

UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

How children learn non-obvious conceptual information from caregivers innaturalistic settings

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0n68113n>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 42(0)

Authors

Attisano, Elizabeth

Denison, Stephanie

Nancekivell, Shaylene

Publication Date

2020

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

How children learn non-obvious conceptual information from caregivers in naturalistic settings

Elizabeth Attisano

University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Stephanie Denison

University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Shaylene Nancekivell

University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, North Carolina, United States

Abstract

A long-standing question in cognitive development asks how young children learn non-obvious conceptual information (i.e., information that is not directly perceptible). For artifacts, this non-obvious information includes the categories items fall into (Rhodes, Gelman & Karuza, 2014), and their functions (Matan & Carey, 2001). We investigated how children learn non-obvious information about novel artifacts from their caregivers during naturalistic interactions in a living history museum. Forty caregiver-child dyads (Ages: $M = 4;22-8;0$, $M_{age} = 5.98$ years) visited two exhibits for 8 minutes each (i.e., a heritage store and house). Using a series of GEEs and correlational analyses, we found caregivers used different pedagogical techniques to teach their children about different artifact properties. Namely, they used causal ($r_s = .49, p_i .001$) and procedural information ($r_s = .60, p_i .001$) to describe an artifact's function, but used questions ($r_s = .79, p_i .001$) and comparisons ($r_s = .64, p_i .001$) to discuss an artifact's identity. These patterns are compatible with the broader literature on how children learn non-obvious information best (Gelman, 2009).