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Authors

Double, Kit S
Birney, Damian

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Do Prospective Confidence Ratings Enhance Problem-Solving?

Kit Double

University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Damian Birney

University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Abstract

Previous research has shown that eliciting retrospective confidence ratings during problem-solving enhances performance in high self-efficacy individuals but impairs performance in low self-efficacy individuals. In the current study, we examined whether judgments of solvability, a metacognitive rating made prior to participants' first-order responses are similarly reactive and whether, like retrospective confidence ratings, this effect is moderated by pre-existing self-efficacy. In two experiments, we showed that judgments of solvability are reactive, but this effect is not moderated by pre-existing self-efficacy. We argue that eliciting metacognitive ratings prior to a participant's response changes metacognitive control, without necessarily activating self-evaluative thoughts. These results are encouraging for the use of judgments of solvability as an education intervention.