

Brain's memory storing is studied

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University of California-Irvine scientists have identified the neural activity that occurs when the brain "sets the stage" for retaining a memory.

The researchers say their findings might have important implications for memory research, helping to find ways by which people can strengthen memories they wish to retain while weakening ones they would rather forget.

In two separate experiments with adults, UCI neuroscientist Michael Rugg, in collaboration with colleagues from University College London, looked at neural activity that preceded the presentation of single words. They found measures of the activity could predict whether the words would be remembered in a later memory test.

Rugg, a professor of neurobiology and behavior and director of the Center for the Neurobiology of Learning and Memory, said he believes the research could significantly influence the way scientists study how and why memories are stored. While researchers have long investigated brain activity that follows an event to study how memories are formed, Rugg says they will now need to also take into consideration the role of activity preceding the event.

The results of the study appear as an advance online publication in the journal Nature Neuroscience.

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