

Wow! Multitasking Really Hurts Your Grade
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Experiment One: Multitasking

Purpose of Assignment: This assignment is related to the text discussion of memory and information processing which should be read prior to completing this assignment. This assignment is designed to demonstrate the impact of distraction on short term memory and recall of information. This assignment is also designed to introduce the use of experimentation to understand marketing phenomena.

For this experiment you will need to do the following:

Step One: Either write a story or find a story from the media that will take between 10 to 15 minutes to tell. The story must be compelling enough to hold the groups attention for the entire time.

Step Two: Create a series of 10 questions, of varying difficulty, related to the story.

Step Three: Recruit 20 participants for your study. Participants can come from anywhere but they cannot be students who are currently enrolled in this course or those who have previously taken this course. You will divide the 20 students into four groups as follows:

Group One: This group will have all electronic devices taken from them prior to beginning the story.

Group Two: This group can keep their electronic devices. If possible these devices can be placed on the table in front of the participant.

Group Three: This group will be told to use social media only during the story.

Group Four: This group will be told to use their electronic devices in any way they want during the story.

Step Four: Within each group one member should be the story teller, one should be the observer, the remaining members should be writing observations about what the participants are doing and how they are using their electronic devices. Please note you can only record the sessions on video if you get permission from all attendees.

To administer the experiment bring the four participants together provide the appropriate instructions depending on which treatment group they are in. Be sure the observers are in place before you begin the story. As soon as the story is complete distribute the questions. Once the group has completed the questions be sure to thank the participants for assisting your group.

Immediately following the experiment the group should conduct a debrief and evaluate the responses to the questions. Be sure that the observers compare their notes and that all information related to this group is kept together.

Once your group has completed all four treatment groups write a report detailing your results. What did you learn about the influence of distraction on memory?