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Seductive Images and Metacomprehension of Science Texts

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Abstract: Although the intention behind including illustrations alongside expository text is generally to increase student motivation, interest, or understanding, images do not always have beneficial effects. Generally, students tend to have poor comprehension when learning from expository science texts. Further, they also tend to have poor metacomprehension accuracy, meaning they are not able to differentiate what they have understood well, from what they have understood poorly. In the current study, the inclusion of either conceptual or seductive images actually increased comprehension as compared to a no-image condition. The inclusion of images also tended to increase readers' interest in the texts. However, including seductive images decreased metacomprehension accuracy compared to the no-image condition. This suggests that seductive images may provide readers with a false sense of fluency or understanding which could potentially undermine effective self-regulation and studying behaviors.