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AFFECT AND MEMORY:
AN INVESTIGATION OF A LEARNING TASK THAT UTILIZES AFFECT AS AN AID TO MEMORY

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education at Massey University.

Stephen Frederick Steffens
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This thesis explored through experimental and correlational conditions the relationship of affect and memory. Some of the individual and situational factors that were associated with the variance in performance were identified. One hundred and twenty children between nine and twelve years of age in three widely separated schools participated in the study. The children were provided with lists of words to learn by using five learning tasks. A learning task that involved affect achieved memory performances that were quantitatively greater than the results achieved after other learning tasks.

The empathic ability of the children was measured through an analogue. The children responded how individuals felt in certain video excerpts. The empathic ability of the children was related significantly to memory performances achieved after the learning task that involved affect.

A questionnaire was answered by the children that gave their perceptions of their mother's and their father's behaviours and feelings. Various statements appeared that were consistently and significantly related to the empathic ability of the children. These items indicated that the factors of support, anger-anxiety, and demand were differentially related to the empathic ability of the children.

A model of relationships that included the child's perceptions of the parents, the empathic ability of the child, and memory performances achieved after the learning task that involved affect was presented. Some implications for classroom implementation were advanced.
This project would never have reached its present stage without the wisdom and practical assistance of many people. The resources of Massey University, both in terms of equipment and personnel, were readily available and contributed immensely to the author's ability to manage the responsibilities of conducting research. Many of these personnel are nameless here. My sense of appreciation to them is real. To several outstanding individuals I wish to make public my appreciation.

Dr. Alan Webster and Eric Archer were constant in their abilities and in their personal concern for the project and the researcher.

The computer consultants and operating staff shared their expertise and cooperated beyond the expected boundaries of their jobs.

The principals, teachers, and students in the three schools warmly participated in the data gathering part of the study. Several teachers also offered valuable insights as to the nature of classroom life and methods of utilizing the findings from this study. Unfortunately, these individuals will remain unnamed.

My family each contributed their special gifts that were appropriate at the time. Erik drew a maze in the beginning stages of the project that accurately pictured many of the stages that were encountered. Kevin offered his wit and steady competencies. Lis knew what was happening throughout the project's many stages and kept two things in clear perspective: where we were at the present moment and where we were going.
Table of Contents

Chapter One: AFFECT AND MEMORY: THE GENERAL RESEARCH PROBLEM

A. General Psychological Theory and Research into the Relationship of Affect and Memory 1
   1. The Quality of Affect and Memory 1
   2. The Intensity of Affect and Memory 4
   3. The Individual as Active in Memory Processes 6

B. The Anatomy and Physiology of the Brain and Its Relation to Affect and Memory 7
   1. The Limbic System and Memory 7
   2. The Triune Brain 8
   3. Related Studies 11

C. Physiological Measurement of Affect 13
   1. Lack of Reliable Relationships 13
   2. Task Difficulty and Physiological Measures 14
   3. Pupil Size and Affect 15

D. Cognition and Affect in Schools 17
   1. The Utilization of Affect for Educational Purposes 17
   2. Affect in the Curricula and Teaching Models 19
   3. Affect for Educational not Therapeutic Aims 21
   4. Piaget and the Relationship of Affect and Cognition 23
   5. Other Studies 25

E. Summary 27

Chapter Two: THE EFFECTS OF LEARNING TASKS ON RECALL

A. Research Associated with the Levels of Processing Metaphor 28
   1. The Levels of Processing Model 28
   2. Pleasantness Rating and Memory 32
3. Initial Propositions to Explain the Effectiveness of the Pleasantness Rating Learning Task 37

B. Problems for Research 42
1. Problem Development 42
2. Research Questions 44

Chapter Three: PILOT STUDY
A. Operationalization 46
1. Material to be Learned 46
2. Learning Tasks 49
3. Memory Tests 51
B. Procedure 51
C. Data Analysis 53
D. Results 55
1. Free Recall and Recognition by List 55
2. Free Recall and Recognition by Task 57
E. Conclusions and Further Directions 59

Chapter Four: SOCIAL SENSITIVITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLEASANTNESS RATING
A. Characteristics of Subjects and Their Relation to Recall and Recognition 61
1. Intelligence 61
2. Developmental Processes 63
B. Egocentricity or Role Taking in Young Children? 67
C. Summary 73

Chapter Five: EMPATHY AS A SOURCE VARIABLE FOR THE PLEASANTNESS RATING LEARNING TASK
A. The Definition and Operationalization of Empathy 75
1. Empathy as Matched Feelings Between two People 75
2. Empathy as Knowing How a Person Feels  
B. Summary and Conclusions as to a Definition of Empathy  
C. The Choice of an Instrument to Measure Empathy  
D. Antecedent Conditions Associated with the Development of Empathy

Chapter Six: EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES
A. Summary and Research Questions  
B. Hypotheses  
C. Sample  
D. Procedures

Chapter Seven: RESULTS
A. Demographic Analyses  
B. The Influence of Learning Tasks on Memory Performances -Hypothesis 1  
   1. Task Variance -Recall  
   2. Level Variance -Recall  
   3. Sex Variance -Recall  
   4. Interaction Effects -Recall  
   5. Task Variance -Recognition  
   6. Sex Variance -Recognition  
   7. Conclusions for Hypotheses 1 a,b,c  
   8. Relation of Quality and Intensity of Affect to Memory -Hypotheses 1d and 1e  
C. The Relationship of Empathic Ability and Memory Performances -Hypothesis 2  
   1. Recall and Unique Feeling Words  
   2. Recall and Accuracy of Empathy  
   3. Recognition and Unique Feeling Words
4. Recognition and Accuracy of Empathy 118
5. Conclusions for Hypothesis 2a 119
6. Relationship of Empathic Ability to Five Learning Tasks -Hypothesis 2b 119
D. The Relationship of Perceived Parenting Behaviours and the Child's Empathic Ability -Hypothesis 3 121
1. Level 1. The Relationship of Theoretical Parental Factors to Empathy and Performance on Memory Tasks 123
2. Level 2. The Relationship of Derived Parental Behaviour Factors to Empathy and Performance on Memory Tasks 123
   a. Factor Analysis of Perceived Parental Behaviours 123
   b. Correlation of Derived Parental Factors with Child Outcomes 128
3. Level 3. The Relationship of Perceived Parental Behaviours to Empathy and Performance on Memory Tasks 128
4. Level 4. The Relationship of Empathically Skilled Children's Perceptions of Parental Behaviours and Feelings to Empathic Ability 130
5. Conclusions for Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 131

Chapter Eight: DISCUSSION

A. The Influence of Learning Tasks on Memory Outcomes 133
   1. Main Effects 133
   2. Interaction Effects -Recall 139
B. The Relationship of Empathic Ability and Memory Outcomes 140
C. The Relationship of Perceived Parenting Behaviours and the Child's Empathic Ability 143
D. The Relationship Between Children's Memory Outcomes and Perceived Parenting Behaviours 153
E. Summary of Findings Related to Model 154
   1. The Pleasantness Rating Learning Task and Memory 154
   2. The Pleasantness Rating Learning Task and Empathy 155
   3. Parental Behaviours and the Child's Empathy and
Memory Performance

F. Implications for Education
   1. Useful Learning Tasks
   2. The Utilization of Affect for Educational Purposes
   3. Possible Procedures in the Classroom

G. Further Suggestions for Study
   1. Generalizability
   2. Classroom Implementation

H. Limitations of the Study

Bibliography
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Relationship between several learning tasks and performance on a recall test (Hyde and Jenkins, 1969)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The amount of recall and recognition under different learning tasks (Battig, 1979)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Correlations between dimensions for 2,854 words (Toglia and Battig, 1978)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The recognition of faces as a function of three learning tasks (Bower and Kurlin, 1974)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Learning tasks and repetition: an inferential study (Postman and Kruesi, 1977)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The range of imagery, concreteness, and meaningfulness for five lists of words</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ANOVA by list for recall and recognition</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ANOVA by learning task for recall and recognition</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Mean unique emotions identified by children at different ages</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Total Memory Performance by all Schools at Level One</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Memory by school after five learning tasks</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Analysis of variance by recall - repeated measures</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Analysis of variance by recognition - repeated measures</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Relation of affect quality and intensity to memory</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Correlation of empathy with memory after pleasantness rating</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Canonical correlation of empathy with memory after pleasantness rating learning task</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Canonical correlation of empathy with learning tasks recall</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Factor analysis of perceived mother behaviours</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Factor analysis of perceived father behaviours</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Comparison of parental behaviour factors perceived by adolescents and children</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
21. Correlation of derived parental factors with child outcomes 128
22. Canonical correlation of parental behaviours with empathy 129
23. Canonical correlation of parental behaviours with child's recall memory after five learning tasks 130
24. Canonical correlation of parental behaviours with child's recall memory after pleasantness rating learning task 130
25. Correlation of perceived parenting behaviours and feelings with empathic ability of selected students 131
26. Correlation of pupil sex with memory after a learning task 139
27. Correlation of empathy with memory after the pleasantness rating learning task for the entire sample and two sub-groups 153
Figures

1. The triune brain after MacLean, 1978  
2. Hypothetical relationships between the variables:  
   the model, definitions, and operationalizations  
3. Memory by learning tasks  
4. Memory by grade level  
5. Free recall with grade level by learning tasks  
6. Summary findings of relationships between the variables
APPENDICES

Word Lists 176
Recognition Word List 177
Family Life Questionnaire 178