

VIDEO, PREFERENCES, AND LEARNING IN NEW WORLD MONKEYS

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Although it is known that nonhuman primates can use information from televised and video images, little is known about how various parameters of such images affect performance. Furthermore, few studies have used video images to demonstrate the solution to a specific problem. We are currently studying squirrel monkeys' and capuchin monkeys' preferences for, and ability to learn from, video images presented at different speeds. In one experiment, monkeys saw video clips of a familiar human explicitly placing a piece of food under one of two small, differently colored boxes. When the clip ended, the experimenter then baited the same box as in the clip, behind an opaque screen. The screen was then removed and the monkey was free to reach for either box; selecting the baited box was deemed a correct response. Each session consisted of 12 trials presented in random order: each box was baited once when it was on the left and once on the right side, and each of the 4 resulting clips was presented at 3 different speeds, namely normal speed, double-speed (X2), and slow-motion (X0.5). Over 35 sessions the monkeys made more correct choices when these were preceded by either a double-speed or slow-motion demonstration clip than a normal speed clip. Possible reasons for this finding will be discussed, along with preliminary evidence for viewing preferences when presented with video footage of conspecifics at different speeds.

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