

COGNITION AND THE LAW

Schema theory and everyday memory

Schemas = simplified, generalized mental representations of everything we understand by a given object/event based on our own past experience

- fixed/compulsory value + variable/optional value
- can be combined to form systems
- represent knowledge at all levels of abstraction
- knowledge rather than definitions
- active recognition devices
- **scripts** represent commonly experienced social events [Schank, 1975; Schank & Abelson, 1977]

What we remember is influenced by what we already know

Bartlett [1932]

'effort after meaning'

'Bartlett approach'

serial reproduction using 'War of the Ghosts': story gets shorter, more coherent, conventional and clichéd

Repeated reproduction

memory = a social phenomenon

Remembering as a cultural activity [Mistry & Rogoff, 1994]

Allport & Postman [1947]

Reconstructive memory

Motivated-forgetting theory (repression) [Freud, 1901]

- accessibility vs. availability
- psychogenic (functional) amnesia
- event-specific amnesia
- PTSD
- Levinger & Clark [1961]
- arousal vs. repression [Eysenck & Wilson, 1973]

Repression and the false-memory debate

Dynamic-memory theory [Schank, 1982]

Eye-witness testimony (EWT)

Loftus's research

A mistaken witness = better than no witness [Loftus, 1974]

Factors influencing EWT

- Race
- Clothing
- Social influence
- Violence
- Misleading questions & suggestibility

- Cognitive interview [Geiselman et al., 1985]
- Reinstating the context
- Reporting the event
- Recalling the event in several orders
- Reporting the event from multiple perspectives

Devlin Committee [1973]

Recognizing faces

Laboratory studies success vs. everyday failure

Reconstruction (e.g. Photofit, E-fit)

Identification (line-ups)

Video-witness testimony (CCTV)

source confusion

Recovered memories (RMs) and the false memory debate

Do RMs exist?

Do false memories (FMs) exist?

Seduction theory vs. Oedipal theory

How might they be created?

- Suggestion [e.g. Loftus, 1997]
- Imagination [e.g. Garry et al., 1996]

Imagination inflation [Loftus, 2001]

Screen memories [Freud, 1899]

Leading questions [Loftus & Palmer, 1974]

After-the-fact information [Loftus, 1975]

Memory change or supplementation?

source misattribution