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Explicit Memory

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Explicit memory involves recalling information and experiences consciously unlike implicit memory which is unconscious. It is part of our long-term memory store and is used everyday when we remember things we have to do later on that day or else we recall past experiences.

A simple way to differentiate explicit and implicit is that explicit memories will remember the day someone first rode a bike while having the skill to ride the bike comes from implicit memories. Explicit memory can also be divided into episodic and semantic memories.



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Storing the Data

Explicit memory is stored and encoded after the brain reorganizes the data. We make certain associations with experiences we have undergone previously. This means the recollection of data is entirely dependent on how it was processed in the first place. When your recollection of an event or object is improved, this is known as the depth-of-processing effect.

In essence, you will not be able to have explicit memories unless you record your experiences. This could come in the form of writing them down or speaking about them. This will aid retrieval of the memories because internal cues that were utilized during the processing of the memories may cause an individual to recall an event spontaneously. Speaking about an experience enables a person to remember it later on because the words could act as a trigger for example.

Episodic Memory

With episodic memory [1], we are able to recollect certain times and places. With this type of memory, you only have to be exposed to an episode once before a memory is triggered. The loose ends of semantic memory can be joined together thanks to episodic memory.

An example of this would be the fact that semantic memory would be used to tell you what an animal sounds and looks like. Every episodic memory you have of this particular animal will take your semantic memory of the animal into account. Also, if you have new experiences with the animal, your semantic impression will be altered.

Some of those who have carefully studied this form of memory believe that episodic memories may become semantic in the long-term. This means that all episodic memories about a certain incident lose their context and become generalized. This belief is countered by other researchers who suggest that episodic memories always stay in that form. These people acknowledge that episodic memories both rely on and inform semantic knowledge.

Semantic Memory

Semantic memory [2] relates to the way we remember the meanings of things. This involves the recollection of knowledge regarding the world without any specific context. Essentially, semantic memory allows you to remember that horses are animals, not inanimate objects, without knowing when or where you remembered this fact.

Endel Tulving was the first person to acknowledge the existence and role of semantic memory in 1972. A 1959 study by Scheers and Reiff which distinguished between two forms of memory was what influenced Tulving.

These two memory forms were known as memoria and remembrance. Remembrance related to memories with experiences whilst memoria entailed memories without autobiographic [3] index experiences. Semantic memory is the total of all the information you have gathered. Semantic memory is all about facts and general meanings while episodic memory relates to personal experiences.

Source URL: <https://explorable.com/explicit-memory>

Links

[1] <https://explorable.com/episodic-memory>

[2] <https://explorable.com/semantic-memory>

[3] <https://explorable.com/autobiographical-memory>