

Forgetting, Memory Construction, and Memory Improvement

Module 23

Pavlov's Classical Conditioning in Action

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nE8pFWP5QDM>
- (1 minute)

Why do we forget?

- Encoding failure – we learned it but didn't encode it into long term memory
- Why not?
 - Age
 - Distraction
 - Not enough effort put forth

Why do we forget?

- Storage decay – memory fades over time
- Why?
 - We didn't access it so the path faded over time

Why do we forget?

- Retrieval failure – can't get to the memory
- Why?
 - Interference with other similar information
 - Proactive & retroactive interference
 - Question: Why would you experience less retroactive interference in things you learn an hour before you go to sleep

Why do we forget?

- Motivated forgetting – rewriting history
- What about repression of unwanted memories? Very difficult to do if they are emotionally charged memories. But some techniques exist to attempt to erase or soften such memories.

Errors in Memory Construction

- Reconsolidation – adding new information to old memories every time we access them (use of hindsight)

Errors in Memory Construction

- Misinformation – replacing incorrect information with actual memories

Errors in Memory Construction

- Source amnesia– remembering something but not being sure why/how we know it (aka source misattribution)
 - Example: hearing a story so many times you believe it is a real memory
 - Example: writing a story only to realize later that that was from a movie you saw two years ago
 - Example: recognizing a face but not being sure from where you know it

Errors in Memory Construction

- Source amnesia– leads to déjà vu – when cues from the current situation trigger earlier memories

Constructed/False Memories

- Especially likely among very young & very old
- More likely when questioning is leading & vivid
- “Recovered” memories are not always false

Jill Price – the woman who can't forget

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FerGcT8HnI>
- (9.5 minutes)
- Having total recall isn't all it's cracked up to be

Amnesia

- Anterograde amnesia – inability to store new information
- Retrograde amnesia – inability to recall old information but can form new memories

Tips on Improving Memory

- SQ3R
- Distributed rehearsal
- Make it meaningful – assoc. new info w/what you already know
- Jog your memory w/retrieval cues
- Use memory techniques (like mnemonic devices)
- Get good sleep
- Test yourself and test others