Young Children’s Transfer of Problem Solutions from Television Characters
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Introduction

• Children must learn who or what in their environment provides reliable information and must learn to discriminately trust reliable sources\(^1\).

• Preschool children are not unabashedly credulous; they develop selective trust, in which they identify and seek information from more accurate informants\(^1,2\).

• It is hypothesized children are more likely to remember events from trustworthy sources\(^2,3,4\).

• It is hypothesized children are more likely to transfer information from trustworthy sources, or reliable environments\(^2,3,4\).

Participants

• 44 Children

• Gender: 45.5% Female, 54.5% Male

• Age: 3 to 6 years (\(M = 5.238, SD = .906\))

• Ethnicity & Race: 40.5% White, 9.5 African American/Black, 7.1% Hispanic/Latino, 2.4% Asian, 38.3% reported multiple ethnicities or races, 2.4% did not report

Procedure

• Participants watched a short video clip of Sid the Science Kid. Sid discovers a new invention of putting toys away: creating lever & fulcrum out of a shovel and block that makes toys fly through the air.

• Participants were presented with an analogically similar task; figuring out how to use tools to make a ball fly through the air.

• Problem solving responses coded from video on an ordinal scale; participants producing the analogical solution immediately (3), after one prompt (2), after one hint (1), or not at all (0).

• Participants were also interviewed about video event memory and character trust ratings.

Summary of Results

• Participants trust Sid to have reliable information more often than novel real people.

• Trusting Sid predicts remembering video events.

• Older participants are more likely to analogically transfer video events to problem solving activity.

Discussion

• Participants trusted a character from a short television clip more than real people they did not know to provide reliable information. This supports the concept that children develop selected trust.

• Sid trust predicting video event recall may be a proxy for attention; that is, the more a character is trusted the more attention is paid to the character.

• Increased character attention is hypothesized to impact learning, as children learn more from characters which they attend closely\(^5\).

• Though trust and memory did not predict transfer, we hypothesize the concept of possibility, or what children believe is possible could impact transfer and learning.

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Trust Predicts Event Memory

\[ r = .287, p = .038, r^2 = .082 \]

Age Predicts Transfer

\[ r = .381, p = .013, r^2 = .145 \]

References


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