

Memorability and Response Bias at the Image Level

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Abstract: A great deal of recognition memory research has used word lists as stimuli, but there is ample evidence that effects observed with words do not always generalize to other stimulus classes such as colour photos. While some variation in recognition memory performance may be understandable in terms of these kinds of broad categorical distinctions (e.g., pictures vs. words), there is increasing appreciation that much finer-grained distinctions – even down to the level of comparing individual stimuli – can also be informative, and may ultimately be necessary to understanding the complex interplay among variables that determines the course of a particular recognition memory decision. I will present the results of a series of analyses in our lab investigating both overall discriminability and response tendencies at the level of individual images (photos of faces, photos of assorted indoor/outdoor scenes, and scans of paintings), and discuss them in the context of ongoing efforts in other labs to break down the components of memorability at the image level.