

Different kinds of memories



Information that remains in the brain for more than a few minutes is encoded into the brain by being transferred to long term memory. Long term memory allows information to be retrieved even after it has been stored in the brain and out of human consciousness for a long period of time. (Benjamin, Hopkins, & Nation, 1994. p. 253)

It has been said that long term memory is what " defines reality for each of us." (Benjamin, Hopkins, & Nation, 1994. p. 260) Its capacity is unlimited. Information in long term memory could have been learned, or encoded, five minutes ago or five decades ago. Some scientists believe that such information is stored permanently whereas others argue that with time memory pathways will physically deteriorate over time.

Information in long term memory can be classified according to what is being remembered. Tulving's Model categorizes memory into the following three types:

1. Episodic Memory (events)
2. Semantic Memory (facts)
3. Procedural Memory (motion)

If you know that you are remembering something, then you are using what is called explicit memory. Otherwise, your brain is using implicit memory.

Episodic Memory

Episodic memory is memory of past or future events. Here are some sentences that demonstrate episodic memory:

<https://assignbuster.com/different-kinds-of-memories/>

* I remember choosing my Dalmatian, Spot, from the litter of puppies because he was the most playful.

* I remember playing tag with my friends yesterday.

* I have a doctor's appointment at 10 o'clock tomorrow.

Autobiographical Memory is memory for events personally experienced (Benjamin, Hopkins, & Nation, 1994. p. 261) (Matlin, 1998, p. 154).

Autobiographical memory gives individuals a sense of identity. You come to know who you are because of your past, the memory of your personal history.

Semantic Memory

Semantic memory is memory that is knowledge, factual or conceptual. Here are some sentences that demonstrate semantic memory:

* I know what a Dalmatian looks like.

* I know that there are 50 states in the U. S.

* I know the alphabet.

* I have my doctor's phone number memorized.

With semantic memory, you may not remember where, when, or how you learned the information, you just know it. Sometimes, one can confuse Semantic Memory with Episodic Memory.

Procedural Memory

Procedural Memory is motor memory. Here are some sentences that demonstrate procedural memory:

* I remember/know how to pick up a glass of water.

* I remember/know how to write my name.

* I remember/know how to tie my shoe.

Your muscles have memorized a particular motion so that you know how to perform a certain action (Matlin, 1998, p. 88). Another example is using the computer's keyboard. At first, you may need to look to find each letter, but with practice, you just type without thinking of the location of each letter. You have internalized the information into your procedural memory.

When performing something with procedural memory, one not consciously aware of exactly how he or she is performing each individual movement or how to combine the movements. Becoming aware of these things can disrupt a well-learned skill (Benjamin, Hopkins, & Nation, 1994. p. 261). This is because all of procedural memory is implicit.

Implicit Memory

Implicit Memory is remembering something without being aware that you are remembering it. It is an automatic or an unconscious form of memory.

(Schacter, 1987) (Benjamin, Hopkins, & Nation, 1994. p. 261)

Implicit memory is special because most amnesiacs still have implicit memory skills even if they don't realize it. There are many forms of implicit memory. (Freed, 2000) What amnesiacs lose is explicit memory, memory of

<https://assignbuster.com/different-kinds-of-memories/>

which one is consciously aware. (Benjamin, Hopkins, & Nation, 1994. p. 261)
(Jacoby & Witherspoon, 1982; Squire, 1992; Tulving & Schacter, 1990)
(Benjamin, Hopkins, & Nation, 1994. p. 283)

- * Procedural or motor memory are things the muscles physically remember.
- * Strategies or rules for playing a game or solving a puzzle may be used without memory of ever having learned them.
- * Certain words may come more easily to one's mind if they were just recently encountered.

The fact that implicit memory exists means that we are always capable of being influenced by all of our past knowledge whether we are consciously aware of it or not. This is an important factor in why prejudices and biases are still a problem today. Implicit memories can affect people's thoughts without their knowing it.

Subliminal Messages

Another important part of implicit memory is the issue of subliminal messages. Can self-help tapes with subliminal messages help someone learn, for example, a new language? The answer to this question is controversial. Research studies have shown both ways.

In one famous study, a movie theater announced having improved sales of popcorn significantly when it flashed subliminal messages to its viewers before the show. However, is this really "remembering," or is it just motivating people to respond to their desires at that moment?

Many scientific studies have shown no improvement in using such subliminal messaging in learning. (" Subliminal Perception." 2000).