). Turner and Engle have written multiple papers on their validity and reliability of the OSPAN. Besides the creators of the task, Klein and Fiss (1999), also tested the validity and reliability of it to an .78 alpha coefficient average. The only “bad” thing Klein and Fiss had to say was within their error, they used the same participants, so the participants may have had test-retest correlations from the three times they redid the OSPAN.

**Fluid Intelligence**

There are of course more factors that work into how much you can hold in your working memory that could affect the way you think. One of focus is intelligence, specifically fluid intelligence (*Gf*). Horn (1968) describes intelligence for those who study behavioral science as, “. . .observable, measurable behavior, whence it may become possible to relate this variable as important variables of neurology, sociology, etc..” . He is describing that, for behavioral sciences, intelligence needs to be measured in some aspect for it to be considered observable. Horn (1968) reports that Cattell presented the idea of *Gf* in 1941 at an APA convention. Since then it has grown popular in the behavioral sciences as a way to measure intelligence that is always expanding.

Jaeggi, Buschkuehl, Jonides, & Perrig, (2008) classify *Gf* as a human ability that allows participants to adapt their thinking to the problem at hand regardless of acquired knowledge. In addition, Gray, Chabris, and Braver (2003) highlight that *Gf* is related to attentional control, or “the ability to overcome interference that would otherwise disrupt performance. . . (p. 316).” Gray et al. also says that these attentional control is necessary for the abstract thinking needed for *Gf.*

**Expertise**

The last construct that may affect your working memory or fluid intelligence is expertise. Chi, Glaser, and Rees (1982) describe expertise as having an abundance of knowledge and having skill to apply that knowledge (p. 8). The authors argue that having this knowledge and skill plays a large part in intelligence as a whole. Because they are able to recall their skill better and faster, they are perceived as more intelligent. This has been demonstrated primarily with the skillsets of chess (Chase and Simon, 1973) and physics (Chi, Feltovich & Glaser, 1981).

In Chase and Simon’s 1973 study on chess and perception, they had three classes of participants. From highest to lowest they were: master, Class A player, and beginner. The way the authors decided to study this was to isolate “chunks” that would then be encoded by the participant between two different tasks. These chunks were created by having a chess position set up having one of 28 variations. Chunks refer to Miller (1956) and his “magical number” 7, which proposes that most humans can contain 7 individual pieces of information plus or minus 2. In Chase and Simon’s (1973) perception task two boards were set up. One with the chess position already displayed, and the second with all the pieces at their starting points. The participant was able to look at the board they were to recreate as much as they wanted, they just had to complete the task quickly and accurately. The memory task still had one of the 28 variations set up next to their board, but they only had five seconds to look over and memorize the set before it being blocked off to where they had to recall it. The participant was able to do this until they recalled the original set perfectly. It took those in the master class less trials than the Class A players and beginners to recall the preset variation in both tasks. This coincides with author’s idea was that those in the “master” class would encode the preset chess boards and recreate their model faster than the other two groups of participants.

Chi et al. (1981) looked at the same idea of expertise, but with those in the field of physics. For their categories of participants, they used PhD students in the physics department (experts) and undergraduates who had only completed one semester of a physics course (novices). They were given 24 problems that were to be grouped by the how the solution was to be found. All participants were interviewed after they separated the problems to their respective categories to see how they reasoned why that problem fits with the category they chose. They determined that the experts sorted by the laws of physics, and the novices sorted by surface structures. Theses surface structures refer to objects, terms, or configurations of the problem presented. In the second part of the authors study the experts and novices were presented a new set of 20 physic problems. This part of the study also included an intermediate participant who was a fourth-year physics major. These problems were created to include both physic laws and surface features combined to see how the participants would categorize them. The results were replicated from the previous study by the expert and the novice participant. Yet, the intermediate participant reasoned both by using the laws of physics and surface structures, showing that they had applied the laws, but not yet left the surface structure.

These studies by Chase and Simon and Chi et al., demonstrate that expertise is perpetually learned through practice and understanding. They both demonstrate ideas of chunking and previous knowledge that can lead to expertise.

**Interplay between these systems**

With these three constructs combined, they could help shape how things may get stored in our short term or long-term memory. They each play an important part in how we view the world around us and evaluate everyday situations.

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