

# 1 **Variability in error-based and reward-based human motor** 2 **learning is associated with entorhinal volume**

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## 13 **Abstract**

14 Error-based and reward-based processes are critical for motor learning, and are thought to be  
15 mediated via distinct neural pathways. However, recent behavioral work in humans suggests that  
16 both learning processes are supported by cognitive strategies and that these contribute to  
17 individual differences in motor learning ability. While it has been speculated that medial temporal  
18 lobe regions may support this strategic component to learning, direct evidence is lacking. Here  
19 we first show that faster and more complete learning during error-based visuomotor adaptation is  
20 associated with better learning during reward-based shaping of reaching movements. This result  
21 suggests that strategic processes, linked to faster and better learning, drive individual differences  
22 in both error-based and reward-based motor learning. We then show that right entorhinal cortex  
23 volume was larger in good learning individuals—classified across both motor learning tasks—  
24 compared to their poorer learning counterparts. This suggests that strategic processes underlying  
25 both error- and reward-based learning are linked to neuroanatomical differences in entorhinal  
26 cortex.

27

28 **Keywords:** motor adaptation, visuomotor rotation, explicit learning, reinforcement, individual  
29 differences

## 30 **Significance Statement**

31 While it is widely appreciated that humans vary greatly in their motor learning abilities, little is  
32 known about the processes and neuroanatomical bases that underlie these differences. Here,  
33 using a data-driven approach, we show that individual variability in error-based and reward-based  
34 motor learning is tightly linked, and related to the use of cognitive strategies. We further show that  
35 structural differences in entorhinal cortex predict this intersubject variability in motor learning, with  
36 larger entorhinal volumes being associated with better overall error-based and reward-based  
37 learning. Together, these findings provide support for the notion that the ability to recruit strategic  
38 processes underlies intersubject variability in both error-based and reward-based learning, which  
39 itself may be linked to structural differences in medial temporal regions.

## 40 **Introduction**

41 The human brain's capacity to learn new motor commands is fundamental to almost all activities  
42 we engage in. Traditionally, such learning has been viewed as an implicit, procedural process of  
43 the motor system, with neural studies focusing on brain areas in the frontoparietal cortex, striatum  
44 or cerebellum (Doya, 2000; Lalazar and Vaadia, 2008; Taylor and Ivry, 2014). Only relatively  
45 recently have studies demonstrated that cognitive systems, including processes related to  
46 strategy use and memory, can bolster or interfere with aspects of motor learning (Mazzoni and  
47 Krakauer, 2006; Keisler and Shadmehr, 2010; Taylor and Ivry, 2011; Seidler et al., 2012; Holland  
48 et al., 2018). It has been speculated, but not yet shown, that regions in the medial temporal lobe  
49 (MTL) may contribute to this cognitive component to motor learning.

50  
51 In error-based learning, the form of learning by which we refine and adjust our movements to  
52 changes in the body or the environment based on observable errors, the use of cognitive  
53 strategies (often termed the 'explicit' component) has been shown to drive large, rapid changes  
54 during early learning (Taylor and Ivry, 2011; Taylor et al., 2014). This is in contrast to the implicit  
55 process, which contributes to learning in parallel but in a nonconscious, gradual fashion. Whereas  
56 the reliance of the implicit process on the cerebellum is well established (Smith and Shadmehr,  
57 2005; Tseng et al., 2007), the neural basis of the explicit component remains speculative.  
58 Evidence from neuroimaging, aging, and lesion studies have implicated areas in the prefrontal  
59 cortex in explicit strategies (Shadmehr and Holcomb, 1997; Della-Maggiore and McIntosh, 2005;  
60 Taylor and Ivry, 2014). In addition, it has been suggested that regions in the MTL, given their role

61 in declarative processes, may be involved in the explicit component to motor learning (Doyon and  
62 Benali, 2005; Taylor and Ivry, 2014; de Brouwer et al., 2018).

63

64 In reward-based learning, the form of learning in which motor commands are updated by signals  
65 related to success or failure (Sutton and Barto, 2018), the use of cognitive strategies have also  
66 been shown to play a pivotal role in performance (Codol et al., 2018; Holland et al., 2018).  
67 Conventionally, reward-based learning has been shown to involve neural circuits in the basal  
68 ganglia and striatum (Doya, 2000), but there is also some emerging evidence to suggest  
69 contributions from MTL regions (Gershman and Daw, 2017; Duncan et al., 2018). A key feature  
70 of reward-based learning is that it is achieved through exploration (i.e., the brain figuring out motor  
71 commands that increase success). Insofar as such exploration is facilitated by strategies, MTL  
72 structures may also contribute to performance during reward-based motor learning.

73

74 The role of MTL regions in declarative memory and spatial navigation have been well established  
75 (Eichenbaum and Cohen, 2014). In humans, for example, anatomical imaging methods have  
76 demonstrated clear links between individual differences in hippocampus and/or entorhinal cortex  
77 volume with performance in memory and navigation tasks (Maguire et al., 2000; Rodrigue and  
78 Raz, 2004; Whiteman et al., 2016; Sherrill et al., 2018). It is increasingly recognized, however,  
79 that the hippocampal-entorhinal system can support more abstract relational representations  
80 (Tavares et al., 2015; Constantinescu et al., 2016; Horner et al., 2016; Aronov et al., 2017), and  
81 forms a 'cognitive' map for representing goals and relating objects and actions within a spatial  
82 context (Tolman, 1948; O'Keefe and Nadel, 1978). Such maps are likely to be critical when  
83 forming new action-outcome associations, as is the case when searching for and implementing  
84 strategies during motor learning.

85

86 Here we asked whether individual differences in motor learning performance are linked to  
87 hippocampal and entorhinal volume in humans. To examine this, we had human participants  
88 undergo a structural neuroimaging session in addition to performing separate error-based and  
89 reward-based learning tasks, both known to elicit the use of strategies. We show that learning  
90 performance in both motor tasks is directly related and that better overall learning across tasks is  
91 associated with larger entorhinal cortex volume.

## 92 **Materials and Methods**

### 93 ***Participants***

94 The current study used a subset of participants (N=34; 18 men and 16 women, aged 20-35 years)  
95 from a larger cohort study (registered at <https://osf.io/y8649>) in which 66 right-handed paid  
96 volunteers underwent structural and resting state MRI scans. Our thirty-four participants took part  
97 in an error-based and reward-based motor learning testing session in addition to participation in  
98 the main study. One of these participants was excluded from further analysis because of a high  
99 number of invalid trials in the error-based learning task (>25%), thus leaving 33 participants for  
100 analysis.

101  
102 The main experiment and motor learning follow-up tasks were approved by the Queen's  
103 University Health Sciences Research Ethics Board, and participants provided written informed  
104 consent before participating in the main experiment and in the motor learning session. The motor  
105 learning session took approximately an hour and 45 minutes and participants were compensated  
106 \$20 for their time. The methods, hypotheses and data analyses for the current study were pre-  
107 registered on OSF (<https://osf.io/7prq5>).

### 108 ***Neuroimaging***

#### 109 **Procedure**

110 The day prior to each participants' MRI scan, participants completed a biofeedback session in a  
111 simulated (mock) MRI scanner to become familiar with the MRI environment and to learn to  
112 minimize head movement. During the biofeedback session, participants viewed a 45-minute  
113 documentary with a live readout trace of their head motion overlaid. When their head motion  
114 exceeded an adaptive threshold, the documentary was paused for several seconds while static  
115 was played on the screen along with a loud, unpleasant noise. The next day, MRI data were  
116 collected over the course of a 1.5-hour session using a 3T whole-body MRI scanner (Magnetom  
117 Tim Trio; Siemens Healthcare). We gathered high-resolution whole-brain T1-weighted (repetition  
118 time [TR] 2400 ms; echo time [TE] 2.13 ms; flip angle 8°; echo spacing 6.5 ms) and T2-weighted  
119 (TR 3200 ms; TE 567 ms; variable flip angle; echo spacing 3.74 ms) anatomical images (in-plane  
120 resolution 0.7 × 0.7 mm<sup>2</sup>; 320 × 320 matrix; slice thickness 0.7 mm; 256 AC-PC transverse slices;  
121 anterior-to-posterior encoding; 2 × acceleration factor) and an ultra-high resolution T2-weighted

122 volume centred on the medial temporal lobes (resolution 0.5 x 0.5 mm<sup>2</sup>; 384 × 384 matrix; slice  
123 thickness 0.5 mm; 104 transverse slices acquired parallel to the hippocampus long axis; anterior-  
124 to-posterior encoding; 2 x acceleration factor; TR 3200 ms; TE 351 ms; variable flip angle; echo  
125 spacing 5.12 ms). The whole brain protocols were selected on the basis of protocol optimizations  
126 designed by Sortiropoulos and colleagues (2013). The hippocampal protocols were modeled after  
127 Chadwick and colleagues (2014). In addition, we acquired two sets (right-left direction and left-  
128 right direction) of whole-brain diffusion-weighted volumes (64 directions, b = 1200 s/mm<sup>2</sup>, 93  
129 slices, voxel size = 1.5 × 1.5 × 1.5 mm<sup>3</sup>, TR 5.18 s, TE 103.4 ms; 3 times multiband acceleration),  
130 plus two extra B0 scans gathered separately for each orientation.

### 131 Data analysis

132 Automated cortical and subcortical segmentation of the T1-weighted and T2-weighted brain data  
133 was performed in Freesurfer (v6.0) (Fischl et al., 2002, 2004). For each hemisphere, we obtained  
134 the volume of the hippocampus (HC) and entorhinal cortex (EC) in the MTL for our main analysis.  
135 We also obtained striatal volumes, including left and right globus pallidus, putamen, caudate and  
136 accumbens for exploratory analyses (see *Supplemental Information*). Segmentations of these  
137 areas were checked visually and manually adjusted if necessary.

138  
139 In addition to the Freesurfer segmentations, we obtained separate volumetric measures of the  
140 anterior and posterior hippocampus in each hemisphere. The ultra-high-resolution T2-weighted  
141 0.5mm isotropic medial temporal lobe scans were submitted to automated segmentation using  
142 HIPS, an algorithm previously validated to human raters specialized in segmenting detailed  
143 neuroanatomical scans of the hippocampus (Romero et al., 2017). Three independent raters were  
144 trained on segmenting the hippocampus at the uncal apex into aHC and pHC segments, and  
145 achieved a Dice coefficient of absolute agreement of 80%. Two of these raters independently  
146 segmented all participants using the 0.5 mm T1-weighted scans. The T2-weighted medial  
147 temporal lobe scans were registered to the T2-weighted whole-brain scans, which were in turn  
148 registered to the T1-weighted whole-brain scans, and the combined transform was used to place  
149 the rater landmarks on the detailed medial temporal lobe scans. Finally, the total number of voxels  
150 in each subregion was multiplied by the volume of each voxel to obtain a total aHC and pHC  
151 volume.

152  
153 To account for differences in head size, all regional volumes were corrected for total intracranial  
154 (IC) volume obtained from Freesurfer. This was done by first estimating the slope *b* of the

155 regression line of each regional volume on the IC volume across the 33 participants included in  
156 the analysis. Next, each regional volume was adjusted for the IC volume as: adjusted volume =  
157 raw volume -  $b \times$  (IC volume - mean IC volume).

## 158 ***Motor learning tasks***

### 159 General procedure

160 Thirty-four participants performed an error-based and a reward-based motor learning task. We  
161 attempted to fully counterbalance the tasks across participants; The first 19 participants  
162 performed the error-based motor learning task before performing the reward-based motor  
163 learning task, with the next 15 participants performing the reward-based motor learning task  
164 before the error-based motor learning task. The reward-based task took about 25 minutes to  
165 complete and the error-based task took about 65 minutes to complete.

### 166 Setup

167 Participants were seated at a table, with their chin and forehead supported by a headrest placed  
168 ~50 cm in front of a vertical LCD monitor (display size 47.5 x 26.5 cm; resolution 1920 x 1080  
169 pixels) on which the stimuli were presented (Fig. 1A). Participants performed reaching movements  
170 by sliding a stylus across a digital drawing tablet (active area 311 x 216 mm; Wacom Intuous)  
171 placed on the table in front of the participant. Movement trajectories were sampled at 100 Hz by  
172 the digitizing tablet. Vision of the hand and tablet was occluded by a piece of black cardboard  
173 attached to the headrest. In the error-based learning task, eye movements were tracked at 500  
174 Hz using a video-based eye tracker (Eyelink 1000; SR Research) placed beneath the monitor.  
175 The eye movement data were not analyzed in this study. The stimuli and motor learning tasks are  
176 described in detail below.

## 177 **Reward-based motor learning**

### 178 Task

179 Our task was inspired by the reward-based learning task designed by Dam and colleagues (Dam  
180 et al., 2013). Participants performed reaching movements from a start position to a target line by  
181 sliding the stylus across the tablet. They were instructed to “find an invisible curved path by  
182 drawing paths on the tablet and evaluating your score for each attempt”. Participants started with  
183 a practice block of 10 trials, in which they traced a visible, straight line between the start position

184 and the target, to become familiar with the task and the timing requirement of performing the  
185 movement within 2 s. Next, participants performed 12 blocks, each containing 20 attempts to copy  
186 an invisible path, which differed in each block.

187

188 Each trial started with the presentation of a start position (5 mm radius circle; Fig. 1B). After the  
189 participant had moved the cursor to the start position and held it there for 200 ms, a horizontal  
190 target line (30 x 1 mm) would appear 15 cm in front of the start position, and a rectangular outlined  
191 box (320 x 170 mm) would appear around the start position and target. Next, participants drew a  
192 path from the start position to the target line while remaining in the box. After crossing the target  
193 line, the cursor disappeared, and a score between 0 and 100 was displayed centrally (for 1 s),  
194 indicating how close they were to the invisible path. Following this, all stimuli disappeared, and a  
195 new trial would start with the presentation of the start position and the reappearance of the cursor.  
196 If the movement duration was longer than 2 s, the score was not presented and the trial was  
197 repeated.

198

199 The invisible paths consisted of single curves (i.e., half sine waves; 6 blocks) and double curves  
200 (i.e., full sine waves; 6 blocks) of different amplitudes ( $\pm 0.2$ , 0.5 and 0.8 times the target distance;  
201 see inset of Fig. 1C), drawn between the start position and the center of the target line.  
202 Participants were not informed about the possible shapes of the invisible lines. The trial score  
203 was computed by taking the x position of the cursor at every cm travelled in the y-direction (i.e.,  
204 1, 2, 3, ... and 15 cm), and computing the absolute difference in x position between the cursor  
205 and the invisible line at the corresponding y-distance. The sum of these errors was then  
206 normalized by dividing it by the sum of distances between a straight line and a curve with an  
207 amplitude of 0.5 times the target distance, and multiplied by 100 to obtain a score between 0 and  
208 100 (negative scores were presented as 0).

209

210 All participants performed one practice block and 12 experimental blocks of trials. Ten different  
211 randomized orders of experimental blocks were created. Participant 1, 11, 21, and 31 performed  
212 the first order, participant 2, 12, 22, and 32 performed the second order, etc.

## 213 Data analysis

214 The median score in trials 11 to 20 of each block of 20 attempts were used as a measure of  
215 learning performance. We did not use trials 1-10 in our analysis based on our frequent observation  
216 that participants who learned fairly quickly often used exploratory strategies when encountering

217 a new path, which often resulted in scores of, or around, zero on several trials (Fig. 2A provides  
218 a good example of such a participant). For each participant, we averaged the median scores  
219 across all single curves and across all double curves with the same amplitude. This resulted in  
220 two scores per participant.

## 221 Error-based motor learning

### 222 Task

223 Participants performed center-out reaching movements from a start position to one of eight visual  
224 targets presented on a 10 cm radius ring around the start position. Participants were instructed to  
225 hit the target with their cursor by making a fast reaching movement on the tablet, ‘slicing’ through  
226 the target. The ratio between movement of the tip of the stylus and movement of the cursor  
227 presented on the screen was 1:2, so that a movement of 5 cm on the tablet corresponded to a  
228 movement of 10 cm of the cursor. Participants first performed a baseline block in which they  
229 received veridical feedback about the position of the tip of the stylus, shown as a cursor on the  
230 screen. After performing a baseline block, participants performed a visuomotor rotation task, a  
231 task that has been used extensively to assess error-based learning (e.g., Cunningham, 1989;  
232 Krakauer et al., 2005). In this task, the movement of the cursor representing the hand position is  
233 rotated about the hand start location, in this experiment by 45° clockwise, requiring that a  
234 counterclockwise adjustment of movement direction be learned.

235

236 Each trial started with the participant moving the stylus to a central start position (5 mm radius  
237 circle; Fig. 1D). When the (unseen) cursor was within 5 cm of the start position, a ring was  
238 presented around the start position to indicate the distance of the cursor, so that the participant  
239 had to reduce the size of the ring to move to the start position. The cursor (4 mm radius circle)  
240 appeared when the cursor ‘touched’ the start position (9 mm distance). After the cursor was held  
241 within the start position for 500 ms, the target (6 mm radius open circle) was presented on an  
242 (imaginary) 10 cm radius ring around the start position at one of eight locations, separated by 45°  
243 (i.e., 0, 45, 90, 135, 180, 225, 270 and 315°). In addition, 64 non-target ‘landmarks’ (3 mm radius  
244 outlined circles, spaced 5.625° apart) were presented, forming a 10 cm radius ring around the  
245 start position. After a 2 s delay, the target would ‘fill in’ (i.e., color red), providing the cue for the  
246 participant to perform a fast movement to the target. If the participant started the movement before  
247 the cue, or more than 1 s after the cue, the trial was aborted and a feedback message indicating  
248 “Too early” or “Too late” appeared on the screen, respectively. In correctly timed trials, the cursor



249 was visible during the movement to the ring and then became stationary for 1 s when it reached  
250 the ring, providing the participant with visual feedback of their endpoint error. When any part of  
251 the cursor overlapped with any part of the target, the target would color green to indicate a hit. If  
252 the duration of the movement was longer than 300 ms, a feedback message “Too slow” would  
253 appear on the screen.

254

255 In trials in the rotation block, the movement of the cursor was rotated by 45° clockwise around the  
256 start position. To assess the contribution of the explicit process of learning, participants performed  
257 several ‘reporting’ trials. These trials were performed at the end of the first rotation block to ensure  
258 that participants’ learning behavior would not be influenced, as the reporting procedure itself can  
259 increase the proportion of participants that implement a cognitive strategy (3). In reporting trials,  
260 participants were instructed to, before each reach movement, report the aiming direction of their  
261 hand for the cursor to hit the target. They did this by turning a knob with their left hand, to rotate  
262 a line on the screen, positioned between the start position and the ring, to align it with their  
263 strategic aimpoint. When satisfied with the direction of the line, the participant clicked a button  
264 positioned next to the knob, and the line disappeared. After a 1 s delay, the target filled in as a  
265 cue to execute the reach.

266

267 All participants performed 4 blocks of trials in total, where within each block, target locations were  
268 randomized within sets of eight: (1) A baseline block (5 sets of 8 trials; 40 in total), (2) a rotation  
269 block (10 sets of 8 trials without report + 2 sets of 8 reporting trials + 2 sets of 8 trials without  
270 report; 112 trials in total), (3) a washout block in which veridical cursor feedback was restored (10  
271 + 10 sets with a 30 s break in between; 160 trials in total) and (4) a second rotation block to  
272 assess participants’ rates of re-learning (10 sets of 8 trials; 80 in total). Ten different randomized  
273 trial orders were created for the full experiment. Participant 1, 11, 21, and 31 performed the first  
274 order, participant 2, 12, 22, and 32 performed the second order, etc.

## 275 Data analysis

276 Trials in which the movement was initiated too early or too late (as detected online; 4% of trials)  
277 or in which the movement duration was longer than 300 ms (4% of trials), were discarded from  
278 the analysis. The median endpoint hand angle (i.e., the difference in angle between the target  
279 and the hand when the cursor crossed the ring) per set of eight trials was used as a measure of  
280 learning performance. To capture individual differences in the rate of early learning that  
281 correspond to the implementation of aiming strategies (Taylor et al., 2014; de Brouwer et al.,

282 2018), we computed, for each participant, early learning scores in the first and second rotation  
283 block. To do this, we averaged the median in sets 2 and 3 of each of these blocks (excluding the  
284 first set in which participants often showed highly variable behavior). To derive a direct measure  
285 of the magnitude of the explicit component of learning, we used the average of the median  
286 reported aiming angle with respect to the target, obtained in the reporting trials (sets 11 and 12 in  
287 the rotation block). This resulted in three measures per participant.

## 288 ***Relating learning measures and neuroanatomy***

### 289 Data and statistical analysis

290 As a first exploratory step to determine relationships in subject performance across the error-  
291 based and reward-based learning tasks, we calculated Pearson correlations between the five  
292 learning scores across participants. Having identified patterns of covariation in subject-level  
293 performance across the two tasks, for our main analysis, we submitted the learning scores to a  
294 principal component analysis (PCA). This approach has three important advantages: (1) it  
295 identifies the main patterns of covariation both within and between tasks, (2) it reduces the number  
296 of behavioural variables to be used in further analyses, and (3) it provides us with uncorrelated  
297 measures of learning performance (i.e, principal components), suitable to use in linear regression.  
298 To do the PCA, we first transformed the variables from the error-based learning task, whereby all  
299 angles were converted to errors with respect to the target, such that zero corresponds to a target  
300 hit, negative errors (i.e., between  $-45^\circ$  and  $0^\circ$ ) correspond to no or partial compensation of the  
301 rotation, and positive errors correspond to overcompensation of the rotation. This transformation  
302 ensured that higher values on both the error-based and reward-based motor learning tasks were  
303 associated with better learning performance. We then standardized all scores before submitting  
304 them to the PCA. The principal components (PCs) were obtained using the `pca` function in Matlab,  
305 which uses a singular value decomposition algorithm to find PCs that capture the maximal  
306 variance in the data.

307

308 To test the hypothesis that better performance in the motor learning tasks is related to greater  
309 volumes of brain areas in the medial temporal lobe, we performed multiple linear regression  
310 analyses. All models were estimated using the `fitlm` function in Matlab, which returns a least-  
311 squares fit of the scores to the data. Our primary analysis included the left and right HC and EC  
312 volumes. To control for a potential effect of overall head size on learning performance, we also  
313 included each participant's total intracranial volume, making a total of five neuroanatomical

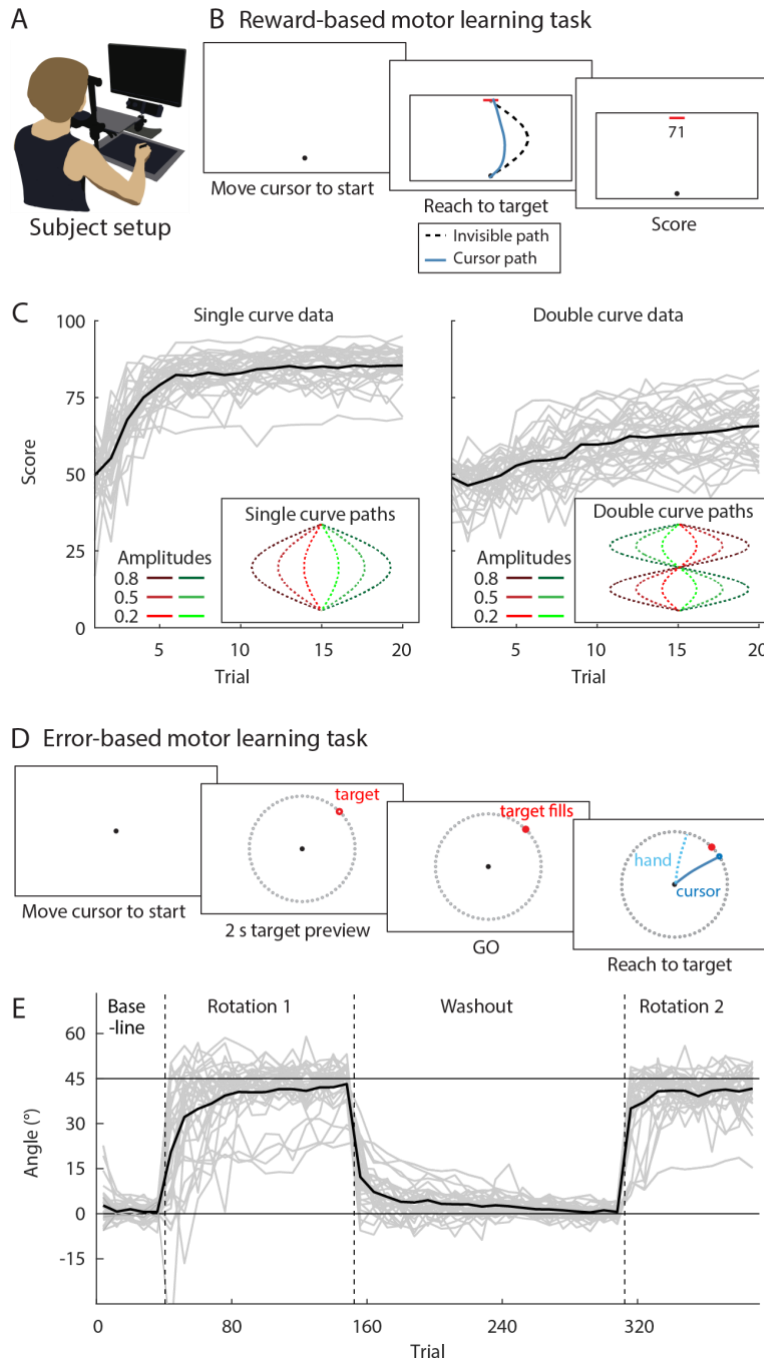
314 measures. For the first and second PC, we fitted a multiple linear regression model with the PC  
315 as the dependent variable, and the set of four regional volumes plus the IC volume as predictors.  
316 Previous studies have reported differential relationships between the anterior and posterior parts  
317 of the hippocampus and memory (e.g., Maguire et al., 2000). Therefore, we performed a  
318 secondary analysis, including the left and right anterior and posterior HC volume as predictors,  
319 and the IC volume as a confounder.

## 320 **Results**

321 In order to determine the relationship between motor performance in reward-based and error-  
322 based learning tasks, and the extent to which the size of hippocampal and entorhinal cortex may  
323 be associated to such learning, we collected high-resolution structural MRI scans from  
324 participants (N=34) prior to performing two separate motor learning tasks outside the scanner. In  
325 the reward-based learning task, participants learned to copy an invisible, curved path through trial  
326 and error, using only a score (between 0 and 100 points) to improve their performance. This score,  
327 presented at the end of each trial, indicated how closely the participants' drawn path  
328 corresponded to the invisible path (Fig. 1B). Participants drew these paths on a digital drawing  
329 tablet from a start to a target position displayed on a vertical monitor (Fig. 1A), and were instructed  
330 to maximize their score. To obtain a representative measure of each participant's reward-based  
331 learning rate and ability, we had participants perform this task for 12 different invisible paths, with  
332 20 attempts for each. Participants were naive to the possible shapes of the paths, which were  
333 shaped as single curves (i.e., half sine waves) and double curves (i.e., full sine waves) between  
334 the start and target position, with different amplitudes (see Fig. 1C). Because participants received  
335 only visual feedback about their path trajectory—and never the rewarded path—they did not  
336 receive error-based information that could be used to guide learning. By design, this reward-  
337 based task requires implementing a search strategy to first find the invisible path and then refine  
338 the drawn path, and we thus predict that participants who perform well in this task are better at  
339 implementing such strategies.

340  
341 For the error-based learning task, we used the classic visuomotor rotation learning paradigm  
342 (Cunningham, 1989), wherein participants had to adjust their movements to a 45° rotation of the  
343 cursor movement, which represented participants' hand movements, in order to hit visual targets  
344 (Fig. 1D). Participants performed center-out reaching movements on the drawing tablet to one of  
345 eight targets displayed on a monitor. After a baseline phase with veridical cursor feedback,

346 participants were exposed to the 45° visuomotor rotation of the movement of the cursor, requiring  
347 an adjustment of the reaching movement in the opposite direction. Learning in this task consists  
348 of two components: automatic, implicit adjustments of the reach direction, resulting in gradual  
349 changes in performance, and the implementation of an aiming strategy to counteract the rotation,  
350 resulting in fast changes in performance (Redding and Wallace, 1993; Taylor et al., 2014). Our  
351 previous work has shown (de Brouwer et al., 2018) — and we predict here — that faster and more  
352 complete learning is largely driven by the use of an aiming strategy, used to counteract the  
353 rotation. At the end of the first block of rotation trials, we assessed this aiming strategy by asking  
354 participants to report the intended aiming angle by turning a knob with their left hand to rotate a  
355 line on the screen at the start of the trial, before executing the reach (Taylor et al., 2014). Learning  
356 was then ‘washed out’ by restoring veridical cursor feedback, after which the visuomotor rotation  
357 was re-instantiated to assess the rate of re-learning.



358  
 359 **Figure 1. Experimental tasks and learning curves averaged across participants.** (A) Setup.  
 360 Participants made reaching movements by sliding a pen across a digitizing tablet without vision of the hand.  
 361 The stimuli and a cursor representing the hand position were presented on a monitor. (B) Reward-based  
 362 motor learning task. Participants were instructed to ‘copy’ an invisible path (dashed black line), with a score  
 363 between 0 and 100 indicating how close their drawn path (blue line) was to the hidden path. (C) Learning  
 364 across trials for single (left panel) and double invisible paths (right panel). Each grey line is an individual  
 365 participant ( $n=33$ ), with the black line representing the average across participants. Insets depict the six  
 366 single curve invisible paths and the six double curve invisible paths used in the task. (D) Error-based motor  
 367 learning task. Participants made center-out reaching movements to visual targets (red dot) on a ring of  
 368 landmarks (small grey dots) with veridical cursor feedback (not shown) or under a  $45^\circ$  rotation of the cursor

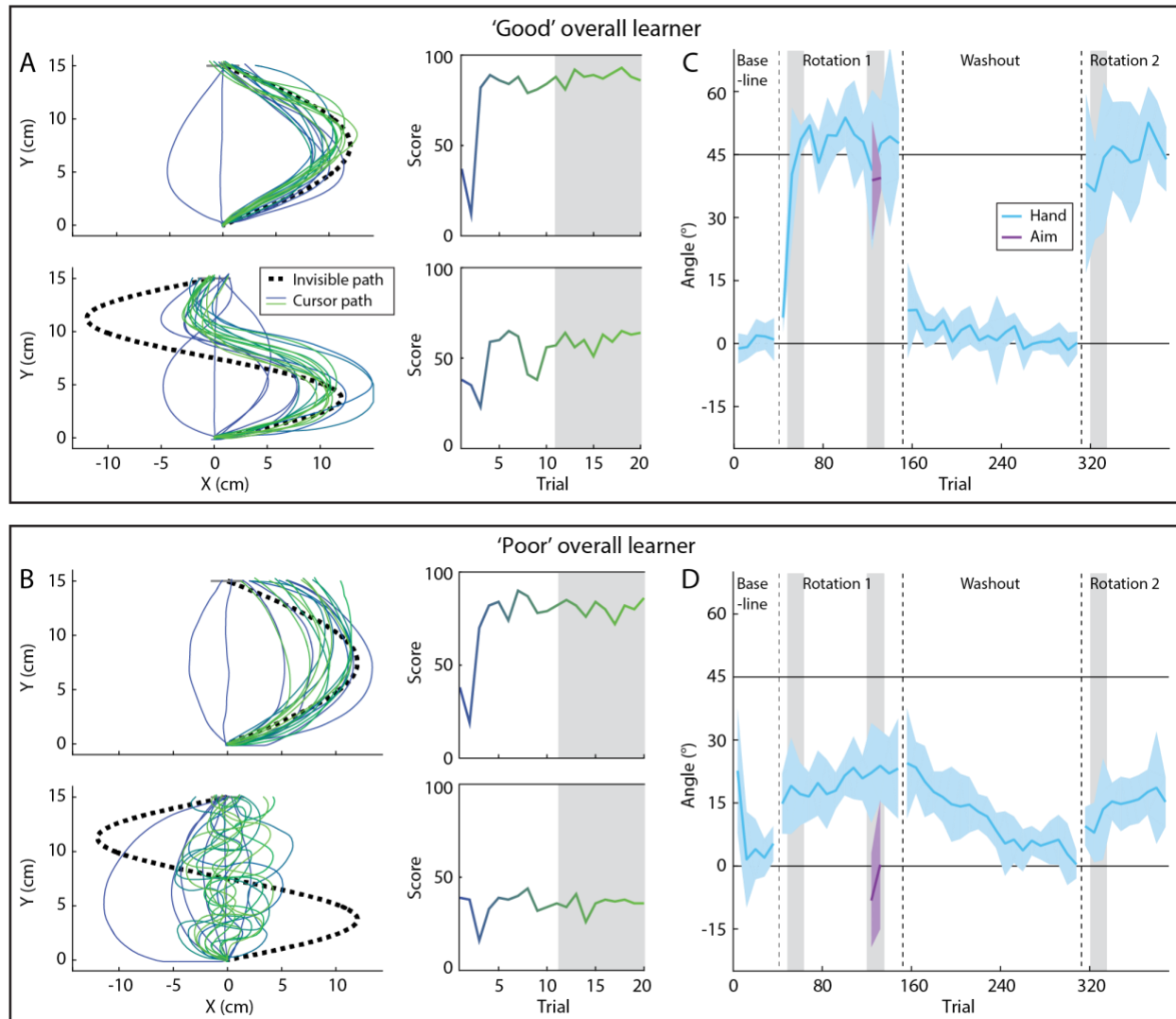
369 feedback (blue line; hand direction is shown in light blue). (E) Learning curves (left panel) across the  
370 baseline, rotation 1, washout, and rotation 2 block. Each grey line represents an individual participant  
371 ( $n=33$ ), the black line represents the mean across participants.

### 372 ***Performance in reward-based and error-based motor learning is related***

373 The black traces in Figure 1C and 1E show the learning curves, averaged across all participants,  
374 for the reward-based and error-based learning tasks, respectively. These figures demonstrate  
375 that participants learned to increase their scores in the reward-based task and change their hand  
376 angle in the error-based task across trials. However, these group-averaged results may be  
377 somewhat misleading, as they obscure significant intersubject variability in both the rates and  
378 levels of learning obtained (see gray traces in Fig. 1C,E, which depict single participants). For  
379 example, Figure 2 shows the behavior of two participants, one 'good' overall learner and one  
380 'poor' overall learner, in both the reward-based learning task and the error-based learning task.  
381 Figure 2A and 2B depict the paths that the participants drew (left panel) and the corresponding  
382 scores (right panel), in two blocks of the reward-based learning task for a single (top) and double  
383 curve (bottom) with the largest amplitude (blocks 4 and 11 for the participant in Fig. 2A; blocks 11  
384 and 10 for the participant in Fig. 2B). While both participants quickly converged on a good solution  
385 for the single curve, resulting in scores close to 100, the movements of the participant in Figure  
386 2A resemble the invisible curve more closely. In addition, while the participant in Figure 2A quickly  
387 converges upon a solution that has a similar shape to the invisible double curve, the participant  
388 in Figure 2B never learns to draw that same double curve, and their score remains low.

389  
390 Figure 2C and 2D show, for the same two participants, the median hand angle (in blue) for each  
391 bin of eight trials across the error-based learning task, as well as the reported aiming angle (in  
392 purple) assessed near the end of the first rotation block. Appropriate corrections for the  
393 visuomotor rotation are plotted as positive values; that is, a hand angle of  $45^\circ$  corresponds to full  
394 compensation for the rotation. The participant in Figure 2C shows quick adjustment of the hand  
395 angle towards  $45^\circ$  in the first and second rotation block, and a quick return towards  $0^\circ$  in the  
396 washout block. Such fast learning is associated with a large contribution of an aiming strategy,  
397 consistent with their reported aiming angles around  $39^\circ$ . The participant in Figure 2D, by contrast,  
398 shows only gradual adjustments of the hand angle in the rotation and washout blocks, and  
399 correspondingly reports aiming values around  $0^\circ$ , suggesting that learning in this participant is  
400 mainly driven by the implicit process. Overall, the participant in Figure 2A,C showed better  
401 learning performance in both tasks than the participant in Figure 2B,D.

402



403

404 **Figure 2. Example data of a 'good learner' and a 'poor learner'.** (A,C) Data of an example 'good learner'.

405 (A) Hidden path (dashed black line), drawn paths (blue and green lines), and score (blue to green gradient)

406 for two blocks in the reward-based learning task. The median score in the last 10 trials of each block (grey

407 shaded area) was used in further analyses. (C) Hand angle (light blue) and reported aiming angle (purple)

408 relative to the target angle during the error-based learning task. Each data point represents the median of

409 a set of eight trials, and the shading represents  $\pm$  one standard deviation. The mean scores across sets 2

410 and 3 (early learning) of the rotation blocks were used in further analyses, as well as the averaged aiming

411 angle (grey shaded areas). In the baseline and washout blocks, a hand angle of zero would result in a

412 target hit, and in the rotation blocks, a hand angle of  $45^\circ$  results in perfect compensation of the rotated

413 cursor path, and thus a target hit'. (B,D) Same as (A,C), but for a 'poor learner'.

414

415 For each participant, we obtained two learning scores for the reward-based learning task (single

416 and double curves) and three learning scores for the error-based learning task (early and late

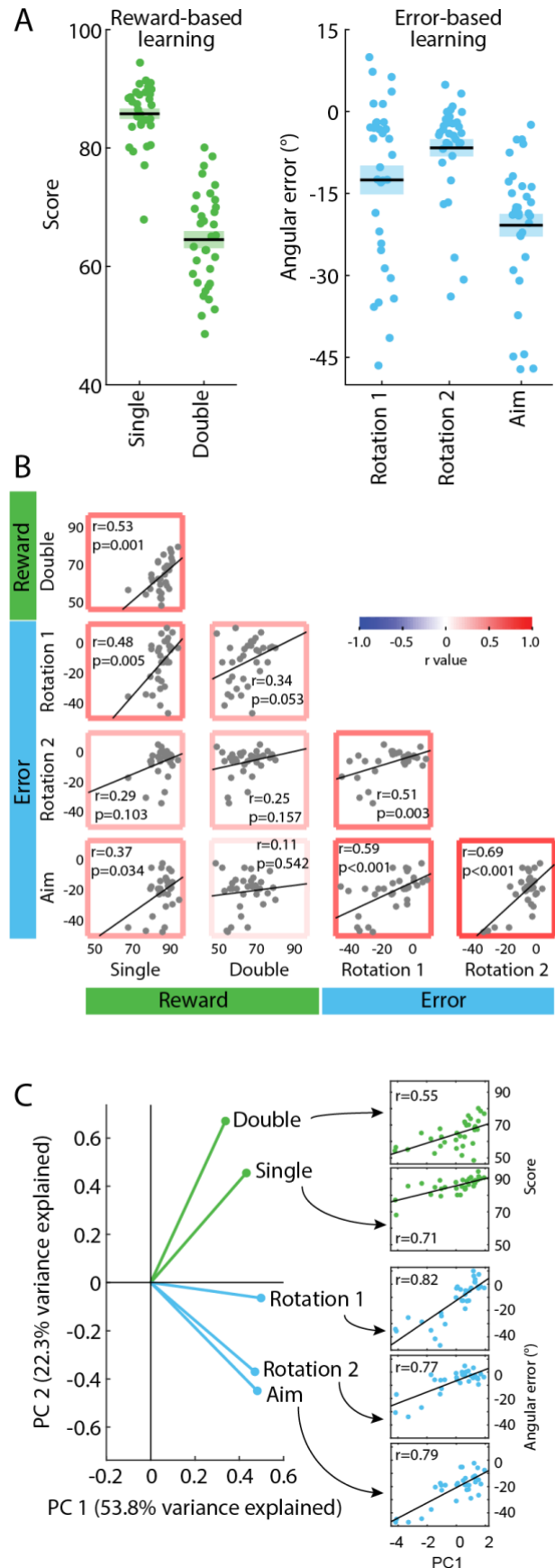
417 learning in rotation block 1 and 2, and the reported aiming angle; Fig 3A). Across the entire group

418 of participants, we observed several significant correlations in the learning scores both within and

419 between the two tasks (Fig. 3B). Notably, the latter demonstrates clear patterns of covariation in  
420 subject-level performance across both the error-based and reward-based motor learning tasks.  
421 To derive single participant measures of learning that capture these patterns of covariation, and  
422 that can be used to relate overall learning performance to the neuroanatomical data collected in  
423 these same participants, we performed a principal component analysis (PCA) on the learning  
424 scores (see *Methods* for details). We found that the first (PC1) and second principal components  
425 (PC2) explained 53.8% and 22.3% of the variance in the data (76.1% overall), respectively. The  
426 projection plots in Figure 3C (left panel) allows for a straightforward interpretation of these PCs,  
427 directly showing both the magnitude and sign of the loading of each of our 5 learning measures  
428 onto PC1 and PC2. Notably, PC1 has positive loadings for all of the learning measures, indicating  
429 that this single component captures overall learning performance. Indeed, PC1 shows significant  
430 positive correlations with *all* behavioral learning measures from both tasks (ranging from  $r=0.55$   
431 to  $r=0.82$ , all  $p<0.001$ , see Fig. 3C, right panel). In other words, PC1 provides a single scalar  
432 measure that distinguishes between relatively 'good' versus 'poor' learning performance across  
433 *both* the reward-based and error-based learning tasks. The second principal component (PC2)  
434 broadly distinguishes between performance in the reward-based and error-based learning task,  
435 with positive loadings for the reward-based learning scores and negative loadings for learning in  
436 the rotation blocks. However, PC2 explains a relatively small portion of the overall behavioral  
437 variance (22.3%), limiting its interpretational value and its use in further analyses. Taken together,  
438 our dimensionality-reduction approach on the behavioral learning data demonstrates that subject-  
439 level performance in both tasks is highly related, as a single latent variable (PC1) captures  
440 whether participants are good learners in both the reward-based learning and in the error-based  
441 learning task.



442 **Figure 3. Learning performance in the error-based**  
 443 **and reward-based tasks is related and is captured**  
 444 **by a single latent variable.** (A) Distribution of scores  
 445 for single and double curve performance in the reward-  
 446 based learning task, and distribution of angular errors  
 447 during early learning in the first and second rotation  
 448 block, and reported aiming errors. Each dot indicates  
 449 the mean value of one participant, the horizontal line  
 450 indicates the mean across participants, and the shaded  
 451 area indicates the standard error of the mean. (B)  
 452 Scatterplots and associated Pearson correlations  
 453 (uncorrected) within and between scores in the reward-  
 454 based and error-based motor learning tasks across  
 455 participants (n=33). This demonstrates subject-level  
 456 covariation in learning performance both within and  
 457 between the two tasks. (C) Principal component  
 458 analysis loadings for the first and second principal  
 459 component (PC) at left, and Pearson correlations  
 460 between the first principal component and learning  
 461 scores at right. This shows that PC1 provides a useful  
 462 proxy for learning performance across both tasks. In  
 463 (B) and (C), each dot represents one participant, and  
 464 the black line represents the best fit regression line.

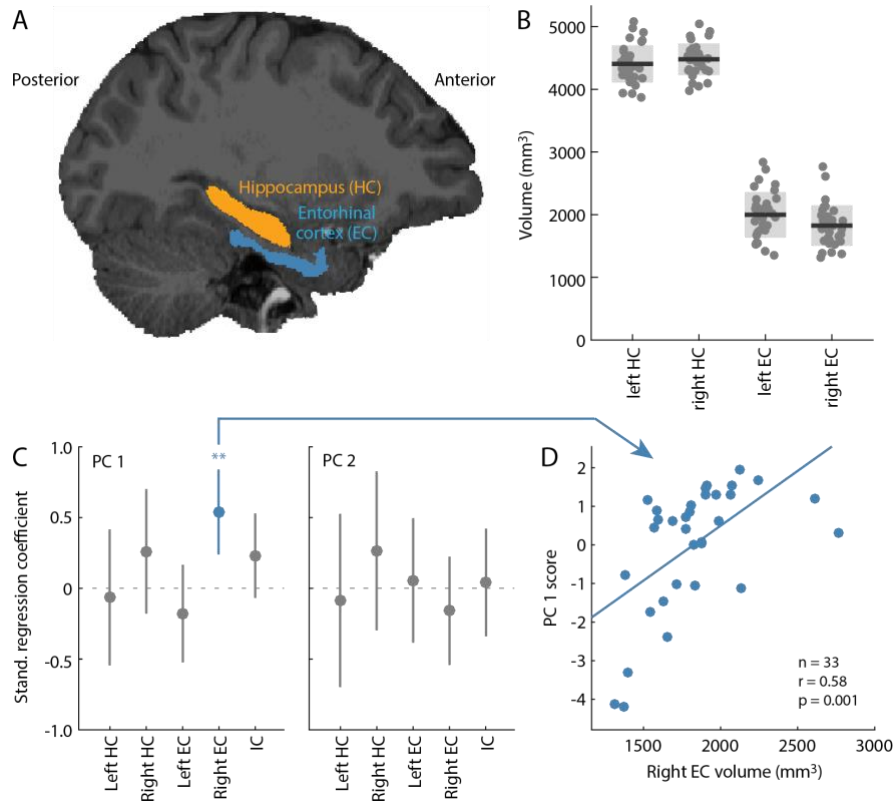


465 ***Larger entorhinal volume is associated with better error- and reward-based motor***  
466 ***learning***

467 Having clearly established that subject-level performance in reward-based and error-based  
468 learning is related and that this pattern of covariation can be captured by a single measure (i.e.,  
469 PC1), our next aim was to determine whether this variation in performance is associated with the  
470 neuroanatomy of the MTL. To this end, we performed multiple linear regression analyses using  
471 right and left hippocampus (HC) and entorhinal cortex (EC) volumes as predictors and PC1 as  
472 the outcome variable (Fig. 4AB), corrected for total intracranial volume (see *Methods*). We also  
473 included total intracranial (IC) volume in our model to account for a potential effect of overall head  
474 size. Figure 4C shows the standardized regression coefficients and 95% confidence interval of  
475 the regression models for each PC. For PC1 — our measure of good vs. poor performance in  
476 both tasks — the model significantly explained the variance in PC1 score (model  $F(5)=4.050$ ,  
477  $p=0.007$ ;  $R_2=42.9\%$ ), with right EC volume being a significant predictor ( $t=3.689$ ,  $p=0.001$ ; see  
478 Figure 4-1). That is, larger right entorhinal volume corresponded with higher scores on PC1, or  
479 better overall learning in both tasks. Notably, we found no significant predictors of PC2 score  
480 (model  $F(5)=0.410$ ,  $p=0.806$ ,  $R_2=7.1\%$ ), the measure that broadly distinguished between  
481 performance in the reward-based and error-based learning task. This lack of effect might not be  
482 surprising given that the percentage of variance in our motor learning data that was explained by  
483 the second principal component was fairly small (22.3%).

484  
485 As a secondary analysis, we performed a linear regression with the anterior and posterior  
486 hippocampus as separate predictors, as previous studies have reported differential relationships  
487 between these individual parts of the hippocampus and memory (e.g., Maguire et al., 2000).  
488 However, here we again did not find significant relationships between left and right aHC and pHC  
489 volume and the score on PC1 (model  $F(5)=0.360$ ,  $p=0.871$ ,  $R_2=6.2\%$ ) or PC2 ( $F(5)=0.440$ ,  
490  $p=0.817$ ,  $R_2=7.5\%$ ; Figure 4-2).

491  
492 Taken together, the results of these regression analyses indicate that better performance in both  
493 reward-based and error-based learning is associated with larger right entorhinal volume.



494

495 **Figure 4. Larger entorhinal volumes are uniquely associated with better overall motor learning.** (A)  
496 Illustration of the segmented hippocampus (orange) and entorhinal cortex (blue) in an example participant.  
497 (B) Volume of the left (L) and right (R) hippocampus (HC) and entorhinal cortex (EC), corrected for total  
498 intracranial volume (see *Methods*). Each dot depicts an individual participant (n=33), the dark grey line  
499 indicates the mean across participants, and the light grey area indicates the standard deviation. (C)  
500 Standardized regression coefficients and their corresponding 95% confidence intervals of the regression  
501 models to predict principal component 1 (PC 1; left panel) and principal component 2 (PC 2; right panel)  
502 based on the left and right hippocampus and entorhinal volumes, and the total intracranial volume (IC). See  
503 Figure 4-1 and 4-2 for all model coefficients and significance values. (D) Individual partial correlation  
504 between right entorhinal volume and PC 1 score. The line represents the best fit regression line.

## 505 Discussion

506 While previous work in motor learning has often studied error-based and reward-based learning  
507 processes in isolation from one another, recently there has been increased interest in  
508 understanding how these separate learning processes interact at the behavioral and neural levels.  
509 Here we find a strong relationship in intersubject variability between error-based and reward-  
510 based motor learning, showing that learning performance across tasks is correlated and can be  
511 explained by a single, latent variable. Our measures of learning and the nature of the tasks used  
512 suggest that this latent variable captures participants' use of cognitive strategies during learning,  
513 with higher scores on this variable being associated with faster and better overall learning in both

514 tasks. We further show, using structural neuroimaging and regression analyses with participants'  
515 hippocampus and entorhinal cortical volumes as predictors, that higher scores on this latent  
516 variable, and thus faster and better overall learning, is associated with larger right entorhinal  
517 cortex volumes. Together, these findings suggest that a shared strategic process underlies  
518 individual differences in error-based and reward-based motor learning, and that this process is  
519 associated with structural differences in entorhinal cortex.

520

521 Considerable computational and neural work has argued for a division of labor between the neural  
522 circuits that support error-based and reward-based learning (Doya, 1999, 2000; Daw and Doya,  
523 2006; Shadmehr and Krakauer, 2008; Ito and Doya, 2011; Makino et al., 2016). According to this  
524 prevailing view, cortico-cerebellar pathways are responsible for error-based learning whereas  
525 cortico-striatal pathways are responsible for reward-based learning. Such distinctions, however,  
526 have often been reliant on indirect comparisons between different studies, and have been  
527 influenced by sampling biases in neural recording sites across different tasks. For instance,  
528 conventional views on error-based learning have suggested that adaptation is a primarily  
529 automatic mechanism, immune to reward-based feedback (Doya, 2000; Shadmehr and Krakauer,  
530 2008). However, more recent behavioral evidence suggests that these two learning processes,  
531 while separable (Izawa and Shadmehr, 2011; Cashaback et al., 2017), interact during  
532 sensorimotor learning (Shmuelof et al., 2012; Taylor and Ivry, 2014; Galea et al., 2015; Nikooyan  
533 and Ahmed, 2015). Such interactions are likely to be supported by the recent demonstration of  
534 direct anatomical connections between the cerebellum and striatum (Bostan and Strick, 2018).  
535 These bidirectional connections could explain recent neural findings from rodents showing that  
536 the cerebellum, besides processing direction-related errors, also represents various aspects of  
537 reward-related information during task performance (Wagner et al., 2017; Heffley et al., 2018;  
538 Kostadinov et al., 2019; Larry et al., 2019). Together, this emerging evidence suggests that error-  
539 based and reward-based learning processes are closely intertwined at both the behavioral and  
540 neural levels.

541

542 There is also emerging evidence to suggest that both error-based and reward-based processes  
543 are mediated through the use of cognitive strategies implemented during learning. In error-based  
544 adaptation, the contribution of this explicit, declarative process to learning has been well-  
545 established behaviorally (Redding and Wallace, 1993; Fernandez-Ruiz et al., 2011; Taylor and  
546 Ivry, 2011; Taylor et al., 2014; Bond and Taylor, 2015; Haith et al., 2015; de Brouwer et al., 2018).  
547 Recent evidence from our group further indicates that faster learning across participants is linked

548 to individual differences in the magnitude of the cognitive strategy (de Brouwer et al., 2018), which  
549 drives rapid changes early in the learning process. In reward-based learning, by contrast, the  
550 contribution of cognitive strategies to performance have received comparably little attention, and  
551 is only beginning to be established. As one example, recent work, wherein participants were only  
552 provided with reward-based feedback (binary success/failure) to perform a visuomotor rotation  
553 task, has shown that good versus poor learning is related to the implementation of a cognitive  
554 component (Holland et al., 2018). This was evidenced by the observed reduction in reach angle  
555 when participants were required to remove their aiming strategy (see also Codol et al., 2018). It  
556 was also evidenced by the observation that the reward-based learning was impaired when (1)  
557 participants had to perform a dual task (a separate mental rotation task) that divided their cognitive  
558 load (Holland et al., 2018), or when (2) participants' reaction times were constrained (Codol et al.,  
559 2018), such that they could not implement the strategy (Haith et al., 2015). To date, work  
560 examining the link between error- and reward-based learning has focused on how reinforcement  
561 signals (e.g., binary success/failure) shape learning in traditionally error-based tasks (Shmuelof  
562 et al., 2012; Galea et al., 2015; Cashaback et al., 2017). By contrast, our current behavioral  
563 findings show that, even when reward- and error-based learning is studied separately (and in very  
564 different tasks), learning performance in both tasks is highly related — so much so that a single  
565 latent variable can explain a significant proportion of intersubject variability in performance across  
566 both types of learning.

567  
568 Another novel result in our study was our finding that a larger right entorhinal volume was  
569 associated with better overall learning in both the reward-based and error-based motor learning  
570 tasks. The entorhinal cortex has been shown to support a wide range of cognitive functions that  
571 would have bearing on various features of our motor learning tasks. Classically, the entorhinal  
572 cortex, together with neighboring areas in the medial temporal lobe, has been implicated in spatial  
573 navigation and memory through electrophysiological studies in rodents. These studies showed  
574 that place cells in the hippocampus (O'Keefe and Dostrovsky, 1971) and grid cells in the  
575 entorhinal cortex (Hafting et al., 2005) form a map-like representation of the environment. Grid  
576 cells have also been demonstrated in primate entorhinal cortex, even in the absence of  
577 locomotion, when the animal is simply exploring a visual scene with its eyes (Killian et al., 2012,  
578 2015). Such observations have recently been extended to humans with functional MRI (Julian et  
579 al., 2018; Nau et al., 2018), and there is even evidence suggesting that mere shifts in covert  
580 attention (i.e., in the absence of overt eye movements), also elicits grid-cell-like responses in the  
581 entorhinal cortex (Wilming et al., 2018). Together, these and other findings (Bellmund et al., 2016;

582 Constantinescu et al., 2016; Horner et al., 2016) have begun to reshape our understanding of the  
583 role of the entorhinal cortex in visual-spatial memory, and in cognitive operations more generally.  
584 An influential hypothesis is that the hippocampal-entorhinal system supports a cognitive map, an  
585 idea that was originally proposed to explain findings in rodents (Tolman, 1948; O'Keefe and  
586 Nadel, 1978) and later extended to humans (for review see Epstein et al., 2017). This hypothesis  
587 proposes that the brain creates flexible representations of the environment to not only support  
588 memory but also guide future decisions and effective (motor) behavior (Schiller et al., 2015;  
589 Garvert et al., 2017; Bellmund et al., 2018).

590  
591 In the context of the current study, we expect cognitive and spatial maps to be utilized during the  
592 exploration of visuomotor space in our curve drawing (reward-based) and visuomotor rotation  
593 (error-based) tasks. Studies using fMRI in healthy adults, and neural recordings or electrical  
594 stimulation in pre-surgical patients, have provided evidence that the entorhinal cortex supports  
595 the encoding of goal direction and distance, relative locations, and the clockwise or  
596 counterclockwise direction of routes (Jacobs et al., 2010, 2016; Miller et al., 2013, 2015; Chadwick  
597 et al., 2015; Goyal et al., 2018; Qasim et al., 2019). While our motor learning tasks did not involve  
598 navigation in VR, the encoding of goal directions (in the visuomotor rotation task) and trajectories  
599 to the goal (in the curve drawing task) were critical to learning. If the entorhinal cortex is important  
600 for representing such spatial information, then its size may predict the ability to perform tasks —  
601 perceptual and motor — that recruit such representations. Studies investigating the relation  
602 between neuroanatomy and performance have associated greater gray matter volume in the  
603 entorhinal cortex with better scene recognition (Whiteman et al., 2016), spatial memory (Hartley  
604 and Harlow, 2012), navigation to memorized object locations in VR (Sherrill et al., 2018), as well  
605 as the lifetime amount of video gaming (Kühn and Gallinat, 2014). Here, we extend these general  
606 observations to include the previously unexplored domain of motor learning, showing an  
607 association between right entorhinal volume and overall performance in error-based and reward-  
608 based learning tasks. Given that motor learning has a strong visual-spatial component  
609 (particularly so in our tasks), we find it noteworthy that it is the right, and not left, entorhinal cortex  
610 that is associated with the processing and integration of visual-spatial information (Dalton et al.,  
611 2016).

## 612 **Author contributions**

613 Conceptualization and methodology AJdB, JP, JPG, JRF; investigation AJdB; software AJdB;  
614 formal analysis AJdB, JP, MRR; visualization AJdB, JPG, MRR; writing - original draft AJdB,  
615 JPG; writing - review and editing AJdB, JP, JPG, JRF, MRR; supervision AJdB, JP, JPG; project  
616 administration AJdB, JP, JPG; resources JP, JPG, JRF; funding acquisition JP, JPG, JRF.

## 617 **Acknowledgements**

618 This work was supported by operating grants from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
619 (CIHR) awarded to J.R.F. and J.P.G. (MOP126158). J.P.G. and J.P. were supported by Natural  
620 Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Discovery Grants, as well as funding from  
621 the Canadian Foundation for Innovation. The authors thank Mohammed Albaghdadi, Olivia Broda,  
622 Sydney Dore, Kate McKenzie and Reem Toubache for help with data collection, and Martin York  
623 for technical support.

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