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1. REPORT DATE 08/16/2010		2. REPORT TYPE final technical		3. DATES COVERED final 04/01/2007-11/30/2009	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Learning Robustly Through Embedded Cognition				5A. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5B. GRANT NUMBER FA9550-07-1-0359	
				5C. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Niels Taatgen John Anderson				5D. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5E. TASK NUMBER	
				5F. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Carnegie Mellon University 5000 Forbes Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15213				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) AFOSR 875 N. Randolph St. Arlington, VA 22203				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACCTY(M)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) AFRL-DNR-VN-JR-2012-067	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT A = Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited B = US Gov't agencies only — must have an approved reason for using this distribution					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT In the ACT-R modeling approach we assume that in order to become skilled at a task, we start with knowledge that first consists of a set of memorized instructions that is interpreted by the cognitive system. This interpretation process is gradually internalized by a process we call production compilation, leading to improvements in performance in terms of speed and accuracy. The quality and robustness of the resulting skill partially depends on the representation of the initial instructions. We found that if these instructions are grounded in what is perceived in the world, the resulting performance is better in terms of speed and accuracy, but more importantly in terms of being able to deal with new and unexpected situations. The reason is that grounded instructions require less internal control, which reduces the computational complexity of the skill. Several studies with a simulated Boeing 777 Flight Management System have shown that participants who receive instructions grounded in perception perform much better than participants who receive classical checklist instructions.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19A. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON John Anderson/Niels Taatgen
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			
					19D. TELEPHONE NUMBER 412-268-2788

To: technicalreports@afosr.af.mil
Subject: Final report

Contract/Grant Title: Learning Robustly through Embedded Cognition
PI: Niels Taatgen (until July 2009)/John Anderson (after July 2009)
Contract/Grant # FA95500710359
Reporting Period: 4-1-2007 to 11-30-2009

Accomplishments:

In the ACT-R modeling approach we assume that in order to become skilled at a task, we start with knowledge that first consists of a set of memorized instructions that is interpreted by the cognitive system. This interpretation process is gradually internalized by a process we call production compilation, leading to improvements in performance in terms of speed and accuracy. The quality and robustness of the resulting skill partially depends on the representation of the initial instructions. We found that if these instructions are grounded in what is perceived in the world, the resulting performance is better in terms of speed and accuracy, but more importantly in terms of being able to deal with new and unexpected situations. The reason is that grounded instructions require less internal control, which reduces the computational complexity of the skill. Several studies with a simulated Boeing 777 Flight Management System have shown that participants who receive instructions grounded in perception perform much better than participants who receive classical checklist instructions.

We explored a number of extensions to the Boeing 777 Flight Management Task experiment and cognitive model. In addition, we performed a number of studies that focused on cognitive control in general.

We performed three new experiments with the FMS task:

- In a first experiment we collected eye-movement data to assess the visual information subjects used to decide on their actions. This experiment showed that subjects extensively rely on visual information to guide their actions.
- In a second experiment we compared subjects who had received no procedural task instructions at all to subjects who did receive instructions. Although performance by the non-instructed subjects was poor initially, they reached the same performance levels as the instructed subjects after approximately 15 problems.
- In a third experiment we introduced equipment malfunctions of two different types. One type introduces display malfunctions, making it harder to assess the state of the system. The second type concerns state malfunctions, in which correct actions may put the system in a wrong state. The results of this experiment showed that subjects that received the grounded instructions outperformed the subjects that received the checklist instructions, but particularly on the problems in which there was a display malfunction. The trials of the second type of malfunction, the state malfunctions, turned out to be too easy to produce a difference compared to trials without malfunction.

We successfully modeled the first experiment by extending the visual module of the ACT-R architecture with a means to keep track of locations on the screen, and a system

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to learn from instructions called ACT-R/Lisa. The model was not only able to fit the performance data, but also to predict the details of the eye-movements.

To broaden our investigation of the role of control in task performance, we looked at control in smaller tasks on two different levels: procedural and declarative. At the declarative level it is necessary to keep previous goals from interfering with the current one. In that context we used results from a set of Stroop experiments as a guide to set up activation system that suppresses the activation of completed goals. At the procedural level we concluded from a model of the attentional blink that changes in control state are mediated through separate cognitive actions, and that interference at the procedural level can therefore impact the maintenance of control in a task.

Archival publications during reporting period:

Juvina, I. & Taatgen, N.A. (2009). A repetition-suppression account of between-trial effects in the Stroop task. *Acta Psychologica*, 131, 72-84.

Taatgen, N.A., Juvina, I., Schipper, M., Borst, J., & Martens, S. (2009). Too much control can hurt: A threaded cognition model of the attentional blink. *Cognitive Psychology*, 59(1), 1-29.

Taatgen, N. A., Huss, D., Dickison, D. & Anderson, J. R. (2008). The acquisition of robust and flexible cognitive skills. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 137(3), 548-565.

New discoveries, inventions or patent disclosures: None