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Self-Regulated Study Choices Differ Across Learning Domains: Evidence From Example-Based Learning

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Abstract

Self-regulated learning research assumes that perceived mental effort and judgment of learning guides study choices, but whether the same monitoring cues are diagnostic across domains remains untested. In a within-person design, undergraduates chose between worked examples and practice problems across four trials in each of two domains: a mathematical procedure and analogical reasoning problems. Participants chose practice more often for math from the first trial onward, and most used different study strategies across domains, adopting a more example-oriented approach for analogical reasoning. The monitoring cues associated with these choices also differed, even after controlling for perceived effort and learning: no cues were associated with subsequent math choices, whereas perceived mental effort significantly predicted analogical reasoning choices. These findings extend research on self-regulated example-based learning, which has typically examined single domains, by providing within-person evidence that the diagnosticity of metacognitive cues is domain-dependent.