

Interleaving

Education

Mixing problem types beats blocking them, if they are easily confused.

Blocked — AAA BBB CCC

- Feels smooth and successful
- Higher accuracy during practice
- The method is given by the block
- Weak at choosing between methods
- Lower scores at delayed test

Interleaved — ABC BCA CAB

- Feels harder and slower
- Lower accuracy during practice
- Each item requires a choice of method
- Trains discrimination between types
- Higher scores at delayed test

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Interleaving works where confusing similar categories is the real obstacle, not where the skill is a single procedure.

Well supported in mathematics and category learning. It is not a general rule: interleave items that compete, not everything.