

Human memory essay example

[Experience](#), [Memories](#)



The basic memory process involves three steps which are encoding, storage and recall or retrieval. Encoding refers to the stage where the information is transformed or processed so it can be part of one's memory. Encoding involves four types of codes which are the acoustics (sounds), visual (images or pictures), tactile (senses) and semantic (meaning). The next step is the storage which is the consolidation of the information and retaining it in the brain as either a sensory memory, short-term memory or long-term memory. The third stage in the memory process is the retrieval stage which is the recalling of the stored memories or what is commonly known as remembering. An example of the memory process is when one hears a favorite song in the radio (acoustic encoding) which one remembers even after the song ends (storage) and then hums the song even after a week from hearing it (recall).

There are several factors which enhance or impede information flow in the memory process. One factor which can enhance memory is through association, that is, a new information can easily be remembered if it can be associated with a previous knowledge which is already in one's memory. Another factor which can enhance or impair memory is stress. On the other hand, having a good sleep routine can contribute to the improvement of one's memory.

Related to the memory process are the theories of forgetting. One of these theories involves interference. Proactive interference is when a previous information slows down one's ability to recall new information. On the contrary, retroactive interference is when the new information disturbs the memory of a previously learned information.

One can counteract the effects of proactive and retroactive interference by a consolidation of the new information with the previous information learned.

Testing is another way of protecting against proactive interference.

Having a poor memory performance often results in forgetting. According to an article from the Harvard Medical School, there are various types of

forgetting which includes transience, absentmindedness, blocking,

misattribution, suggestibility, bias, and persistence. Transience is when a

person forgets facts or events over time. Being absentminded is when one

does not focus enough on the information. Blocking is the “ temporary

inability to retrieve a memory”. Blocking is usually the experience when one

feels that the information that he is forgetting is at the tip of his tongue.

Misattribution is when one remembers some parts accurately but

misattributes the other details. An example of misattribution is when one

thought that the information he has came from a friend when in fact, he

heard it from the news. Suggestibility is the vulnerability of one’s memory to

the power of suggestion. There are times when one forgets because his

perceptions and experiences are affected by his personal biases. Persistence

refers to memories which people want to forget because of the negative

feelings that they bring.

There are ways to improve one’s memory. Some of these ways are by

believing in oneself, economizing brain use, organizing your thoughts, using

all the senses, expanding one’s brain, repeating things, spacing out, making

mnemonic, challenging oneself, taking memory courses and getting enough

sleep.

References

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