

EMOTIONAL VALANCE OF THE WANDERING MIND: DOES VALENCE MODERATE TASK IMPAIRMENT

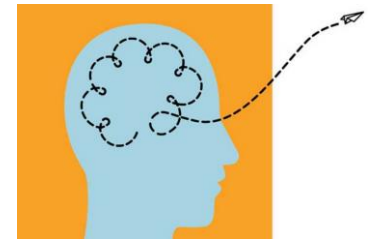
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Parker Building Room 203



Mind wandering, or experiencing task-unrelated thoughts (TUTs), refers to any thoughts related to personal concerns or goals but unrelated to the current task (Smallwood & Schooler, 2006). While mind wandering occurs during almost 50% of daily activities (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010), it can be detrimental to current task performance. The majority of work examining mind wandering has assumed that all types of TUTs result in similar consequences. Recent findings from our lab have demonstrated that negative emotional and neutral, but not positive emotional TUTs, are related to poorer task performance (Banks, Welhaf, Hood, Boals, & Tartar, 2016). The current study examined the impact of emotionally valenced mind wandering on working memory task performance on a trial-by-trial basis. Specifically, we examined the impact of mind wandering on trials immediately preceding and immediately following the thought probe. Emotional valence of mind wandering differentially moderated the impact on task performance prior to and following the thought probe. Implications for models of mind wandering will be discussed.