



**Illinois Wesleyan University**  
**Digital Commons @ IWU**

---

John Wesley Powell Student Research  
Conference

2006, 17th Annual JWP Conference

---

Apr 8th, 2:35 PM - 3:35 PM

## **Practical Problem Solving Depends on Experience and Strategy Use**

Emily Eickhorst  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Jean Pretz, Faculty Advisor  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc>

---

Eickhorst, Emily and Pretz, Faculty Advisor, Jean, "Practical Problem Solving Depends on Experience and Strategy Use" (2006). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. 31.

<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2006/posters2/31>

This Event is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@iwu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@iwu.edu).

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Poster Presentation P20

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

Emily Eickhorst and Jean Pretz \*  
Psychology Department, Illinois Wesleyan University

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.