UC San Diego

Cognitive Science Talk:

How Children Learn the Designed Actions of Everyday Objects & Toys

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via Zoom Meeting ID: 858 822 3352

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Abstract

Many cultural artifacts require specific actions to use as their designers intended. To get ready for school in the morning children must open their dresser drawers, button their pants, Velcro their shoes, open their bedroom door, twist the lid of the toothpaste tube, zip up their backpack, etc. Even children's toys have designed actions, such as putting the shapes in a shape sorter or turning the handle of a jack in the box. Despite the ease with which adults use everyday objects, designed actions are not obvious to children and must be discovered. Previous work (Rachwani, et al., 2020) identified a developmental progression in learning designed actions––from non-designed exploratory actions, to display of the designed action, to successful implementation. However, performing the designed action lagged months behind successful implementation because children must both know what to do and have the motor skills to execute the action. In this talk I will present on the perceptual-motor and social factors that influence how children learn the designed actions of everyday objects and toys.