

Take a Break: Study Breaks' Effects on Media Multitasking

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Hypotheses

- Hypothesis #1: Giving students timed breaks will lower students' amounts of media multitasking
- Hypothesis #2: Allowing students to have timed breaks will decrease the number of times they are distracted while studying
- Hypothesis #3: Using timed breaks will give students a stronger feeling of accomplishment in their studying
- Hypothesis #4: People with higher levels of media multitasking will have lower GPAs than those with lower levels of media multitasking

Abstract

The current study aims to determine if timed study breaks will affect students' amounts of media multitasking while studying. A repeat measures t test revealed that there was a small to moderate possible effect in students' amounts of media multitasking while studying while implementing study breaks. Another repeat measures t test found that there was a moderate to large possible effect in students' total number of times that they were distracted while studying while using study breaks. The last repeat measures t test revealed that there was a small to moderate possible effect in students' feelings of accomplishment while studying while also implementing study breaks. Lastly, a Pearson product correlation found that there was no correlation between GPA and levels of media multitasking.

Introduction

- **Main Question:**
 - How can people work to minimize their media distraction time in order to be able to get more work done?
- **Pomodoro Technique:**
 - A time management method that was originally created by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980's (Cirillo, 2018)
 - The method implements a 25-minute work session that is followed by a 5-minute break
 - The idea behind this method is that having a break to look forward to will allow an individual to focus on their work and work towards the break
- **Independent study time:**
 - Time outside of lectures
 - Working on homework
 - Study groups
 - Working on projects
 - Studying for tests/quizzes
- **Types of Distraction:**
 - Media Distraction**
 - Time spent distracted by social media
 - Mind Distraction**
 - Time when participants' minds wandered away from their schoolwork
 - Peer Distraction**
 - When participants were distracted by peers around them



Methodology

Participants:

A total of 60 participants began the survey, however, 17 participants did not complete the survey, so their data was disqualified. The final sample included 43 participants of which 26.6% were male and 74.4% were female. The sample ranged in age from 18 to 26, with a mean age of 19.5. Of the total participants, 48.8% were Freshmen, 16.3% were Sophomores, 30.2% were Juniors, and 4.7% were Seniors. The sample had a GPA range from 2.42 to 4.0, with a mean GPA of 3.0. There were also 6 participants who either did not answer or did not know their GPA.

Materials:

A series of 14 surveys were used over 2 weeks. A short demographics form found in the first survey of the series, comprised of age, gender, year in school, and college GPA, was used to assess basic participant information. The rest of the questions in the first survey were repeated in the remaining 13 surveys. Informed consent was also included in the first survey and a debriefing form was included in the last survey in the series.

Results

- **Hypothesis #1:**
 - Repeat measures t test $t(27) = 1.43$, $p = .166$ (two-tailed) Cohen's $d = .269$
 - There was a small-moderate effect
- **Hypothesis #2:**
 - Repeat measures t test $t(26) = -2.05$, $p = .051$ (two-tailed) Cohen's $d = .394$
 - There was a moderate to large effect found
- **Hypothesis #3:**
 - Repeat measures t test $t(27) = 1.23$, $p = .231$ (two-tailed) Cohen's $d = .232$
 - There was a small to moderate possible effect
- **Hypothesis #4:**
 - Pearson's product correlation $r(21) = .040$, $p = .839$
 - No correlation found between levels of media multitasking and GPA

Conclusion

- Due to an issue with low power in this study, none of the results found were statistically significant. But results indicate that implementing timed study breaks may have effects on students and their distraction.

Citations

Cirillo, F. (2018). The pomodoro technique. Random House UK.