Partial awareness of strategies used in a complex decision making task

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Abstract

There are individual differences in complex task performance that can be attributed to the strategies people use and how they adapt their strategies to task demands (Schunn & Reder, 2001). It is unclear if people are aware of the strategy they use and how this affects adaptation of their strategy. The present study assessed participants awareness of their own strategy while performing a complex task. Part of the task required participants to select which objects to sort based on different object features that affect their score. Using a participants selections, their selection strategy was inferred using automated techniques and compared to their reported strategy. Participants reported using more of the object features in their strategies than what was inferred based on their choices. The features in the inferred strategy only partially overlapped with the features participants reported. In addition, greater awareness of ones strategy was associated with better task performance.