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Does Testing Change the Way Students Use Their Study Time?

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Abstract

The present study examined how testing of previously studied materials affects learners subsequent study time allocation when learning new materials. Participants learned the painting styles of various artists through two sections (Section A and B). After studying Section A for a fixed time, participants took a test or restudied for Section A and then studied another set of artists in Section B for unlimited time. The results showed that while total study time was not different in Section B, the test group outperformed the restudy group on the transfer test of Section B. The test group, however, allocated more time in the early stage of Section B than the restudy group. Interim testing seems to inhibit study time decrease in the initial phase of learning and encourage learners to use more effective strategies in their subsequent learning. These results align with the encoding theory of the forward effect of testing.