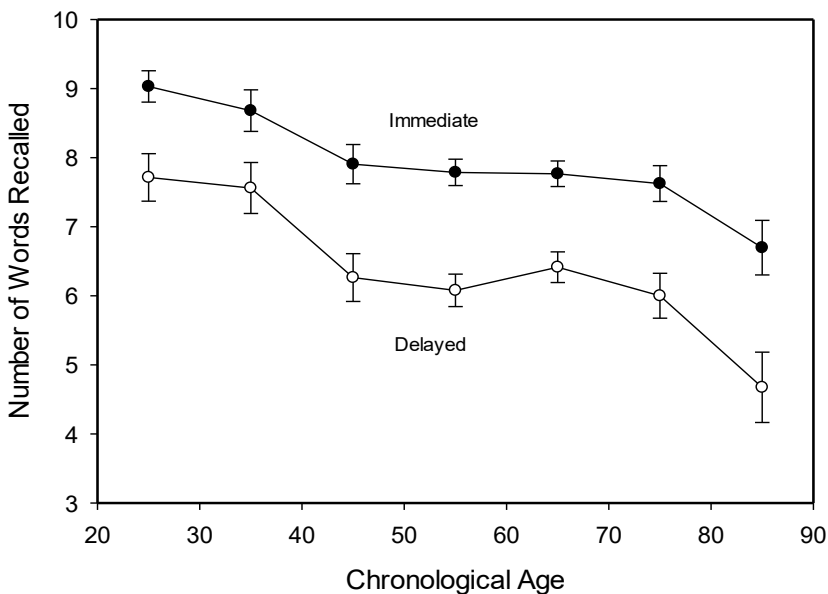


Virginia Cognitive Aging Project

Salthouse Cognitive Aging Lab

I knew it a few minutes ago...



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One of the tests we use to evaluate memory is word recall, in which we asked you to recall as many words as you could from a list of 12 different words. This task measures immediate memory because you hear the list of words, and are then immediately asked to recall the words. In addition to the immediate test, at the end of the session we asked you to try to recall the original information again, which is a test of delayed memory.

We were particularly interested in comparing the age trends in immediate and delayed memory to determine whether aging was associated with more severe decreases in delayed memory than in immediate memory. Surprisingly, our results suggest that this was not the case. As can be seen in the graph above, the average number of words remembered was smaller in the delayed memory task than in the immediate task, but the age relations were very similar in the two tasks. These results indicate that although engaging in other cognitive activities for about 20 or 30 minutes is associated with lower levels of memory performance, this is true to nearly the same extent for people between 20 and 30 years of age and for those between 70 and 80 years of age. Some research from other laboratories has found that people in early stages of dementia have more severe decreases in performance in contrasts of immediate and delayed tests. Therefore we will continue to examine immediate and delayed memory to determine whether the difference between the two might be an early sign of pathological memory decline.

Does personality change with age?

Have you ever wondered if, and how, personality changes as people get older? In order to examine this question, we analyzed the data obtained by our Personality Inventory questionnaire. This questionnaire includes questions such as: are you the life of the party, do you get stressed out easily, and do you pay attention to details? Many previous studies using this and related questionnaires have indicated that five major dimensions of personality can be identified consisting of: openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and emotional stability. Although it is sometimes assumed that personality changes as people age, our results, and those from other studies, suggest that most people tend to remain fairly stable in their personality across the adult years. Some age differences are apparent, such as higher levels of emotional stability and conscientiousness at older ages, but they are typically rather small. The available research therefore suggests that for most people your personality in your 70's and 80's will likely be very similar to what it was when you were in your 20's and 30's.



Call Today!

We would love for you to come back!

The Cognitive Aging Lab is recruiting participants again this spring! We have opportunities for you to participate starting in April 2016 and going through August 2016. As a reminder, you would come into the lab for three 2-hour sessions to complete a number of different cognitive and memory tasks. You will receive \$120 for your participation! If you are interested and you have not been at the lab for at least two years, please call 434-982-6320 to schedule your appointments today!

Where does the money come from?

You may have wondered about the source of funds used to compensate you for your participation, and to pay the salaries of research staff, and purchase materials, and equipment. The Virginia Cognitive Aging Project (VCAP) is supported by a research grant from the National Institute on Aging, which is one of the institutes within the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Grant applications are prepared by a team of researchers, and must be approved at several levels within the originating institution (e.g., The University of Virginia) before they can be submitted to NIH. Submitted applications are initially reviewed for scientific merit by a panel of about 20 scientists who are specialists in that area of research. That is, each application is evaluated by this panel in terms of its scientific importance, methodology, and potential impact. The ratings from the scientific panel are then combined with institute priorities and used by an advisory council for the relevant institute (e.g., National Institute on Aging), to make funding decisions. The proportion of submitted applications that eventually receive awards varies according to the available funds, but in the last several funding cycles less than 1 in 12 applications to the National Institute on Aging have resulted in grants.

We are fortunate that our recent application to extend the Virginia Cognitive Aging Project for another five years was successful, which will allow us to continue and expand the research we have been conducting since 2001.

*Want more information on
research funding at NIH?*



*Visit: [https://grants.nih.gov/
grants/about_grants.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/about_grants.htm)*



Where are they now?



Alese Zeman moved down to Houston, Texas after graduation to join Teach For America, a program that recruits college graduates to teach in high-need areas. She was placed at a charter school in southeast Houston to teach sixth grade math. Even though 90% of the student body lives below the poverty line, every single one of them gain admittance to a four-year college or university during their senior year! Her Teach For America contract ends this year, but she will be staying in teaching for many years to come. When Alese is not teaching, she's busy exploring her new city or fostering pit bulls for a local non-kill animal shelter.



Brendon Cummiskey is currently a 1st year PhD student in Organizational Behavior at Washington University in St. Louis' Olin Business School. His main research interest focuses on understanding creativity and its impact in areas ranging from the arts to business. He is also drawn to emotion and perception research, at times combining this with creativity. During his free time, you'll likely find him at the art museum or listening to Kendrick Lamar's newest song while yelling at James Harden on his TV.



Morgan Mullen recently received her M.Ed. in Educational Psychology from the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. She currently works as a data collector for the School-Based Violence Prevention Group at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Her research focuses on assessing the efficacy of programs that strive to improve student behavior, school climate, and promote cultural awareness in middle schools. In her spare time she enjoys running, hiking, reading, and listening to live music.

The Virginia Cognitive Aging Project is an ongoing project which is only able to continue because of your participation and support!

**We are on the web! Check us out
at: [www. MentalAging.com](http://www.MentalAging.com)**

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The Cognitive Aging Lab has employed over 20 research assistants every summer since 2001. Many of our research assistants have been very successful continuing their education or pursuing interesting occupations! In this section we will let you get to know some of our previous research assistants a little more!

If you are interested in learning about our current research assistants at the lab, feel free to visit our website at www.mentalaging.com under "Lab Members".