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How is learning, and maintaining know-how related to technology, experienced by people with dementia?



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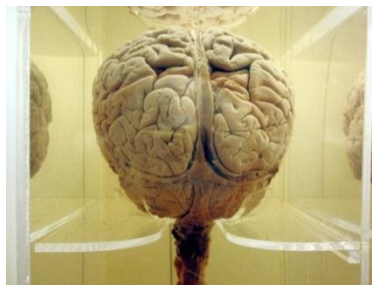


- People with dementia are expected to manage everyday technologies such as cell phones, cash machines and remote controls, and new technologies to support them are continuously developed and introduced.
- But to be able to use technology, ability to learn new and maintain former know-how as well as to solve problems that occur when using technology is required – and learning is known to be difficult in dementia.



We *teach* – but how do they *learn*?

- Most research on learning in the field of dementia has studied teaching approaches while little is known about ***learning as experienced and enacted by those who learn***; i.e. people with dementia.
- Teaching methods, for example
 - Spaced retrieval
 - Errorless learning
 - Modelling



The aim

- to explore the lived experience of learning related to technology among people with mild to moderate stage dementia, and of how they – from their own initiative - maintained their knowledge of how to use technology that they already had.



Methods:

- Seven persons with dementia were interviewed in-depth, and data were analysed with a phenomenological approach
- The EPP-method; Empirical Phenomenological Psychological method
- Activity focused (occupational) perspective – not psychological

Fictive name	Age	Living condition	Education years	Type of occupation	Approximate time since diagnosis
Marianne	72	Single	20	University lecturer	AD* 1 year
Anne	57	Single	No information	Preschool teacher	AD 1 year
Maj	70	Single	16	Nurse	AD 3 years
Bo	68	Cohabiting	14	Engineer	AD 2 years
Rune	78	Cohabiting	6	Construction worker	AD <1 year
Eva	62	Single	9	Nurse's assistant	AD 1 year
Peter	66	Cohabiting	10	Bank clerk	AD 1 year

Findings

- Positioning oneself in the technological landscape
- The 'everyday' as the context of a transient, easily lost flow of knowing
- A variety of ways of learning technology

Positioning oneself in the technological landscape

A continuum:

- *Updating and expanding is not for me -----*
- *Updating and expanding is really for me*



- Age not decisive
- Cognitive state not decisive
- Education?



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The 'everyday' as the context of a transient, easily lost flow of knowing



Ways of learning technology

- *Rely on ones habituated/automatized repertoire of actions*
- *Rely on other people*
- *Rely on the technology*
- *Belonging to a learning context*



Reflections:

- Does learning require that the person actually acquires the knowledge or skills?
- Knowledge as temporarily *borrowed* - learning as knowing where the knowledge would be available for borrowing when needed.

Lessons learned

- the person and his/her individual ways of approaching learning and positioning in relation to technology should be given more attention.
- the importance of maintaining the flow of using a piece of technology in everyday life is underscored, and maintenance should be emphasized as the most important “training”.
- a more open-minded view on learning is suggested, based on that knowing also could be boosted by a learning context, or borrowed from others or from technology, rather than acquired by the person.

Thank you!

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