Distributed Practice

**Is it better to study a little bit each day or a lot the day before an exam**? Researchers have studied the difference between “distributed practice” (studying a little bit each day distributed over a period of time) compared to cramming or “massed-practice.”

In this activity, you will use data simulated to match the results of the following research study:

Bloom, K. C., & Shuell, T. J. (1981). Effects of massed and distributed practice on the learning and retention of second-language vocabulary. *The Journal of Educational*

*Research*, *74*(4), 245-248.

In this study, the researchers taught new French vocabulary to students in high school. The students were randomly assigned to one of two conditions:

* **Group 0: Distributed Practice.** This group studied the words for 10-minutes a day on three consecutive days.
* **Group 1: Massed Practice**. This group studied the words for one 30-minute session.

Both groups took a test designed to evaluate their memory of the words. The test measured the total number of words that the student was able to recall. Each student took the test at two time periods: :

* **Immediate.** They took the test once immediately after their final practice session
* **Delayed.** They also took the test 4 days later.

Questions:

* Is there a significant difference in the number of words remembered between the two groups in their immediate recall?
* Is there a significant difference in the number of words remembered between the two groups in their recall 4-days later?
* What do the results tell us about distributed practice versus massed practice? How might you use this information to adjust your study strategies for exams in this class and other classes?