

News & Comments

Exposure to New Things Makes People More Open to Unintentional Learning

Elizabeth Ferrer

Real-world things are often observed without the intent to learn about them. A novel study found that exposure to new things sparks and elevates the curiosity to learn about them. A study shows that adults learn from accidental exposure to a subject they don't even understand and have no knowledge of. Such exposure triggers an impression in the human brain that makes them 'ready to learn.'

The research comprises a series of experiments on 438 individuals, and surprisingly, all of the experiments yield similar findings

In the first phase of the experiment, also known as the "exposure phase", the participants were instructed to play a computer game with colourful images, in which unfamiliar creatures were shown. Participants did not know that the images were divided into two categories, A and B. while in the experimental group, the subjects, were exposed to different unfamiliar creatures.

After the participants had participated in the experiment, they were instructed to familiarize themselves with explicit learning, in which they were taught that the creatures belonged to two categories (called "flurps" and "jalets"), and to identify the category membership of each creature.

The team found that those who were exposed to the two categories of creatures earlier on (the experimental group) learned faster than the controlled group.

This study offers experimental evidence for how people can learn by accident when they are exposed to something they don't even know about.

KEYWORDS

Brain research, latent learning, learning, neurobiology, neuroscience, learning, science, experiment, category learning, incidental learning, unsupervised category learning, category structure, open data

