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Abstract

Human learning processes have long been topics of interest and research. Two processes, prototype and distinctive feature, were investigated in 20 kindergarteners in two groups of 10 each. I hypothesized that the prototype processing group would perform better than the distinctive feature group because of the age and probable cognitive development of the children. Group EI was given instructions and trained to form prototypes of verbally presented nonsense words for classification. Group EII was directed and trained to determine distinctive feature rules of the same nonsense words for classification. A transfer design was used to test learning. EI reflected prototype learning with the same prototype and different distinctive features (as in training) used on the transfer test. EII reflected distinctive feature processing since a different prototype but same distinctive features (as in training) was used on the transfer test. Results do not support the hypothesis since there were no significant differences ($p > .25$) between the two groups. However, possible methodological problems are indicated and further research suggested.