Testing the testing effect with featural and relational categories

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Abstract

Testing the testing effect with featural and relational categories Theoreticians have recently proposed that the benefits of testing depend on the extent to which the to-be-learned concepts are interconnected, with testing effects emerging from low element interconnectivity and becoming weaker with greater element interconnectivity. We tested this idea by using a classification task and manipulating the amount of element interconnectivity in the categories that subjects learned. Some subjects learned featural categories, which lack element interconnectivity, whereas others learned relational categories, which are defined by how its elements are interconnected. This factor was crossed with type of training, wherein some subjects learned through classification (i.e., testing) and others through observation (i.e., studying). For featural categories, it was predicted that classification training would produce better learning than observational training, whereas this benefit should become weaker or disappear for relational categories. However, preliminary results show that both types of training lead to similar learning for both category types.

In J. Culbertson, A. Perfors, H. Rabagliati & V. Ramenzoni (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 44th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.