Distinctiveness effects in children's long-term retention

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Abstrak

In 3 experiments, kindergarten and second-grade children's retention was examined in the context of 2 distinctiveness manipulations, namely, the von Restorff and bizarre imagery paradigms. Specifically, children learned lists of pictures (Experiments la and lb) or interactive images (Experiment 2) and were asked to recall them 3 weeks later. In Experiments la and lb, distinctiveness was manipulated perceptually (changing colors) and conceptually (changing categories or switching to a numeral), whereas in Experiment 2, distinctiveness concerned the interaction (common or bizarre) between the referents. The results showed that (a) older children retained more information than younger children, (b) younger but not older children failed to benefit from numerically distinct information, and (c) distinctiveness in other domains facilitated children's retention. These results highlight the importance of distinctive information in children's retention