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Practical Problem Solving Depends on Experience and Strategy Use

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Poster Presentation P20

**PRACTICAL PROBLEM SOLVING DEPENDS ON EXPERIENCE AND
STRATEGY USE**

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Intuition can be described as a holistic yet uncertain sense of knowing that people often rely on to make decisions and solve problems. This is in contrast to analysis which requires a step by step breakdown of a problem. Past research suggests that intuition may be a successful problem-solving strategy, especially for experts. This has been attributed to experts large amount of experience; however, recent evidence has suggested that expert problem solving performance also depends on intuitive cognitive style. The present study examined the effect of expertise and strategy use on an individual's ability to solve practical, everyday college problems. Participants were IWU students with varying levels of experience in college life. College experts were junior and senior residential advisors and greek peer counselors. Participants solved problems using either an intuitive or analytical strategy or followed their preferred intuitive or analytical cognitive style. Results showed an interaction of strategy use and expertise. Novices performed better when using intuition, while more experienced participants performed better using analysis. Further research is needed to determine under what conditions and for what type of people the intuitive strategy is the most helpful.