

Information Processing

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Psychology

When I was growing up in Taiwan, my dad had jet black hair and my mom had very blonde hair. It was difficult to spot my dad in a group of men, yet it was very easy to spot my mom in a group. If I knew my parents were together in a crowd somewhere, and I needed to talk to them, I would simply look for my mom - it was quicker and easier. It took more attention, effort, and concentration to find my dad. Of course, with my thick, bright red hair, they could easily spot me in a crowd anywhere. This is an example of purposeful filtering of information that my senses and mind are receiving. I would purposefully overlook everyone without blonde hair.

Perception involves learning and learning involves perception. The filters that a person utilizes will determine what information/stimulus they pay attention to, and what stimulus/information they do not pay attention to (DeGloma & Friedman, 2005; Sternberg, 2009). If a person has any damage to their sensory receptors, they cannot receive that stimulus and incorporate the information into their knowledge base; if they cannot receive the information then they cannot learn the information (Sternberg, 2009). I had a kindergarten student who could not perceive various colors and match them. When I talked to his classroom teacher about what I noticed, she stated there are complex ideas he can understand, and some that he can't. He has difficulties with receiving auditory and visual stimulus. If his body would receive the stimulus, he would be able to learn with this stimulus.

Another way that a person may not receive the information to learn and incorporate it into their knowledge is through the filters used (DeGloma & Friedman, 2005; Sternberg, 2009). Our attention and brain capacity does have a limit, and we filter what information we want to process and what information to be inattentive to (Sternberg, 2009). Even if the body is able to receive the information yet the information is filtered and not processed, then that information cannot be incorporated in to the learning process. During my undergraduate studies, I listened to numerous lectures, and read numerous chapters in textbooks. During the freshman year, typically students think everything the professor says and everything in the textbook is important. Throughout the years of school, a filter of what type of information is important to incorporate and pay attention to developed. These filters can hinder learning and help learning at the same time. If the filter that is developed begins to filter out nonessential information, it saves on energy and brain power; yet if it filters out vital information that does not get incorporated, it could wreck havoc on the GPA.

Culture can also influence the development of filters through knowledge, learning, and past experience. If a student from another culture is taking notes, information they deem important may not be the same as other students or the instructor. The information is filtered through their cultural understanding. Past experience can also be seen when a teacher or parent has a student who has a tendency to cause problems and not fess-up or take responsibility for their actions. The parent or teacher will begin to perceive whatever story the student tells not to be the truth the next time something happens - whether that is the truth or not.

Cultural perception can also influence what is placed into textbooks and what the students learn (DeGloma & Friedman, 2005). Certain groups will perceive the actions of various wars from different sides, and will use these perceptions to teach others; whether intentional or not. DeGloma and Friedman (2005) discussed that groups with different political, religious, and

cultural interest will have different perspectives of the same idea, event, or norms. They described how the north and the south viewed slavery differently, depending on what they were taught by their culture.

References

- DeGloma, T., & Friedman, A. (2005, August 13). Thinking With Socio-Mental Filters: Exploring the Social Structuring of Attention and Significance. *Conference Papers -- American Sociological Association*, Retrieved September 13, 2009, from SocINDEX with Full Text database.
- Sternberg, R. (2009). *Cognitive psychology* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning.