Reactive Task-Set Switching Ability, Not Working Memory Capacity, Predicts Change Blindness Sensitivity

Robert Youmans
California State University, Northridge

Abstract: Individual differences in working memory capacity (WMC) have long been shown to predict how well people perform tasks that require directed attention, but other individual differences responsible for task-set switching and noticing behaviors are less well understood. In this study, students from California State University, Northridge completed a measure of WMC, a measure of cognitive flexibility, and attempted to identify disappearing objects in change blindness slides. WMC had no relationship with the other measures, but measures of cognitive flexibility were directly correlated with the ability to notice change, and no relationships were established. The author argues that these findings support: 1) new ways of thinking about task-set switching behaviors, and 2) the existence of individual differences in the ability to notice changes in an environment that are independent of WMC.