**Title:** Judgments of Learning Improve Memory through Enhanced Item-Specific Encoding

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**Abstract:**

Judgments of Learning (JOLs) are reactive on memory. Specifically, having participants make memory predictions while studying for an upcoming test improves their learning compared to silent reading. However, the specific mechanisms behind this effect are unclear. Recently, Zhao et al. (2023) proposed that JOLs specifically encourage item-specific encoding (i.e., processing the unique features of study items) while simultaneously inhibiting relational encoding (e.g., processing the connections between studied items). The present study tested this account using two JOL types: 1) Item-level JOLs made individually for each word (which emphasize unique features) and 2) global JOLs made following a list of words (which emphasize shared characteristics). First, Experiment 1 tested both JOL types on recognition memory using related and unrelated word lists. Next, Experiment 2 tested how each JOL type would affect learning when participants studied DRM lists, which organize words around a single, non-presented lure (i.e., *bed*, *rest*, and *dream* are related to the non-presented word *sleep*). Because the lure is strongly related to the studied words, participants often falsely report it at test (i.e., the DRM illusion). However, tasks which emphasize item-specific encoding produce smaller DRM illusions versus relational tasks. Across experiments, item-level JOLs improved correct recognition, regardless of list type (related, unrelated, or DRM). Global JOLs, however, did not improve correct recognition for any list type. Finally, item-level JOLs led to a smaller DRM illusion compared to global JOLs. Taken together, JOLs improve memory but only when they emphasize the unique characteristics of each item (IRB# 24022005).

**Word Count:** 248/250