Schema theory

A schema describes an organized pattern of thought or behavior. Scripts are schemas which provide information about a sequence of events. Self-schemas organize information we have about ourselves, such as our strengths and weaknesses. The last is the social schema, which represents information about groups of people, and this is how stereotypes are also developed. Bartlett (1932) wanted to look at the effect that schemas have on memory. He had his participants read " The War of the Ghosts". the 1st participant read the original story, and then wrote it on paper.

Then a 2nd participant, reads whats been written by the 1st participant. Then the 2nd reproduces it on paper for the 3rd participant and so on. In repeated reproduction, the same participant reproduces the story 6 or 7 times. Bartlett found that as the reproductions went on, the stories became shorter and that certain details had been left out or changed. These changes were in an effort to make the story more comprehend-able from within the participants experiences and cultural backgrounds. For example the word canoes became boats, and hunting seals became fishing. Your brain also fills in blanks based on ones existing schemas.

Your memory is processed into three main stages; which are encoding, storage, and retrieval. Encoding is when u put the memory into your mind. Storage is maintaining it in your mind. Retrieval is using what you saved in your mind. Cohen (1993) criticized schema theory, saying that the concept of schemas is too vague to be useful. However, many researchers use schema theory to explain cognitive processing. Anderson and Pichert did an experiment to investigate if schema processing influences both encoding and retrieval. The results showed schema processing influenced both.