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University students' performance in different types of exam questions informs on their problem solving skills as well as studying ability

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Abstract content
 (Max 300 words)

An evaluation of students' performance in different questions in an exam at the end of a Physics first year major course, at the University of the Witwatersrand, in terms of the different skills required to answer each question, leads to insight into their level of problem solving and studying skills. The students in this evaluation found questions that were new and required more intuitive, or lateral and logical type thinking, the most difficult to answer. The students, surprisingly, also found some questions that required the memorization of material only, also difficult to answer. Problems that only required a routine operation, or plugging into an equation, seen many times before, were perceived by the students as the easiest type of question to answer. These results also inform on the type of learning and studying the students have been acclimatised to due to the type of instruction received prior to arriving at university.

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