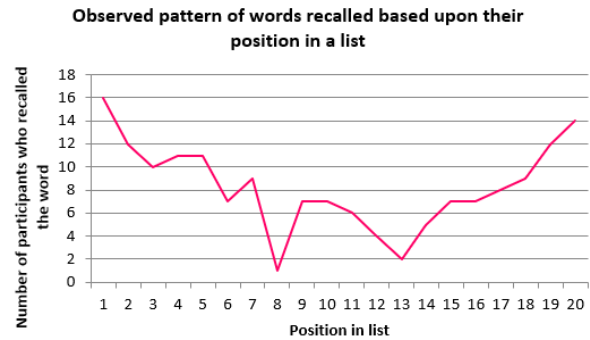
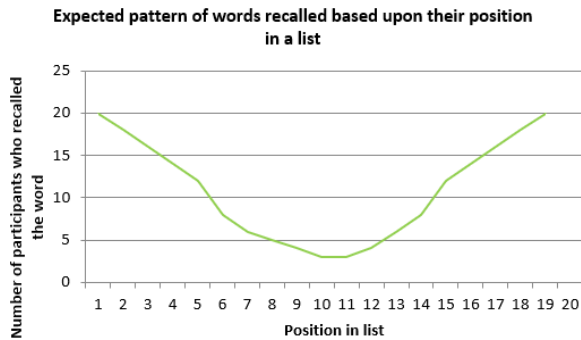


Lower 6 psychologists test theories of memory



Having just commenced the memory topic, the Lower 6 psychologists have already received several opportunities to test their own memories.

From digit span tasks, as used by Jacobs, to the trigram experiments of Peterson and Peterson, students have been able to see the duration and capacity of their own short-term memories.

We have also explored the primacy-recency effect investigated by Glanzer and Cunitz. According to this research, words at the start of a word list are remembered due to the primacy effect, whilst words at the end of a list have a higher probability of being recalled due to the recency effect. Meanwhile, words in the middle of a list would be forgotten due to forgetting e.g. by decay or displacement. This produces the serial position curve as shown in green above.

But would Gateways' psychologists show the same trends predicted? To see, students received a list of 20 words that they had to memorise and then write down using free recall. Two trials were completed with their combined results shown in pink above.

As you can see, it wasn't quite the smooth curve predicted, but there were also very clear similarities with the theory of the primacy-recency effect. This has helped students understand the evidence in support of the multi-store model as well as allowing them to see the practical elements of the subject.

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