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Immediate Feedback Decreases False Recognition in the DRM Paradigm

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Abstract

Studying false recognition is highly important not only in furthering our general understanding of memory but also in applied situations like eyewitness testimony. The Deese Roediger McDermott (DRM) paradigm, utilizing study lists of words all semantically related to a theme word that is not actually presented, has been shown to be highly likely to produce false recognition of the theme word (critical lure) at test (Roediger & McDermott, 1995). Prior studies have aimed to combat this error by providing feedback, however the feedback provided was either delayed or only given for errors to the critical lure. Our study provides immediate feedback for every memory judgment given in a DRM recognition task, allowing subjects to evaluate their active memory traces. The results suggest that immediate feedback (compared to delayed) is more effective at reducing false recognitions, possibly due to a learned reliance on memory features that are diagnostic of true memories.