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Differences in Learning Novel and Partially Known Concepts: Exploring Children's Self-Regulated Choices

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Abstract

Self-regulated learning may be crucial for goal setting, progress monitoring, and adaptive problem-solving. The ability to find and recognize relevant and reliable information has become increasingly valuable. Therefore, to understand self-regulated learning processes, we interviewed 138 9-11-year-olds to analyze their information-seeking behaviors when learning either novel or partially known concepts by themselves. Children's responses were categorized into two groups: Human-Sources Learners and Platform Learners. Results revealed an overall preference for Platforms (73.23%). Interestingly, when learning novel concepts, the proportion favoring Human-Sources increased significantly (34.56% versus 18.80%). Most of the children mentioned changing their strategy when stuck during the learning process (79.93%), with Platform Learners showing higher adaptability (89.34%) than Human-Sources learners (54.17%). These findings deepen our understanding of children's decision-making regarding learning, aiding teachers in guiding their learning processes more efficiently, valuable not only in educational settings, but also in their personal and professional lives.