

The influence of scene discontinuity on the relation between mind wandering and event boundaries

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Abstract

Mind wandering during film viewing can impede comprehension and learning, and prior studies have reported conflicting results regarding its occurrence at event boundaries in narrative versus educational films. This study examines whether scene discontinuity – changes in time, place, character, and action – affects mind wandering differently across film genres. Replicating previous findings, we found that in the narrative film, less mind wandering occurred at event boundaries compared to other parts of the film. Conversely, in the educational film, more mind wandering was reported at event boundaries. Our analysis revealed that the narrative film exhibited higher scene discontinuity at event boundaries than the educational film. Importantly, across both film types, greater scene discontinuity at event boundaries was associated with decreased mind wandering. The differing levels of scene discontinuity between narrative and educational films may explain the contrasting patterns of mind wandering observed, highlighting the influence of film structure on cognitive engagement.