

Working Memory

Many psychologists have suggested that the short-term memory is not unitary, rather it may consist of many components. This multi-component view of short-term memory was first proposed by Baddeley (1986) who suggested that the short-term memory is not a passive storehouse but rather a work bench that holds a wide variety of memory materials that are constantly handled, manipulated and transformed as people perform various cognitive tasks. This work bench is called the working memory.

The first component of the working memory is the phonological loop which holds a limited number of sounds

and unless rehearsed they decay within 2 seconds. The second component- visuospatial sketchpad stores visual and spatial information and like phonological loop the capacity of the sketchpad too is limited. The third component, which Baddely calls the central Executive, organises information from phonological loop, visuospatial sketchpad as well as from the long-term memory. Like a true executive, it allocates attentional resources to be distributed to various information needed to perform a given cognitive operation and monitors, plans, and control behaviours.