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Authors

Gordon, Chelsea

Spivey, Michael

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Exploring the mechanism of context-dependent memory

Chelsea Gordon

University of California, Merced, Merced, CA, United States

Michael Spivey

University of California, Merced

Abstract: Many experiments within the memory literature show evidence for context-dependent effects in memory (Gieselman & Bjork, 1980; Godden & Baddeley, 1980; Marian & Neisser, 2000; Smith, 1986; Smith & Vela, 2001). There have also been a number of failed replications of this effect (Farnsworth, 1930; Reed, 1931; Smith, Glenberg, & Bjork, 1978; Godden & Baddeley, 1980; Jacoby, 1983). If the context-dependent effect exists, there are many unanswered questions about it, such as the mechanism behind the phenomenon and at what level of detail context is encoded. In order to explore these questions, we need a reliable way of observing context-dependence that holds across experiments. Here we attempt to find a paradigm that can be reliably used to elicit context-dependence, so that we can begin answering some of these questions.