

Undergraduate Research Symposium 2012

HARRIET L. WILKES HONORS COLLEGE

Verb Acquisition and Generalization Strategies of Preschool Children

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This experiment tested 3 to 5-year-old children's ($n = 18$) abilities to learn a novel verb in the context of one or two novel objects. We showed the children claymation videos of novel creatures performing two novel actions. They were then tested on whether they could correctly identify the action that a creature was performing in the form of a 'yes' or 'no' response. Children in the blocked condition, who learned the verbs in the context of one creature, responded correctly more often ($p = .01$) than children in the grouped condition, who learned the verbs in the context of two creatures. These findings suggest that when teaching young children verbs, it may be more effective to first teach in the context of one object, so that the children have a more confident understanding of the verb meaning.