Working Memory and Language (Essays in Cognitive Psychology)

Susan E. Gathercole, Alan D. Baddeley

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This book evaluates the involvement of working memory in five central aspects of language processing: vocabulary acquisition, speech production, reading development, skilled reading, and comprehension. The authors draw upon experimental, neuropsychological and developmental evidence in a wide-ranging evaluation of the contribution of two components of working memory to each aspect of language. The two components are the phonological loop, which is specialised for the processing and maintenance of verbal material, and the general-purpose processing system of the central executive.

A full introduction to the application of the working memory model to normal adults, neuropsychological patients and children is provided in the two opening chapters. Non-experts within this area will find these chapters particularly useful in providing a clear statement of the current theoretical and empirical status of the working memory model. Each of the following chapters examines the involvement of working memory in one specialised aspect of language processing, in each case integrating the available experimental, neuropsychological and developmental evidence. The book will therefore be of direct relevance to researchers interested in both language processing and memory.

Working Memory and Language is unique in that it draws together findings from normal adults, brain-damaged patients, and children. For each of these populations, working memory involvement in language processing ranging from the speech production to comprehension are evaluated. Working Memory and Language provides a comprehensive analysis of just what roles working memory does play in the processing of language.

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