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Sounds like Swahili to Me

Jodi Price

University of Alabama in Huntsville

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Sounds like Swahili to Me

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jodi Price, Associate Professor of Psychology

Office: MH 329 *Phone:* 824-3321

Mailing Address: Department of Psychology, MH 335

Project summary: How do you decide what to study when preparing for a test? Do you study everything or focus on the material your professor has stressed in class? Do you form a plan for how you will study or do you simply dive right in and study until you run out of study time? Although students likely approach studying in very different ways, a number of theories have been proposed to explain how students decide what to study (e.g., Ariel, Dunlosky, & Bailey, 2009; Metcalfe, 2002; Nelson & Leonesio, 1988). These theories have considered the role of item difficulty, point values, and allotted study time in students' self-regulated learning decisions, but none have examined how feedback might influence study decisions. Feedback manipulations could influence not only students' study decisions, but also their ability to remember the material they study given that frequent feedback has been found to facilitate learning, but to impair retention of information. The present study will use Swahili-English vocabulary pairs as stimuli to reduce concerns about participants having familiarity with the to-be-learned material. The study will manipulate the types and frequency with which participants receive feedback to examine how feedback interacts with item difficulty, point values, and allotted study time to influence how participants' approach learning the Swahili vocabulary terms. The results of this project have the potential to inform instructional design methods as well as provide insight about how best to structure feedback so as to enhance students' learning.

Student Duties: The student will be asked to read background articles about feedback, learning and memory processes so as to become familiar with the literature and the format style used in all psychology publications. The student and I will meet to discuss these articles to ensure an understanding of the research methods other researchers have used. The student will be asked to contribute to discussions about design decisions so that the student may become familiar with the many steps that go into planning a new experiment. Finally, I will personally train the student how to collect data with younger adult participants before the student runs experimental sessions on their own. I will provide the student with additional training in statistics. The goal will be to cement topics addressed in the statistics class by allowing the student to run analyses on data with which they are familiar, having helped plan the experiment and collect the data. In addition, I would train the student in more advanced statistical techniques (e.g., repeated measures analyses of variance) that are necessary for analyzing the types of data produced in my research, but to which undergraduates are rarely exposed. Thus, students will get additional experience using SPSS. Reading published articles will help familiarize the student with how psychological research is written. Finally, the student will gain experience presenting this work in public forums in order to fulfill the obligation to The University of Alabama in Huntsville. All of these things would strengthen the student's skill set while increasing the likelihood of being admitted to a graduate program in Psychology.

Faculty Supervision and Interaction: My goals in working with the selected student include exposing the student to all aspects of research: designing an experiment, data collection,

