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Judgment of learning reactivity is stronger for randomized than blocked categorized lists: A challenge for the item-specific processing account

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Abstract

Making judgments of learning (JOLs) can sometimes directly modify memory performance, which is termed JOL reactivity. One hypothesis posits that making JOLs enhances item-specific processing (as opposed to relational processing). The current study tested this account by manipulating the list organization of categorized lists: Exemplars of a category are either presented consecutively (blocked) or randomly intermixed with exemplars of other categories (randomized). Blocked lists favor relational processing over item-specific processing, whereas it is the opposite for randomized lists. Thus, the item-specific processing account predicts that JOL reactivity would be stronger for blocked lists than randomized lists. However, our results showed the opposite: Making JOLs enhanced recall for randomized but not for blocked lists. Further, the dual-retrieval model results showed that the effects of JOLs are localized in gist-based familiarity rather than item-specific recollection for randomized lists. Together, our findings present a challenge to the item-specific processing account for JOL reactivity.