

Situated Conceptualization

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One way of construing brain organization is as a collection of systems that processes the components of a situation in parallel, including its setting, agents, objects, actions, and internal states. In a given situation, each situational component is conceptualized individually, as when components of eating in a kitchen are conceptualized as *kitchen* (setting), *diner* (agent), *food* (food), *chewing* (action), and *hunger* (internal state). In turn, configural concepts integrate these individual conceptualizations into larger structures that conceptualize the larger situation, such as *eating* and *meal*. From this perspective, a situated conceptualization is a distributed record of conceptual processing in a given situation, across all the relevant component systems. On later occasions, a situated conceptualization can become active to simulate the respective situation in its absence (e.g., activating a situated conceptualization to simulate *eating*). From this perspective, the concept that represents a category, such as *kitchen* or *eating*, is the collection of situated conceptualizations that has accumulated from processing the category across situations, similar to exemplar theories. The utility of situated conceptualization as a general theoretical construct is illustrated for situated action, social embodiment, social mirroring, and emotion, along with the central role of pattern-completion inference.