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Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

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Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 44(44)

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Publication Date

2022

Peer reviewed

Do Judgments of Learning Improve Inductive Learning?

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Abstract

The present study investigated whether making judgments of learning (JOLs) can enhance the learning of the studied materials (backward effect) and newly studied materials (forward effect) in inductive learning. In two experiments, participants studied various butterfly species through Sections A and B. After learning Section A, participants made either target-present JOLs, target-absent JOLs, or merely restudied Section A (Experiment 1). We also manipulated whether participants make an explicit retrieval attempt before making JOLs (Experiment 2). Then all participants learned Section B and took a final test for both sections. The results revealed that simply making target-present or target-absent JOLs did not produce learning benefits. However, when people made the target-absent JOLs combined with explicit retrieval attempts they outperformed the other groups in both sections, showing backward and forward effects of JOLs. In conclusion, JOLs seem to be effective only when learners actively retrieve the learned information while making metacognitive judgments.