Recent research on memory/learning

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Are we over estimating remembering and underestimating learning?

Current research by Nate Kornell, an assistant professor of psychology at Williams College, and Robert A. Bjork of the University of California, Los Angeles address this question and was recently published in the Journal of Experimental Psychology.

In their paper titled 'A Stability Bias in Human Memory: Overestimating Remembering and Underestimating Learning,' Kornell and Bjork write: "To manage one's own conditions of learning effectively requires gaining an understanding of the activities and processes that do and do not support learning."

In psychology, experts use the term metacognition to talk about how people think about their own cognitive processes - in essence, thinking about thinking.

To probe the way people think about their capacity for remembering, Kornell and Bjork asked people to look at a list of words and predict how well they would be able to remember the words after subsequent periods of study and testing.

Their results led the researchers to the suggestion that people are under confident in their learning abilities and overconfident in their memories. That is, people failed to predict that they would be able to remember more words after studying more - although in reality, they learned far more -- instead basing their predictions on current memory. Kornell and

Bjork call this a "stability bias" in memory.

Provided by Williams College