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Effects of Analogical Processing: Evidence for Re-representation

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Abstract: Re-representation is a mechanism for aligning non-identical structurally corresponding predicates during comparison. Re-representation is therefore a shift in the encoding of a stimulus from an initial set of elements to an altered set. For example, when comparing two analogous sentences, different verbs could be re-represented to allow a match – thereby altering construal. Re-representation is theoretically and intuitively compelling, but difficult to demonstrate. We had participants compare pairs of short text passages and judge them as potential analogies. At test, participants read an altered version of a prior passage and were asked to detect changes from the original. The alterations increased the semantic match between the passage and its analog. Participants who had compared the original passage to the analog were less likely to detect changes than those who compared to a non-analogous passage. As would be expected due to re-representation, analogical comparison made participants less sensitive to the changes.