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Abstraction and affective content

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Abstract

Previous work has suggested that abstraction should not be treated as a unitary construct, but it should be split in at least two components. Concreteness is based on the proportion of sensory information in a concept, while precision is based on the aggregation of information corresponding to the concept position in a semantic taxonomy. This line of work showed that while both of these components have been used as operationalizations of abstraction, they can have opposite effects on cognitive performance. In this paper we extend those findings by showing that precision and concreteness are also differently related to affective content. Our current findings are relevant to some inconsistencies and puzzles in the existing research on the link between abstraction and affective content, and further emphasize the multi-component structure of abstraction.