



Testing with Feedback Enhances Caregiver Knowledge of Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia

Maryann F. Hernandez, Sophia Lohrmann, Morgan D. Shumaker & Sarah K. Tauber



Background

- Many people living with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD) are cared for by informal caregivers (Thompson et al., 2007).
- Caregivers face challenges managing and treating symptoms owing to gaps in their dementia-related knowledge (Jorge et al., 2021).
- Caregivers often learn about dementia from medical professionals, other caregivers, or from online resources.
- Online resources might encourage caregivers to use low impact learning strategies when researching dementia care.
- Practice testing followed by detailed, corrective feedback can benefit learning, even when the retrieval attempt is unsuccessful (Butler, 2008).

Research Question

Does practice testing with or without detailed, corrective feedback improve caregivers' learning of Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD)?

Participants

$N = 65$ via Prolific

- Between 19-66 years old ($M = 40.81$, $SD = 11.86$)

Design

Within-participant

Learning strategy:

- Reread (4 categories)
- Testing (4 categories)
- Testing with detailed, corrective feedback (4 categories)

*Participants engaged in each learning strategy 3 times

Materials & Procedure

- **12 Categories of BPSD:** aberrant motor ability, agitation and aggression, anxiety, apathy, appetite and eating disorders, delusions, depression and dysphoria, disinhibition, elation and euphoria, hallucinations, irritability and lability, nighttime behavior disturbances
- **Study:** Information about BPSD in webpage format
- **Tests:** 48 questions (4 per category)

Study & Restudy Materials

Delusions and Dementia

Delusions (or strongly held false beliefs) are a common symptom for a person living with dementia. They can take the form of paranoia, which makes the person feel threatened, even if there is no or little reason to feel this way. Dementia can make a person suspicious of the people around them.

What are delusions?

A person experiencing a delusion may feel that they are being watched, or that someone is acting against them. They may jump to conclusions without much evidence.

If the person you care for has delusions, this can be very difficult to cope with, especially if they are convinced that you have done something wrong or are trying to harm them. Try to remember that their delusions feel as real to them as your reality feels to you. You will not generally be able to convince a person experiencing delusions that they are wrong or mistaken.

If this is a sudden change, make an urgent appointment with the doctor to rule out delirium, which is a medical emergency. If delusions are ongoing and causing distress, the doctor may consider a drug treatment.

Test & Test with Feedback Materials

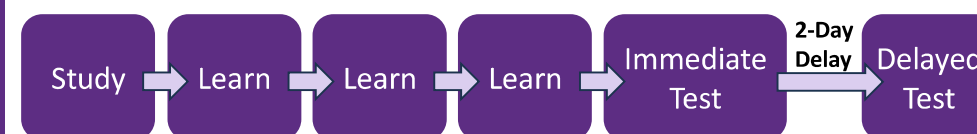
Your loved one sometimes believes things strongly that are not true, for example thinking that someone has stolen their keys when they can not find them. What can you do about these experiences?

- Take their concern seriously
- Focus on an issue that can be resolved such as locating the keys and ignore the belief that is not true
- Because you know this is not true, you can dismiss the concern
- Explain to them that they are wrong, so they do not make the same mistake again in the future

Please select the correct answer

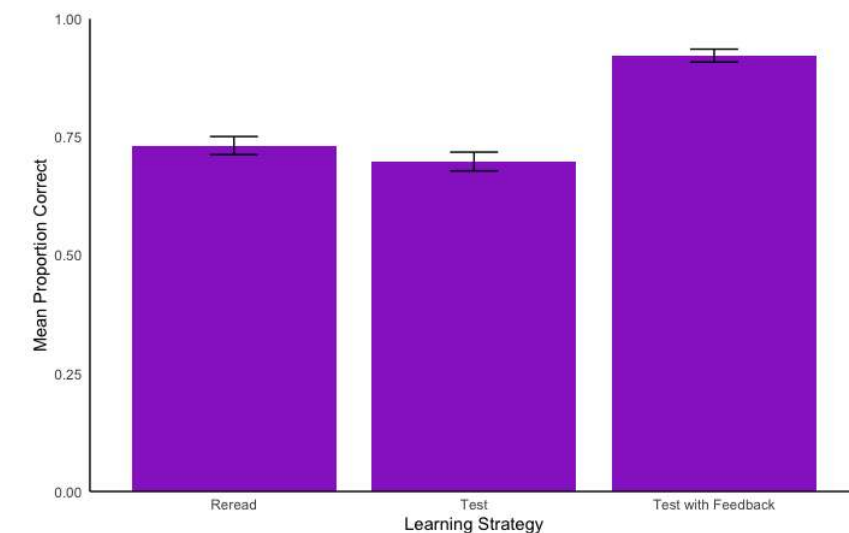
No, that is incorrect. Trying to convince them that they are wrong is unlikely to help and can make both of you feel frustrated and distressed. Instead, stay calm, acknowledge how they feel, and reassure the person that you are taking their concern seriously.

Procedure

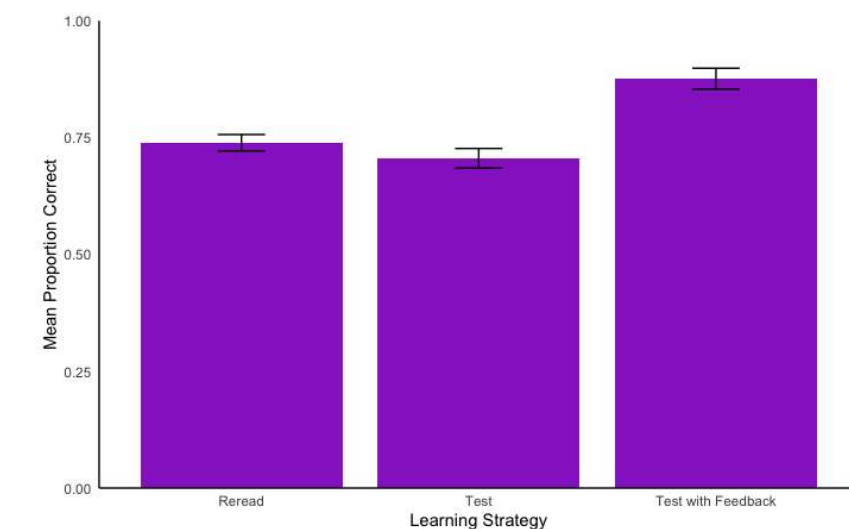


Results

Immediate Test



Delayed Test



Conclusions & Future Directions

- Testing with detailed, corrective feedback enhanced learning compared to rereading the materials and testing without feedback.
- Future work will examine the efficacy of these strategies using participants from the Fort Worth community.