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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, 41(0)

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Publication Date

2019

Peer reviewed

The role of environment and body in divergent thinking tasks

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Abstract

Humans are creative tool users. We investigated whether body posture and environmental context influence creative output in the divergent thinking task. Participants adopted either flexion or extension body postures and were shown images of kitchen utensils or work tools. Each image was primed with an image of either a congruent environment or an incongruent environment. Results show that body posture, specifically extension, results in faster generation of responses, especially when the object is primed by a congruent environment, and that extension increases sensitivity to environmental primes, increasing fluency overall. Our results shed light on the cognitive mechanisms of generating creative object uses.