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Understanding Direction Giving in the Service of Wayfinding on a University Quad

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Abstract

One goal was to specify the types of details students provide when giving directions to assist others in finding buildings on their university quad. Another goal was to test whether visuospatial and verbal secondary tasks disrupted direction giving by reducing the number of details provided. Thirty-three college students (21 women, 12 men) provided wayfinding directions to campus buildings for a fictitious listener under three secondary task conditions: control (no secondary task), verbal secondary task (word-nonword judgments), and visuospatial secondary task (clock hand judgments). In general, students provided landmarks most frequently, followed by cardinal directions and left-right details. Students provided significantly fewer spatial details when completing the visuospatial secondary task and marginally fewer details when completing the verbal secondary task relative to control. These findings confirm the role of visuospatial and verbal working memory in direction giving in the service of wayfinding on a familiar university quad.