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Paradox of Memory in Old Age

In laboratory studies, old age is associated with:

1. Poorer memory for context (i.e., *source memory*)

2. Poorer memory for specific events and personal experiences (i.e., *episodic memory*)

3. Poorer memory for intentions (i.e., *prospective memory*)

However, older adults perform better in naturalistic settings. Does this occur because they rely on *external memory aids*?

"We spent a long time creating a coding scheme for survey responses, and then coming to a consensus on which categories certain responses fit into. It was a great learning experience in terms of combining and evaluating perspectives."

-Tannya Cai

Supporting Aging Memory:

The Use and Benefits of External Aids

BASS CONNECTIONS

Do older adults rely on *external memory aids* (e.g., notes, other people)?

Memory Strategy Survey

8. What strategies do you use to remember **where you put something important**, like your keys?

first, look in all 'reasonable' places. Then, berate myself. finally, review sequence of last movement w/ object

9. What strategies do you use to remember a **goal**, like when you enter a room and find yourself wondering "What was I about to do?"?

pass it off, 'obviously not that important' – e.g., going into basement to get or do something

✓ "First, look in all 'reasonable' places. Then, berate myself. Finally review sequence of last movement w/ object"

✓ "Pass it off, 'obviously not that important'—e.g. going into basement to get or do something."

Coding Responses

It has been challenging to meaningfully categorize participants' responses. For example, when asked how they respond when a word is "on the tip of their tongue," people say:

❖ "Usually, I try to review the last time I used it. Then, I see if it pops up when I get to the word."

❖ "I 'forgive myself' if I cannot remember!"

❖ "I mentally run through the alphabet."

team lunch spent discussing coding scheme