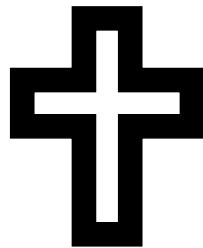


Twelve Lessons
on
Speed Reading & Memory

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UNDERSTANDING HOW MEMORY WORKS – LESSON 1

Introduction: A base understanding of how memory works is essential to our improvement in the areas of processing and recalling data. Our study begins with the basics of how the mind operates concerning the collection, storage and retention of information.

Lesson Goals:

1. Familiarize the student with the three divisions of memory within the faculties of the human mind.
2. Review the tools or different manners in which the mind receives, analyzes and passes judgment on information.
3. Examine the theories and processes of memory.

Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:

1. Sensory – Involving or derived from the senses; sensory experience or sensory channels; relating to sensation
2. Memory – Retention, retentiveness; the power of retaining or recalling past experience
3. Anamnesis – Remembrance or recollection

I. THE THREE TYPES OF MEMORY

A. Sensory Memory

1. Sensory is an adjective having to do with the sensations of the body and the sense organs.
2. The sensory memory of man is exact but does not have long lasting effects.
3. There is very little retention of memory concerning most things encountered.
4. Through selective attention, some information can be transferred to short-term memory.

B. Short-term Memory

1. Short term memory acts as a temporary storehouse for small amounts of information.
2. This type of memory is limited by the amount of space and a short time frame (1 minute).
3. Some short-term memory can be stored as images, but more often they are stored by sound, especially in recalling words and letters.
4. This memory acts as temporary storehouse for small amounts of information. In fact, this aspect of memory is the “working area” where the individual does most of his thinking and meditation.
5. The information stored in short-term can be quickly lost if it is not considered or deemed important by the individual. The problem related to short-term memory is the fact that the memories created are most often brief and very sensitive to interruption and interference. The best way to overcome this dilemma is to rehearse the information repeatedly.
6. Short-term or working memory capacity is thought to be five to nine pieces of information and can be enhanced by increasing one’s attention ability. It is interesting to note that many pieces of information are structured in five to nine piece increase for increased retention. Examples: Social Security numbers, phone numbers, zip codes, passwords, etc.

C. Long-term Memory

1. Meaningful and important information is especially stored in this type of memory. Long-term memory functions as a general storehouse of information, but it is not necessarily organized. Effort and attention must be given to systematically retrieve the information.
2. Long-term memories are relatively important or lasting.
3. There is almost unlimited storage capacity in this region of memory.
4. It is also subject to constructive processing or on-going revision and updating.
5. Long-term memory acts as storage for information we want to retain over a greater period of time. It has virtually unlimited capacity and is not as easily disruptable as short-term memory.

II. THE FACULTIES OF THE INTELLECT

A. Perception

1. By perception, the mind receives sensations of sound, color, taste, smell, and touch from the physical world and translate them into knowledge.
2. Through the senses man perceives information which is processed, passed to short-term memory and then decisions are made whether or not to commit this information to long-term memory.

B. Memory

1. By memory, the mind records, retains, recalls, and recognizes its perceptions.
2. Memory is associated with both positive and negative feelings or thoughts.

3. Thoughts related to highly charged emotions or concepts are retained more clearly. These emotions are created through joy, laughter, excitement, unfamiliarity, pain, distress, discomfort and hurt.

C. Imagination

1. By imagination, the mind weaves percepts into new combinations.
2. In this realm, man is able to create—the architect his plan, the painter his picture, the author his plot, the scientist his hypothesis.
3. Here, also, the man's religious life sees reality in spiritual things.

D. Conception

1. By conception, the mind analyzes and classifies its precepts.
2. Conception can refer to the following: a broad understanding of something; the result of a thought such as an idea, invention or plan; the formulation of an idea or the process of arriving at an abstract idea or belief or the moment at which an idea starts to take shape or emerge.

E. Judgment

1. By judgment, the mind compares concepts and arrives at conclusions.
2. Discernment is a key to good judgment which cannot be reached apart from the above mentioned faculties. Discernment is keenly selective judgment as in the matter of good taste or appropriateness.

G. Reason

1. By reason, the mind compares judgments.
2. The ability to reason is extremely important in the matter of thinking. Note the following:
 - a. Reason relates to justification or the explanation for something.
 - b. Reason often reveals the motive or cause for acting or thinking in a particular way.
 - c. It also consists of the power of orderly thought and the ability of thinking in a logical and rational manner.
 - d. Reasoning speaks of the ability to think clearly and coherently.
 - e. As a matter of philosophy, reason refers to the intellect as a basis for knowledge. This aspect speaks of thinking logically as a basis for knowledge, as distinct from experience or emotions.
3. Man has the capacity to think, persuade and resolve by rational thought.
4. The term reason is used in many ways to convey ideas of rational thought. Note such phrases as...
 - a. By reason of or because of
 - b. It stands to reason – Used to emphasize that something seems obvious or logical
 - c. Listen to reason – To take note of sensible advice
 - d. Within reason – Within reasonable limits

II. MEMORY THEORY AND PROCESSES

A. Attention and Selection – What information will you remember?

1. Attention
 - a. Information cannot easily be retained without a conscious effort to pay attention to data. The mind creates priorities on information depending upon the focus given to a particular stimulus. Example – A fox may forget the feelings of fear if his primary focus is on the meal he wishes to steal. Conversely, his fear of capture may cause him to forfeit his opportunity to satisfy his hunger.
 - b. Focus is extremely important in directing the mind in matters of long-term retention. Example – People often forget names of other individuals they meet within moments. If upon hearing the name of a person we would focus for just a moment to commit the information to memory, the potential for recollection increases dramatically.
2. Selection – Information is retained as a matter of choice. In a world of abundant data, one must choose what is important to remember. The choice is based upon personal values and perceptions. Examples...
 - a. Wife – A husband may tell his wife about an experience of hunting, fishing or sport that is forgotten.
 - b. Husband – A wife may explain the need for household maintenance which is soon forgotten.
 - c. Child – A kid may run into the house muddy shoes, not considering the cleanup later.

B. Encoding, Storage and Retrieval – How will you remember the information? How will you recall it?

1. Acoustic – Acquiring information by auditory means
2. Visual – Acquiring information by visual means
3. Semantic – Acquiring information through the study of words or symbols

C. Forgetting – How can you fight memory decay?

1. Organization – Establishing relationships between separate components
2. Review – Repetitive examination of information deemed important