Thanks for participating!

Debriefing

Memory for category learning experiences

The experiment you just completed investigates how people remember new information that is presented during category learning. The specific focus is to determine whether memories are more precise when the object being categorized (i.e. flower) varies greatly in appearance from those seen previously during learning.

In the first part of the experiment, to successfully sort the flowers into fictional categories (feeds *bees* vs. *hummingbirds*), you had to attend to the number and shape of the petals and ignore the flower colour and background scene. After category learning, to test the precision of your memory you had to remember the background scenes you saw in the first phase and distinguish them from very similar and completely new scenes. To determine memory precision for the flower as well as scene, we instructed you to recreate each flower given its specific background image. Finally, to further test memory precision, you had to choose which flower you saw with each background out of a set of four options. We think that people will have better memory for scenes and flowers when the colour and shape of the flower was quite different from those seen up until that point in learning.

This project will constitute an important step towards answering questions about concept learning and could inform future work on the mechanisms underlying this cognitive process in the brain.

For more information about our research, check out our website:
http://buddingmindslab.utoronto.ca