

**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

Allport & Postman [1947]

memory = a social phenomenon

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

**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**

RM therapy

Screen memories [Freud, 1899]

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]

Leading questions [Loftus & Palmer, 1974]

After-the-fact information [Loftus, 1975]

Memory change or supplementation?

source misattribution