

MEMORY: CONRAD
ENCODING IN STM

Aim: to find out whether people use acoustic coding in STM, even when information is presented visually.

Procedures:

- ❑ Participants were shown a random sequence of six consonants projected in rapid succession onto a screen.
- ❑ Strings of consonants were either acoustically similar (eg. P,C,V,T, B,D) or acoustically dissimilar (e.g. L,Z,F,X,H,W)
- ❑ Participants were asked to write down the letters in the same order as they appeared.
- ❑ Letters were presented too rapidly for the participants to keep up, so they had to rely on memory.
- ❑ Conrad carefully noted the errors made by the participants

Findings:

- ❑ The majority of the errors involved the substitution of a similar sounding letter (e.g. B for D, or S for X).
- ❑ Participants found that it was more difficult to recall strings of acoustically similar letters in the correct order than acoustically dissimilar letters, even though they were presented visually

Conclusions:

- ❑ Items are stored in STM in some form of acoustic code
- ❑ Even if consonants are presented visually, they are recorded into acoustic form in order to be stored in STM.

Criticisms:

- ❑ Artificial stimuli used therefore cannot generalise to everyday memory
- ❑ Other studies have shown that acoustic coding is not exclusively used in STM. Visual coding can be found (Brandimonte et al)