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Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

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Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 40(0)

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Publication Date

2018

Age-related change of hand raising behavior in elementary school children

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Abstract

Raising hands is an important behavior in a classroom because children get a chance to participate in the class by doing it, and teachers use it to monitor how well children have understood the lesson. However, little is known about the hand raising behavior in a classroom. Thus, we examined to see if hand raising behavior varies with children's age in an elementary school. Children in the first, third and fifth grades participated in this study. We recoded the teachers and children's behaviors and speech observed in Japanese language class and analyzed their interactions. The results showed that fifth graders frequently raised their hands, while third graders raised them the least. The incidence of hand raising during another's speech was also higher in fifth graders. This suggests that with age, children learn to use teacher and other children's speech and non-verbal behavior as a resource to participate in a class.