

Interaction of episodic and semantic memory in cued recall

Cynthia M. Henderson
Stanford University

James McClelland
Stanford University

Abstract: A large body of literature suggests that memories for both episodic and semantic details contribute to our ability to recall episodic events; however, the amount of interaction between the two systems during the recall process is unclear. A cued-recall experiment tested 63 participants on the extent to which semantic associations between two mnemonic episodes affected participants recall of either episode. Participants studied 16 sentences which did or did not have elements semantically associated with another sentence, while another 8 sentences were added as fillers. Sentences semantically related to another sentence elicited significantly more responses mixing the two sentences, as compared to responses for sentences without this semantic relationship. The critical responses analyzed for this study involved cases in which participants were cued by one sentence but recalled arbitrary material from the semantically related sentence. These results suggest reciprocal interactions between memories for episodic and semantic details during recall.