

Chimp see, chimp learn: First evidence for chimps improving tool use techniques by watching others (w/ video)

January 30 2013

Chimps can learn more efficient ways to use a tool by watching what others do, according to research published January 30 in the open access journal *PLOS ONE* by Shinya Yamamoto and colleagues from Kyoto University and Kent University, UK. Their study presents the first experimental evidence that chimps, like humans, can watch and learn a group member's invention of a better technique.

Chimps in the study were provided juice-boxes with a small hole and straws to drink with.

One group of chimps used the straws like dipsticks, dipping and removing them to suck on the end, while the other group learned to suck through the straw directly.

Learning both techniques required the same cognitive and motor skills, but chimps that drank through the straw got considerably more juice in a shorter amount of time.

When the first group of [chimps](#) watched either a human or a chimp demonstrate the more efficient 'straw-sucking' technique, all of them switched to using this instead.

The study concludes, "When [chimpanzees](#) are dissatisfied with their own technique, they may socially learn an improved technique by closely

observing a proficient demonstrator."

According to the authors, their results provide insights into the cognitive basis for the evolution of culture in chimpanzees, and suggest ways that culture could evolve in non-human animals.

More information: Yamamoto S, Humle T, Tanaka M (2013) Basis for Cumulative Cultural Evolution in Chimpanzees: Social Learning of a More Efficient Tool-Use Technique. PLOS ONE 8(1): e55768.

[doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0055768](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0055768)

Provided by Public Library of Science

Citation: Chimp see, chimp learn: First evidence for chimps improving tool use techniques by watching others (w/ video) (2013, January 30) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-01-chimp-evidence-chimps-tool-techniques.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.