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Contributed talk: Are our students studying smart? Insights into the study strategies and metacognitive awareness of undergraduate students in Spain and the UK

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The approach that students take in their studies at university is critical not only for their academic success but is equally important in life-long learning for their career and professional development. Cognitive science has demonstrated that re-testing oneself on material when learning, enhances and promotes greater retention of knowledge compared to re-reading the material. Learning that is spaced out over multiple study sessions also allows for greater retention of knowledge in the longer-term compared to 'cramming' of information. A survey study with first- and second-year undergraduate students (n=135) at a university in Spain and in the UK was carried out to investigate the study strategies and habits prevalent in these cohorts and to explore the extent of their metacognitive awareness. It was of interest to explore the reported study strategies and habits among students studying chemistry courses in two distinct geographical locations. It is expected that the findings from this study in two distinct locations will apply to other chemistry teaching contexts and locations. It was found that most students endorsed self-testing but also suboptimal study methods such as re-reading, copying notes and cramming. There was evidence of a difference between UK and Spain in relation to decisions for prioritizing studying, returning to review course material and time of study. Implications of the findings will be considered in relation to curricula and teaching.

Region

UK/Ireland

Key words

Study habits, metacognition, retrieval practice, distributed practice

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