The Effects of Hybrid Learning Schedules on Hierarchical Categorization
Vanessa Martinez
The University of Texas at Austin

BACKGROUND
- Many items can be categorized on multiple levels in a hierarchy
- Previous research on hierarchical categorization found that learning stimuli on a broad or specific level is driven by instruction to learn that level
- Little research has been done on this type of categorization and enhancing learning
- Desirable difficulties make acquisition challenging but enhance learning
- Ex: Study schedules with interleaved stimuli better than blocked stimuli
- People tend to prefer blocked study schedules even though they are not optimal

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. Given a hybrid schedule, which schedule is best for broad categorization?
2. Which schedule is best for specific categorization?
3. Which schedule do people prefer?

Predictions:
- Interleaving on both levels of categorization (II) will be best, but people will prefer interleaving at the broad level and blocking at the specific level (IB)

METHODS

Hierarchy

METHODS (CONT.)

- Stimuli
  - Domestic: Fires: curled up
  - Feral: Ears: pinned back or flat
  - Tail: low or tucked into body

Acquisition
- Assigned to focus on learning either broad or specific category
- Shown 60 cat photos (10 per breed; 30 per broad)
- Displayed for 4 sec. presented in specific schedule (3 possible)

Test Phase
- 2 tests: Broad and specific (counterbalanced)
- Tested on both levels regardless of instruction
- 48 images per test

Surveys
- Demographics
- Knowledge of breeds
- Knowledge of behaviors
- Schedule choice given descriptions

RESULTS

Breed Test
- Instruction to learn breeds resulted in better performance (p<.001)
- BI schedule better than IB (p<.001)
- BI schedule better than II (p<.01)

Feral Test
- Instruction to learn broad category resulted in slightly better performance (p<.07)
- BI schedule better than II (p<.05)

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