

Abstract

Multitasking is everywhere in the modern world. Although much research has been carried out on various aspects of multitasking, there is still not much insight into how well people adapt to different multitasking demands. In this study, an experiment consisting of three distinct tasks was carried out. Participants had to perform dual-tasking in two different settings: fixed dual-task, and free dual-task. In fixed dual-task setting, participants had to execute two out of the three tasks simultaneously, and all permutations of the three tasks were used. Two of the tasks involving verbal working memory were predicted to have larger interference when combined, which would lead to larger response time. In the free dual-task setting, participants were first given one task. Upon knowing the task, they were required to choose one task out of the remaining two. It was predicted that they would pick the task with smaller interference with the given task. The experiment was put online in order to attract volunteers. Twenty participants were recruited for the experiment. The experiment results partially supported the hypothesis on interference – the two tasks involving verbal working memory had much larger response time when done together. However, the results did not show a clear strategy on the participants' side. One of the tasks posed important limitation on the experiment, and various improvements were proposed.