

Contextual Reinstatement in Prospective Memory

Tracy Huang
Simon Dennis
University of Adelaide

Prospective memory is the realisation of delayed intentions. In this study, we examine the impact of contextual manipulations on prospective memory. A context effect occurs when a change to background context between study and test compromises performance. Sixty-two participants completed either a Consonant-Vowel-Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVCVCV) or a pleasantness rating task. They were assigned to one of four conditions during study and test respectively (i.e. CVCVCV-CVCVCV, CVCVCV-pleasantness rating, pleasantness rating-pleasantness rating, pleasantness rating-CVCVCV). At the beginning of the experiment, participants were given a prospective memory instruction ("Press P on the keyboard if they see words that appeared on the study list"). We found a context congruency effect only for high frequency words. Such a result would be predicted if high frequency words are subjected to more interference as proposed by context noise models of recognition memory.