

The Interaction of Age and Skill for Recognition of Chess Positions

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Abstract: Even young chess players display superior recall for chess positions (Chi, 1978; Horgan & Morgan, 1990; Schneider, Gruber, Gold, & Opwis, 1993), which has been attributed to their greater chess knowledge and available patterns and chunks (Chase & Simon, 1973). Controlling for skill no effect of age has generally been found in youth chess players on chess tasks. This study demonstrates, a strong effect of age, where older children are better able to recognize chess positions. Additionally this study uncovered an interaction between age and skill whereby older children who are better at chess do much better than other groups. We propose that older children use deeper processing techniques to scaffold the complex memory structures that support chess playing, which may not be automatically applied to an unfamiliar task.