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The Effects of Note-taking Strategies and Gender on Word Recognition

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**Abstract**

Technological advancements have changed the way notes are taken. This study will examine gender and note-taking style on the student's ability to recognize words. Participants in this study were instructed to either write, type or read a set of randomly generated words. After a word search buffer, participants were instructed to complete a post-test. Lastly, participants completed a questionnaire. Past studies have supported that handwriting notes is the most effective way for students to retain information and score higher on tests.

**Introduction**

The literature supports that note-taking is an important strategy to help students retain information and score higher on tests. Bohay, Blakely, Tamplin, and Radvansky (2011) examined the impact of note-taking style on memory and comprehension. Bohay, Blakely, Tamplin, Radvansky, & Radvansky (2011) conducted an experiment with participants who recorded notes using three methods: handwriting, keyboard, and voice recordings. The results showed that participants who recorded notes using handwriting scored higher on tests than those who used keyboard or voice recordings. The study also found that note-taking style is not affected by gender; however, note-taking habits are affected by gender. Females tend to elaborate and report more relevant information when taking notes. Females also have been shown to remember more words when compared to males (Bohay, Blakely, Tamplin, Radvansky, & Radvansky, 2011). Handwriting hand-arm movements (Kiefer, Schuler, Mayer, Trumpp, Hille, & Sachse, 2015). Handwriting has been shown to improve long-term memory and learning (Bohay, Blakely, Tamplin, Radvansky, & Radvansky, 2011). This study examined how note-taking strategies and gender affect word recognition.

**Hypotheses**

1. Females will recognize more words than males
2. Participants who write the list of words will recognize more words than participants who type or read the words.
3. Females who write the list of words will recognize more words than participants who type or read the words.

**Participants**

- Total sample size of 63 college aged (range 18 – 30) participants (males=9, females=54, SD= 2.195).
- Participants were recruited by convenience sampling through an electronic sign up system called SONA system at a Longwood University.

**Procedure**

- Participants were instructed to either write, type or read a list of randomly generated words that were projected on a screen in front of them.
- Participants attempted a word search for 5 minutes.
- Participants completed a post-test that had 14 of the original 15 given words.
- Participants filled out a demographic questionnaire.

**Results**

A 2-Way Analysis of Variance test compared gender and note-taking strategies (See Figure 1).
- Females recognized more words than males
- Note-taking strategies did not differ amongst each group
- Gender did not have an effect on note-taking strategy

**Discussion**

- Study found that there was no significant main effect for note-taking strategy.
- There was no interaction between note-taking strategy and gender.
- Found that note-taking style does not matter.
- Limited: Words are too simple, time that each group got to spend writing, typing, or reading word

**References**


**Materials**

- Words displayed at beginning of study:
  - Medical
  - Blushing
  - Encourage
  - Disillusioned
  - Clouds
  - Forgetful
  - Bleed
  - Itchy
  - Chin

- Displayed above is the list of words that were presented to the three levels of note-taking strategy.

**Post-test**

- Circle the words that you recognize from the list of words shown in the beginning of the study.
  - Dapper
  - Lamentable
  - Recess
  - Glamorous
  - Education
  - Itchy
  - Shoes
  - Chin
  - Absorbed
  - Screw
  - Illustrious

- My confidence level with the majority of words I recognized.
  - Not at all
  - Somewhat
  - Confident
  - Very

- The reason I write my notes:
  - Handwriting
  - Typing
  - Reading

- The questionnaire was administered to collect demographic information and assess the confidence of individuals after completing the post-test.

**Figure 1.** The bar graph displays that females recognized more words than males when using either the writing, typing or reading note-taking strategy.

**Figure 2.** The bar graph displays that confidence level of males were higher than females who used the typing note-taking strategy. However, women were more confident when using writing or reading strategies of the independent variable.