

Five Things to Know About the Doer Effect

The Doer Effect is a learning science principle that has proven that doing practice questions while you're reading causes better learning outcomes. Simply put: doing practice *causes* learning.

Our team of learning scientists has done extensive work on this topic, and here are the five things you need to know about the Doer Effect.

1

The original studies from Carnegie Mellon University's (CMU) Open Learning Initiative prove that students who do more interactive activities have a learning benefit beyond that of reading text or watching video. The studies confirm what most people understand: doing practice is good for learning—and that's just the beginning.



2

How much of a benefit? The research shows that doing practice can have SIX TIMES the effect of reading and three times the effect of watching video.



3

The Doer Effect is more than coincidental—it's causal. The original CMU study proved this, and our studies have replicated these findings. The Doer Effect doesn't just help learning, it actually causes learning.



4

Our studies show that the effects of doing practice increase learning gains even when the assessment takes place long after the initial learning. That's good news for those final exam scores!



5

The simplest and most effective thing a student can do to help learn content is to do the formative practice. Even if the book doesn't have them mixed in with the content, finding a way to do practice problems through end-of-chapter problems, assigned homework, or study problems will do the trick.



Koedinger, K., McLaughlin, E., Jia, J., & Bier, N. (2016). Is the doer effect a causal relationship? How can we tell and why it's important. Learning Analytics and Knowledge. Edinburgh, United Kingdom. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2883851.2883957>

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