This Research Honors thesis has been approved for
the Psychology Department and
the Honors and Investigative Studies Committee by

Faculty Thesis Advisor

Date

Thesis Committee Member

Date
Can Knowledge of Future Public Presentations of Eyewitness Testimonies Obviate Positive Post-Identification Feedback Effects?

Audrey Ross

Marietta College
Abstract

The objective of this two part study was to determine if knowledge of a future public presentation of an eyewitness testimony could obviate positive post-identification feedback effects. All participants had to watch a video that depicted a young male stealing a laptop computer, making them an eyewitness to a crime. Following the video, an identification from a photo line-up had to be made and regardless of the identification, all participants were given positive feedback. A series of post-identification questions were answered and participants in the experimental group were told that when they returned to the lab for part two of the study they would be giving a public presentation of their eyewitness testimony while those in the control group were told no such thing. The post-identification questions had to be answered during part two of the study and an additional question pertaining to confidence was answered as well. A two-tailed independent samples test was used to reveal any differences in participant confidence between groups. Additionally, an ANOVA was used to analyze the effect of time and public presentation expectation on answers to the post-identification questions. The implications of this study are reviewed in the discussion section.
Can Knowledge of Future Public Presentations of Eyewitness Testimonies Obviate Positive Post-Identification Feedback Effects?

Studies of jury decision-making indicate that confidence is the most influential cue used by juries in assessing the credibility of eyewitness testimony (Cutler, Penrod, & Dexter, 1990). In fact, using confidence as a tool for assessing the accuracy of eyewitnesses has been preserved in the United States Supreme Court through decisions in cases such as Neil vs. Biggers (1972) (Luus & Wells, 1994). This ruling set forth five criteria for the courts to use when determining the likely accuracy of an eyewitness’s identification (Wells & Bradfield, 1998). These criteria are as follows: 1) the eyewitness’s opportunity to view 2) the attention allotted to the event by the eyewitness 3) the accuracy of the eyewitness’s description of the suspect prior to the line-up 4) eyewitness certainty 5) the length of time between the event and identification.

The importance of these factors when assessing eyewitness accuracy has been reinforced time and time again by The United States Supreme Courts. Jurors have been told to consider certainty, view, and attention as indicators of eyewitness identification accuracy (Wells & Quinlivan, 2009). Thus, the certainty/confidence an eyewitness demonstrates in his or her own lineup identification plays a role in how persuasive that eyewitness is to a jury (Cutler, Penrod, & Dexter, 1990). However, a meta-analysis done by Douglass and Steblay (2006) shows that eyewitness confidence tends to be only modestly related to eyewitness identification. Furthermore, eyewitness confidence is impressionable.

Past research has demonstrated that even eyewitnesses who have made a mistaken or incorrect identification can be highly confident in their decision (Bradfield, Wells, & Olson, 2002; Wells & Bradfield, 1999). Actually, mistaken identification is the leading cause of wrongful convictions (Scheck, Neufeld, & Dwyer, 2000). In recent years the advances in
technology have allowed for 301 wrongful convictions in the United States to be overturned by post-conviction DNA evidence (http://www.innocenceproject.org). Of these 301 wrongful convictions, mistaken eyewitness identifications contributed to approximately 75% of them. In the traditional eyewitness identification process a standard lineup of individuals or photographs of individuals are presented to the eyewitness by a lineup administrator. This administrator typically knows who the suspect is and may provide unintentional cues to the eyewitness about which individual to pick from the lineup. Furthermore, there are no legal prohibitions against an investigator telling an eyewitness whether or not their identification was that of the actual suspect. Consequently, such feedback is given in real cases.

Post-identification feedback is any feedback that is given to an eyewitness after a lineup decision has been made (Quinlivan, Neuschatz, Douglass, Wells, & Wetmore, 2011). Changing a witnesses’ confidence in their identification decision is known as the post-identification feedback effect (Wells & Bradfield, 1998). Original research done by Wells and Bradfield (1998) revealed that when eyewitnesses were given confirming, or positive, feedback there was strong inflation in eyewitness reports of certainty, view, and attention. Furthermore, the information provided to a witness about the accuracy of their identification has been found to distort additional eyewitness judgments as well (Wells & Bradfield, 1998). This includes the judgments of how easy the identification was for the eyewitness, how clear the suspect’s image is in memory, and how confident the witness remembers being at the time of their identification (Douglass & Steblay, 2006).

Douglass, Neuschatz, Imrich, and Wilkinson (2010) have expanded the range of study of post-identification feedback effects in order to evaluate the impact that feedback has on third party evaluators and their impressions of an eyewitness’s credibility. They asked third party
evaluators to watch a videotape of an eyewitness to a simulated crime and rate their credibility (Maclean, Brimacombe, Allison, Dahl, & Kadlec, 2010). The results of this research show that third party evaluators who viewed the testimonies of eyewitnesses that received positive post-identification feedback rated those eyewitnesses as both more accurate and more credible than those who received disconfirming or no feedback. This indicates that the confidence inflation that eyewitnesses experience carries over to their testimony. Furthermore, third parties can perceive this confidence which then influences their perception of the eyewitnesses’ credibility and accuracy. These results imply that post-identification feedback could substantially interfere with the duties of a jury.

Extensive research on the post-identification feedback phenomenon has taken place throughout the last decade, during which important boundaries of the effect have been identified (Douglass, Neuschatz, Imrich, & Wilkinson, 2010). For instance, feedback affects witness judgment regardless of age (Hafstad, Memon, & Logie, 2004), lineup type (Douglass & McQuiston-Surrett, 2006) and retention interval (Wells, Olson, & Charman, 2003). Wright and Skagerberg (2007) have demonstrated that post-identification feedback influences real witnesses to actual crimes and that these effects are robust. Eyewitness experts routinely claim that distorted eyewitness memories will compromise the ability of jurors to appropriately evaluate eyewitness identification accuracy and the research supports this notion. Because of this, various techniques for reducing the confidence inflation of post-identification feedback, known as confidence prophylactics, have been tested.

Research has demonstrated that feedback effects can be eliminated if an eyewitness is suspicious of the experimenter (Neuschatz, Lawson, Fairless, Powers, Neuschatz, Goodsell, & Toglia, 2007) or if the eyewitness discovers that their feedback has been randomly determined.
(Lampinen, Scott, Pratt, Leding, & Arnal, 2007). However, there are still many unanswered questions about the post-identification feedback effect and how confidence inflation due to positive post-identification feedback can be deterred. This study seeks to explore an area that few researchers have touched upon thus far. The goal of the current study was to determine if the knowledge of an upcoming public presentation of an eyewitness’ testimony would obviate positive post-identification feedback effects.

It was hypothesized that eyewitnesses who demonstrated an initial increase in confidence due to positive post-identification feedback would then demonstrate a deflation of confidence after being informed of an upcoming public presentation of their testimony. Thus, confirming results could provide the court system with a way to ensure that eyewitness testimonies used as evidence during a trial are as accurate as possible. With only a few known confidence prophylactics, this study could possibly provide another way to reduce positive post-identification feedback effects.

It is crucial to ensure that eyewitness testimonies used as evidence during trial are as accurate as they can be. Ideally, police and other lineup administrators should refrain from providing the eyewitness with feedback or at least acquire a statement of eyewitness confidence before providing feedback (Lampinen, Scott, Pratt, Leding, & Arnal, 2006). However, it is known that this is not always the case so it is imperative to determine what steps can be taken to reduce post-identification feedback effects when recommendations are not followed. Eyewitnesses and the confidence they demonstrate in the court room can be very persuasive. The ability to obviate the post-identification feedback effect could help to eliminate possibly inaccurate eyewitness testimonies that could influence a wrongful conviction.
Method

Participants

Seventeen undergraduate psychology students participated in this study. Participants were recruited from the Marietta College Psychology 101 pool and received course credit in exchange for their participation. Data for fourteen participants was used in the analysis as data for three participants was thrown out because of failure to complete part 2 of the study.

Materials

Participants watched a video played on a computer monitor which depicted a male suspect stealing a laptop from an empty classroom. The video was created by the researcher and was shot as if the footage was collected from a security camera located in the front corner of the classroom. The video depicted a professor holding a study session with a small group of female students. The professor is using a laptop that is in plain view of the camera at all times. As the study session ends the professor closes the laptop and exits the classroom along with the students. For approximately 1 minute and 15 seconds, the classroom is completely empty. A male with a backpack then enters the classroom and locates the laptop left by the professor (See Figure 1). At this time the face of the male suspect was clear to participants but for a brief period of time. Cautiously, the male places the laptop in his backpack and exits the classroom. The entire video lasted approximately 3 minutes and 45 seconds.

A laboratory equipped with secure, individual work spaces, containing a desktop computer, was used as the setting for the experiment. A photo line-up consisting of 6 photos, one of which was that of the suspect portrayed in the video, was presented on a computer screen. The 5 photos presented that did not depict the suspect matched the suspect’s general description (i.e. sex, hair color, age). Thirteen post-identification questions adapted from research done by
Wells & Bradfield (1998, 1999) were used to measure participant confidence. A copy of these questions can be found in Appendix A. The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adults was used to measure participant anxiety. A copy of the questions that make up the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adults can be found in Appendix B. The Research Randomizer website was used to randomly assign participants to either the control or experimental group (www.randomizer.org). Inquisit, a computer program developed by Millisecond Software (www.millisecond.com), was installed on all desktop computers and was used to administer the video, photo line-up, post-identification questions, and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adults to participants.

**Procedures**

Participants arrived to a laboratory setting provided by the Marietta College Psychology Department located on the fourth floor of Mills Hall. Prior to their arrival participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups via Research Randomizer (www.randomizer.org). The experimental group would eventually be told that their eyewitness testimony would be presented publicly in the future and the control group would not be informed of a public presentation. Upon arrival participants were given consent forms that were explained by the researcher. After asking any questions, participants signed the consent forms that were then collected by the researcher.

At this time the participant was taken to a smaller room and seated in front of a desktop computer. The researcher informed participants that they would first be answering some questions about emotions they are currently and usually experience and that these questions would then be followed by a short video. At this time the researcher exited the room and let the participant proceed. First, participants were asked a series of questions that made up the State-
Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adults. Following completion of these questions, the computer made participants aware that they would now be watching a video. At the conclusion of the video the computer program informed the participants they were now an eyewitnesses to a crime.

Next, participants were prompted to type a statement explaining in detail what it was they witnessed. After submitting their report, a line-up consisting of 6 photographs was presented to the participants via the computer screen. Instructions on the screen asked the participants to select the photograph that was that of the male suspect from the video. At this time participants were prompted to exit their individual workspace and retrieve the researcher from a neighboring conference room.

Both the researcher and the participant returned to the participant’s workspace where the computer screen displayed a 4 digit number with a message that read as follows: “You have selected the following line-up photo: #0356.” The researcher recorded the number in a binder and acted as though the number was being compared to that of the photo number of the actual suspect. Whether the participant’s identification was correct or incorrect, the researcher gave the participant positive feedback by stating that they had correctly identified the actual suspect. At this time the researcher left the participant in the room to proceed.

Instructions on the computer screen prompted the participant to answer a series of questions. At this time the thirteen post-identification questions were presented to the participant one by one. The next question did not appear until the current question received an answer. Each question asked the participant to answer the question by selecting a number 1 through 7 that best represented their thoughts. After all thirteen questions were answered a message on the computer screen informed participants that part 1 of the experiment had been completed and to see the researcher for further instructions.
At this time, the researcher explained to participants what part 2 of the experiment would entail. Part 2 of the experiment would take place 2 days following the completion of part 1. To ensure that participants would return for the second part of the experiment, participants were made aware that the experiment would require two meetings when initially signing up for participation. At this time participants in the experimental group were told that when they returned for completion of the experiment that they would be giving their eyewitness testimony to a group of students and faculty members who made up a college board liken to a jury found within the court system. Those in the control group were asked to return to simply review their testimony with the researcher. After given these further instructions participants were free to leave.

When the participants returned 2 days later the researcher explained to them what they needed to do to complete the study. Those in the control group were told they had to answer a series of questions similar to the questions presented to them during part 1 of the study. Those in the experimental group were told that they would first answer a series of questions similar to those presented to them during part 1 of the study and then present their testimony to the students and faculty who made up the college board. At this time participants were taken to the original workspace they completed part 1 of the study in and seated at the computer. The researcher left the workspace and the computer prompted participants to answer the same thirteen post-identification questions presented in part 1 of the study. In addition to these thirteen questions, a fourteenth question asking “How confident are you now that your identification was correct?” was presented to participants.

After answering all fourteen questions a message on the computer screen instructed participants to see the researcher for further instructions. At this time those in the control group
were told that the study was complete and thoroughly debriefed by the researcher. Participants in the experimental group were informed that they would not be presenting their testimony and then debriefed as to why deception was used. After debriefing the researcher allowed participants to ask any questions they had and answered them appropriately. At this time the study was complete and participants were free to leave.

**Results**

A two-tailed independent samples test, using an alpha level of .05, was used to determine if there was a significant difference in reported confidence between those participants who thought they were going to give a public presentation of their testimony and those who did not. The data for this analysis came from question 14 of the post-identification questions that was only asked during part 2 of the study. Although those who were expecting to give a public presentation of their testimony had a lower average confidence rating \( M = 5.7, SD = .57 \) than those who were not expecting to give a public presentation of their testimony \( M = 6.4, SD = .3 \), which can be seen in Figure 2, the results of the independent samples t-test showed that this difference was not significant, \( t(13) = 1.1, p = .29 \), with a medium effect size, \( r = .1 \).

Additionally, a 2 x 2 mixed-model analysis was used to analyze participant answers to the thirteen post-identification questions. The ANOVA examined the effect of time (time 1 versus time 2, varied within groups) and public presentation expectation (expecting or not expecting, varied between groups) on confidence ratings reported via the post-identification questions. Of the thirteen confidence questions, results were significant for just a single question at the .05 alpha level. The analysis revealed a main effect of time and public presentation expectation on reported basis strength for Question 7 (“To what extent do you feel you had enough basis (enough information) to make an identification?”), \( F(1,12) = 5.3, p = .04 \). The
average for identification basis strength in those not expecting a public presentation increased between time 1 ($M = 4.2, SD = .79$) and time 2 ($M = 4.9, SD = 1.1$) while the average rating for identification basis strength for those expecting a public presentation decreased between time 1 ($M = 5.1, SD = 1.1$) and time 2 ($M = 5.0, SD = .82$). Lastly, a one way ANOVA was used to test for state and trait anxiety differences between groups. Results indicated that there were not significant differences between groups for state anxiety, $F(1,12) = 1.3, p = .29$, or for trait anxiety, $F(1, 12) = 1.7, p = .21$.

**Discussion**

This experiment sought to determine if the knowledge of a future public presentation of an eyewitness’s testimony could obviate the positive post-identification feedback effect. It was hypothesized that participants who were told that they would be publicly presenting their eyewitness testimony in the short future would have significantly lower confidence ratings than those who were not informed of such a presentation. While results indicated that those expecting a future public presentation of their testimony did have lower average confidence ratings than those who were not expecting a future public presentation, these results were not significant. As a result, the main hypothesis was not supported.

There are a couple ways that these nonsignificant results can be explained. First and foremost, the sample size for this study was rather smaller. A larger sample size would better reflect the population mean. Prior to data collection a power analysis with the target for a repeated-measures study and a medium effect size generated a sample size of 34 participants. The number of individuals whose data was used for analysis was a mere 14 participants. Although nonsignificant, the results did show a difference in confidence in the hypothesized
direction with a medium effect size. In addition to a small sample size, we can look to previous research to further explain the insignificant results of the main research question.

Recent research conducted by Bradfield, Wells, & Olson (2002) and Semmler, Brewer, & Wells (2004), have looked at the effect of positive post-identification feedback effect on eyewitnesses who made an accurate identification. According to Bradfield et al. (2002), accurate eyewitnesses do not exhibit the typical distortions in retrospective confidence and judgments demonstrated by those eyewitnesses who have made an inaccurate identification. The smaller effect of positive, confirming feedback on those who have made an accurate identification can be explained by strong internal cues to accuracy or memory traces. When internal cues are weak, people are more likely to use an external cue, confirming feedback in this case, to infer judgments about themselves and the decisions they have made. Eyewitnesses who have weak internal cues about their decision/judgments are more likely to use external cues to infer their accuracy. So the research suggests that confirming feedback (the external cue) is going to have more influence when internal cues are weak and/or inaccessible.

Eyewitnesses who make accurate identifications should have strong internal cues or memory traces and thus rely less on the confirming feedback. Research indicates that the confirming feedback is what inflates eyewitness confidence. Accordingly, if an accurate identification is made, confirming feedback will be of less significance and confidence inflation will not occur to the extent that we see in those who make an inaccurate identification.

Although the current study was not concerned with whether or not participants made an accurate identification, an accurate identification could have limited the extent to which confidence inflation occurred. In fact, this study expected confidence inflation to occur in all participants. If confidence inflation did not occur because of an accurate identification, the
significant difference hypothesized to occur as a result of the expectation of a public presentation would be less likely to occur.

While not originally concerned with whether or not participants selected the correct photo from the line-up, after reviewing this literature I was curious as to how many participants were accurate with their line-up identification. The data revealed that only a single participant identified the suspect accurately through their photo identification. So why did participants have such a difficult time making an accurate identification? One explanation focuses on the role of arousal and how it affects memory. Research indicates that arousing material is better remembered than is neutral material (Echterhoff & Wolf, 2012). Echternhoff and Wolf (2012) found that participants under high thematic arousal resulted in the greater recognition of central event items. The video that participants viewed in part 1 of the current study may not have produced much arousal. Participants watched a pre-recorded video and they were out of harm’s way, not directly involved. A lack of arousal could have interfered with the encoding process of central event items, like the face of the suspect, making accurate recall difficult when asked to identify the male from the video.

A second, simpler, explanation for why participants struggled with making accurate photo identifications is that of attention, or lack thereof. All participants were left alone in a secure workspace when watching the video shown in part 1 of the study. The video itself lasted a few minutes and there was no way of making sure participants were attentive to video and its happenings. In fact, early trials of the study proved that participants may not have been paying much attention to the task at hand. After making a line-up identification decision the computer program instructed participants to leave their workspace and see the researcher before moving on. However, a couple of the participants failed to read the instructions and the program had to
be modified to prevent this from happening in the future. Participant inattention could have made making an accurate line-up identification a difficult task.

Additional data analysis sought to determine if time, expectancy, or an interaction of the two had a significant effect on any of the thirteen post-identification questions that measured several other eyewitness judgments that had the potential for distortion. The results indicated that for a single question, to what extent do you have a basis for identification, there was a significant effect of time and expectancy on eyewitness basis for identification. Furthermore, participants who were not expecting a public presentation of their eyewitness testimony reported having more of a basis for identification at the time of the second part of the study. Those participants who were expecting to give a public presentation of their testimony reported having less of a basis for identification at the time of the second part of the study. These results are best explained by an assumption first proposed by Wells and Bradfield (1998).

According to Wells and Bradfield (1998) eyewitnesses do not consciously form clear impressions about judgments such as the basis for identification when witnessing the event. Instead, the eyewitness’s memory for cognitive processes that were operating at the time of the event is a reconstruction. Consequently, the answer to a question such as “To what extent do you feel you had enough basis (enough information) to make an identification,” is generated at a later time. If this is the case, the eyewitness is not recalling a judgment but rather creates one. The confirming feedback that was given to the eyewitness post-identification is unable to be ignored when this answer is being created. As a result, the hindsight bias is activated and the eyewitness feels as though the basis for their identification was obvious and strong all along.

In the current study, participants who are told that they are eyewitnesses only after they have watched the video are not consciously considering the basis they have for identification
while viewing the video. Because of this, the positive feedback they receive post-identification interferes and leads them to believe that they must have had a strong basis for their identification because their selection has been confirmed. This occurs in participants in both the control and experimental groups. However, a difference between the two groups can be seen when they return to complete part 2 of the study.

When participants in the control group were asked a second time to what extent they felt they had enough basis for an identification, they did not have access to a clear impression about this judgment as it occurred while the witnessing event took place but an impression that they later created. This impression is that because they were told they made an accurate identification, their basis for their identification was strong and this is what is referenced when participants are again asked about their basis for identification. As a result, participants are going to remember how strong of a basis they had for their identification. In this case, participants responded with higher strength ratings than originally reported in part 1 of the study which increased the average extent in which participants felt they had enough basis to make an identification.

Those participants in the experimental group were also lacking a clear impression about their basis for identification as it occurring when the witnessing event originally took place. However, when they recalled the impression they created, that their basis for identification must have been good because they made an accurate identification, they also recall that they will be making a public presentation of their testimony. Anxiety and social pressure is a likely to occur when participants recall their expected presentation and these feelings are in direct conflict with the confidence that was brought on by the positive feedback. This helps to reduce the initial confidence inflation that occurred as a result of the feedback and constructed retrospective
judgment. As a result, in part 2 of the study participants expecting a public presentation reported that they had less of a basis for identification. Accordingly, the average extent in which participants felt they had enough basis to make an identification decreased.

**Limitations**

As mentioned previously, the sample size used for this study was very limited in that only 17 participants were included in the study. While a larger sample (n=34) was proposed, the nonsignificant results did not approach the level of significance with the acquired sample size. Also mentioned previously, accurate identification by an eyewitness could inhibit the typical occurrence of the post-identification feedback effect. To avoid accurate identification, a target-absent line-up could also be utilized.

The external validity of this particular study may have been compromised to some extent as well. A majority of this study was carried out at desktop computer via a customized Inquisit program. This does not generalize to the conditions that a real eyewitness would experience. For example, in the current study the photo line-up was administered on the computer whereas in a true eyewitness situation the line-up would typically be administered by a police officer. Additionally, a true eyewitness would be physically present at the scene of a crime and experience the event in real time. Participants in this study watched a pre-recorded video in the safety of a laboratory workspace.

An additional limitation to the current study comes from previous research regarding the effect of post-identification feedback and participant suspicion. Quinlivan et al. (2011) discovered that after a delay, if an eyewitness is at all suspicious of the investigator or the feedback given to them by the investigator, there is a reduction in certainty/confidence inflation. Participants in the current study were all undergraduate psychology students who may have been
weary of the true intentions of the study and thus the information given to them by the researcher. Furthermore, as psychology students, there is a chance that some participants may have had some prior knowledge about the accuracy of eyewitness testimonies and perhaps the post-identification effect.

**Implications**

Eyewitness testimonies play an important role in the judicial system today. However, research shows that eyewitness testimonies are not always accurate and should not always be considered reliable. In addition to this, eyewitnesses undergo what many consider a flawed process when identifying a suspect via a line-up. Ideally, the administrator of line-up should be someone who is blind to whom the true suspect is and have no personal stake in the case. Although there is no law against giving eyewitnesses post-identification feedback, we know that feedback does impact eyewitness confidence and certainty, and in this case, it had an effect on the extent to which participants felt that had a basis for identification. Because of this the line-up administrator should avoid giving the eyewitness any kind of feedback. If feedback must be given, the line-up administrator should obtain a clear statement of the eyewitness’s confidence beforehand.

Despite the research and general guidelines in place for conducting a line-up with an eyewitness, there are times when feedback is given to eyewitnesses; feedback that could alter eyewitness confidence and result in the post-identification feedback effect. With this we should focus our attention on how we can combat these effects when they cannot be and are not prevented. This study sought to support the hypothesis that the knowledge of a future public presentation of an eyewitness testimony could obviate positive post-identification effects. Although the results were not significant, they did occur in the predicted direction. That is, those
participants expecting to give a public presentation had lower confidence ratings than those not expecting to give a public presentation. This occurred despite the positive post-identification feedback that both groups received. I believe that if this study were to be replicated with the changes discussed in the limitations section of this paper, that the end results could very well be significant.

With the correction of this study’s limitations, the significant interaction of time and expectancy on participant responses regarding the basis for identification may be replicated for several of the other post-identification questions as well. All of the post-identification questions are representative of judgments that have previously been found to be affected by positive feedback. Like question 7, which measured the basis for identification, the rest of these questions are representative of judgments that are not consciously considered while the eyewitness is viewing the event.

Without a clear impression of the cognitive processes that took place at the time of witnessing the event, eyewitnesses must reconstruct the cognitive processes they believe were occurring at the time of the event. Positive feedback interferes with this process by causing eyewitnesses to actively use the hindsight bias. When an eyewitness is told they made an accurate identification, the will use this feedback a means of assuming that, for example, their basis for identification was good and strong from the beginning. Furthermore, with question 7, the idea of publicly presenting ones eyewitness testimony seemed to stabilize or reduce the original effect of the positive feedback.

Just because my main research question did not yield significant results, I do not feel that it has been determined entirely that knowledge of a future public presentation of an eyewitness’s testimony is a completely ineffective confidence prophylactic. There were a few limitations to
the current study that if corrected, may make a difference in obtained results. There is some
evidence that the anxiety and social pressure that come with expecting and preparing to present
an eyewitness testimony publicly diminishes the confidence inflation that is the result of positive
feedback. The results of this current research may just be a preview of the effect that this
confidence prophylactic can have on the post-identification feedback effect. Because eyewitness
testimonies hold so much weight in court and are so often inaccurate, further research must be
done and the potential effects that knowledge of a future public presentation of an eyewitness
testimony has on confidence inflation should not be ignored or dismissed.
References


Figure 1. The image above is a scene taken from the actual video that all participants viewed during part 1 of the study. The image depicts the male suspect locating the laptop left behind by the professor.
Figure 2. The bar graph above illustrates the difference in reported participant confidence in part 2 of the study between those participants who were in the experimental group and expecting to give a public presentation of their testimony and those in the control group who were not expecting to give a public presentation of their testimony. Those expecting to give a public presentation of their testimony had a lower average confidence rating ($M = 5.7, SD = .57$) than those who were not expecting to give a public presentation of their testimony ($M = 6.4, SD = .3$). However, the results of the independent samples t-test showed that this difference was not significant, $t(13) = 1.1, p = .29$. 
Figure 3. The graph above is illustrative of the main effect of time and public presentation expectation on reported basis strength for Question 7 (“To what extent do you feel you had enough basis (enough information) to make an identification?”), $F(1,12) = 5.3, p = .04$. The average rating for identification basis strength for those expecting a public presentation decreased between time 1 ($M = 5.1, SD = 1.1$) and time 2 ($M = 5.0, SD = .82$) while the average for identification basis strength in those not expecting a public presentation increased between time 1 ($M = 4.2, SD = .79$) and time 2 ($M = 4.9, SD = 1.1$)
Appendix A

Post-Identification Questions

1: At the time you identified the person in the lineup, how confident were you that your identification was correct? (1=not at all certain; 7=absolutely certain)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2: How good a view did you get of the subject in the video? (1=very poor; 7=very good)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3: How long would you estimate that the suspect’s face was visible in the video? (1=very little time; 7=quite a bit of time)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4: How well were you able to make out specific features of the suspect’s face in the video? (1=not at all; 7=very well)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5: How far away from the camera was the suspect? (1=not far; 7=very far)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6: How much attention were you paying to the suspect’s face while viewing the video? (1=none; 7=my total attention)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7: To what extent do you feel you had enough basis (enough information) to make an identification? (1=no basis at all; 7=a very good basis)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8: How easy or difficult was it for you to figure out which person in the photos was the person from the video? (1=extremely easy; 7=extremely difficult)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9: After you were first shown the photos, how long do you estimate it took you to make an identification? (1=little time; 7=a lot of time)
10: On the basis of your memory for the video, how willing would you be to testify in court that the person you identified was the person in the video? (1=not at all willing; 7=totally willing)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11: Generally, how good is your recognition memory for the faces of strangers you have encountered on only one prior occasion? (1=very poor; 7=excellent)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12: How clear is the image you have in memory of the person you saw in the video? (1=not at all clear; 7=very clear)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13: When deciding which photo to pick, did you use a process of elimination or did the photo you picked just ‘pop out’ at you? (1=process of elimination; 7=just ‘popped out’ at you)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14 How confident are you now that your identification was correct? (1=not confident; 7=very confident)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*Question 14 was only asked during part 2 of the study
Appendix B

State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adults

A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then circle the appropriate number to the right of the statement to indicate how you feel right now, that is, at this moment. The numbers correspond as follows: 1=Not At All, 2=Somewhat, 3=Moderately So, 4=Very Much So. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe your present feelings best.

1. I feel calm………………………………………………………………………………1 2 3 4
2. I feel secure………………………………………………………………………………1 2 3 4
3. I am tense………………………………………………………………………………1 2 3 4
4. I feel strained……………………………………………………………………………1 2 3 4
5. I feel at ease………………………………………………………………………………1 2 3 4
6. I feel upset…………………………………………………………………………………1 2 3 4
7. I am presently worrying over possible misfortunes……………………………1 2 3 4
8. I feel satisfied………………………………………………………………………………1 2 3 4
9. I feel frightened……………………………………………………………………………1 2 3 4
10. I feel comfortable………………………………………………………………………1 2 3 4
11. I feel self-confident……………………………………………………………………1 2 3 4
A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then circle the appropriate number to the right of the statement to indicate how you generally feel. The numbers correspond as follows: 1=Almost Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Almost Always.

21. I feel pleasant……………………………………………………………………………… 1 2 3 4

22. I feel nervous and restless………………………………………………………………… 1 2 3 4

23. I feel satisfied with myself…………………………………………………………………… 1 2 3 4

24. I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be…………………………………………… 1 2 3 4

25. I feel like a failure……………………………………………………………………………… 1 2 3 4
26. I feel rested........................................................................................................ 1 2 3 4
27. I am “calm, cool, and collected”................................................................. 1 2 3 4
28. I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them......... 1 2 3 4
29. I worry too much over something that really doesn’t matter............... 1 2 3 4
30. I am happy.................................................................................................. 1 2 3 4
31. I have disturbing thoughts........................................................................ 1 2 3 4
32. I lack self-confidence.............................................................................. 1 2 3 4
33. I feel secure................................................................................................ 1 2 3 4
34. I make decisions easily........................................................................... 1 2 3 4
35. I feel inadequate...................................................................................... 1 2 3 4
36. I am content............................................................................................. 1 2 3 4
37. Some unimportant thought runs through my mind and bothers me..... 1 2 3 4
38. I take disappointments so keenly that I can’t put them out of my mind.. 1 2 3 4
39. I am a steady person.............................................................................. 1 2 3 4
40. I get in a state of tension or turmoil as I think over my recent concerns & interests
....................................................................................................................... 1 2 3 4