

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

# EDU 822



## Advanced Psychology of Learning **Module 3**

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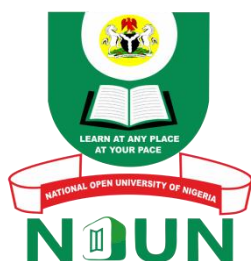
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## Module 3

### Unit I The Theories of Retention in Learning

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#### 1.0 Introduction

Memory is the evidence that meaningful learning has taken place. It is the ability of someone to recall what has been previously learnt. If you learn a body of knowledge in the past and fail to remember it, it means you have forgotten and some factors must have been responsible for this. The implication of this is that you have to start all over.

#### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define Memory
- explain theories of forgetting
- list the various classroom implications of forgetting and remembering.

#### 3.0 Main Content

##### 3.1 Memory

Human beings have limited attention and typically can only attend to just one input channel at a time; and when this piece of input (information) is acquired, it is placed in the short-term memory (STM), which is the work-bench where an individual does his/her thinking (Crowl, Kaminsky and Podell, 1997). Crowl and his associates explain that when a piece of information is acquired it must be properly processed, otherwise, such information dies off, and thus it becomes increasingly difficult for an individual to remember or recall such an idea.

This therefore implies that a piece of information must be learnt repeatedly, and must not be too large at a time; otherwise, the STM may throw away some parts of the information. This often explains why people find it difficult to locate an item placed or kept somewhere when in need of it. It may then be assumed that when such an individual places an object, he/she has not taken time to “look and relook” and then commit the location of the object into heart in order that its location may be easily traced.

The same idea may apply in classroom situation, where a learner is taught a concept and would need to recall the facts surrounding the concept, for the teacher to conclude whether the lesson has been successful, and to also evaluate whether the learner has learnt.

The ability of such a child to remember a learned concept is the product of the process by which we commit the piece of information into memory contingent upon when the information is passed across to him/her. The short-term memory that does the initial processing of the information has the capability to store information for 20 seconds, and unless the receiver of the information acts on it, the information is forgotten.

Similarly, for pieces of information to be stored in the memory at one time or the other, it must not be too large. This is because the short-term memory cannot hold too large a volume of information at a time, before it disposes of it.

However, a better way to remember some pieces of information is to chunk them bit by bit; and by this recall can be enhanced. But to a greater extent, if we want to recall some of the bits that go into the STM, we need to rehearse very well. Rehearsal is a process by which we exercise the repeat of a piece of information so that such information does not elope from memory after the 20 seconds capacity of the STM. There are two types of rehearsal:

- Maintenance Rehearsal
- Elaborate Rehearsal.

In maintenance rehearsal, repetition is made of the piece of information, to allow one to act upon it. For example, if a police officer on the highway wants to keep the information of a vehicle whose driver has decided not to obey the stop and search service of the police on the check point, the officer could repeatedly (within a minute) recite the number plate information to another officer who then records it. This will enable the officer to easily track down the escaping vehicle another time.

In elaborative rehearsal, effort is made to pass a piece of information into the Long-term memory. Here, an association is made of a new piece of information with existing information in order, to retain the newly learned and to also aid recall. Apart from association, the learner has to repeat a new information and then associate it with an existing piece, so that when it is to be retrieved for use, it will be easier to recall.

### **The long-term memory**

Some of the methods by which information is stored in the LTM memory are:

**Sentence creation:** This is otherwise called verbal elaboration. It is a process by which a sentence is made with a learned concept as a component. For example, when a child is taught the alphabets, the teacher often associates the letters with an object as “B” for Ball, “E” for Elephant. The sentences that could be made are “B” for Ball, “kick the ball”, “E” for Elephant, an elephant is big. When this is repeatedly done, the child easily recalls the concept being passed.

**Creation of mental picture:** When a concept is associated with an object as shown above, the child will recall quickly. E.g. letter B as in Ball. Whenever the child comes across letter B, she/he can also visualize a ball.

**Creation of mnemonics:** Here a learner could use acronyms i.e. first letter of each of the points being mastered, or an arrangement that makes the points meaningful to pronounce.

Thus when the individual wants to recall, it will be very easy to retrieve it from memory. A typical example is the arrangement of the characteristics of living things as MR NIGER i.e. M= Movement, R=Respiration, N=Nutrition, I=Irritability G=Growth, E= Excretion, and R=Reproduction.

After the learner has properly rehearsed a piece of learned material, the information is processed into the Long-Term Memory (LTM), from which the learner can recall for use at

any time. However, in order to be able to recall more easily, the information that is newly acquired must integrate very well with already known information in the LTM. There are however two kinds of LTM i.e.

- Semantic Long-Term Memory
- Episodic Long-Term Memory

In the semantic long-term memory, concepts that have peculiar names that can be mentioned by names are stored. But in the episodic LTM, a piece of episode or event is stored.

Imagine you are a witness at an accident scene, will you ever forget the scene in your life? You will always recall the scene, whenever you witness another, linking it with vivid images of the present. Or whenever you are traveling on the same road where the accident occurred, you will always remember. The recall you are likely to make is of that episode of accident. This is different from being able to name an object, defining its characteristics as in a “Hoe”, “used in tilling the ground” and having a “wooden handle and an iron blade” as in the semantic Long-term memory. However, the rehearsal or non-rehearsal may not necessary aid recall. There may be a loss of memory and several factors are (likely to be) responsible for it.

This is better understood with the aid of some theories of forgetting.

### 3.2 Theories of Forgetting

There are various explanations in respect of how people forget what they have learnt. These are:

**Decay:** After a relatively longer period of time, a piece of acquired information dies off the memory and an individual finds it difficult to remember it again. Examples of this experience are the experiences acquired in the earlier part of one’s life; and as the body systems grow, in addition to several experiences acquired; the earlier learned facts go into extinction.

**Interference:** There are two types of interference:

**Retroactive Inhibition:** When a person has just acquired a piece of information, the tendency is that the earlier acquired information becomes increasingly difficult to be remembered or even get lost. For example, when a person relocates to a new area of the city, there is the tendency for him to forget addresses of his earlier location in the city.

**Proactive Inhibition:** This is typically the opposite of the retroactive inhibition. In the above example, the inability of the individual to remember the present address but remembering the previous address is as a result of interference of the first experience.

**Cue-dependence:** In order to remember a learned idea, an individual needs some cues that will aid it. An individual needs related ideas such as a sentence, a mental picture or a mnemonic to remember a fact (as mentioned above). Without this, the possibility for a piece of information to go into extinction is there.

### 3.3 Classroom Implications of Theory of Remembering and Forgetting

In order for learners to benefit from school activities, and to also apply classroom learning into future use, they have to have good memory of classroom activities and learned subject-matter. It is therefore the role of the teacher to assist the learners, train them in various rehearsal skills. Among such activities are:

1. Always associate a current learning with practical examples.
2. Use concrete objects to demonstrate objects learned in the classroom.
3. Teach the use of mnemonic devices, in order to aid recall.

#### Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Write short notes on the following:
  - Recalling
  - Relearning
  - Retention
1. Discuss the factors that influence retention and forgetting.
2. Explain how to promote retention in the classroom.

### 4.0 Conclusion

This unit has discussed why people usually forget what they have learnt in the past and how they can remember or recall earlier learning. The unit will therefore assist the learners and teachers alike on how to improve the status of their memory and void forgetting.

### 5.0 Summary

In this unit, learners have learnt about:

- the concept of memory
- remembering and Forgetting theories
- classroom implications of remembering and forgetting.

### 6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What do you understand by the word 'memory'?
2. Why did your students forget what you taught them last week?
3. Distinguish between interference and decay?
4. What are the implications of forgetting in the students learning process?

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## Unit 2 Transfer of Learning

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### 1.0 Introduction

The ability of the individual to apply the previous experience on the new related experience is what we call transfer of learning. Except students are able to transfer prior skills and knowledge on new ones, the continuity of learning will be difficult. This unit will explain how old learning can be transferred to a new one. You will know what the classroom teacher needs to do in order to facilitate transfer of experiences among his/her students.

### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this study, you should be able to:

- explain transfer of learning
- discuss the three theories of transfer of learning
- enumerate classroom implications of transfer of learning.

### 3.0 Main Content

#### 3.1 Transfer of Learning

The essence of learning is that a previously learnt fact should be linked with a present experience. This is because human being must be dynamic and that the prior experience will make them to develop the new skills and knowledge. The influence the past experience has on the succeeding experience is called transfer of learning. Cormier and Hagman, (1987) define transfer of learning as the application of skills and knowledge learned in one context being applied in another context.

Oladele (1998) defines transfer of learning as the effect of prior learning on the present. Learning is meaningful when the past learning smoothens the progress of something else. For example, if a learned experienced refuses to aid the new learning, the goal of training has seized to be accomplished. In the school, the teacher teaches some subjects in order that the experience gained in those subjects could be transferred into another.

Charham (1987) affirms that human and animal learning is normally affected by the past experience, and that the various subjects are included in the school curriculum because of their utility and wide application to real life situations. For instance, the teacher who has taught his/her students some skills in Mathematics would believe that such skills be transferred to related subjects like Physics or Accounting.

If the students fail to apply these skills in their subsequent learning, it means that the students have not been successful in transferring the learning. The above example gives us clues into the different types of transfer of learning that we have. These are explained below:

**Positive Transfer:** This is a situation whereby a previously learnt fact or information aids in the understanding of a new task. Aside from aiding the learners in their subsequent learning, it also helps the learners to learn better and effectively the new task.

**Negative Transfer:** This is a type of learning in which prior experience imparts negatively on the new one. In this case, the understanding of past skills inhibits the mastering of new ones. For example, if a student wrongly connects information, it can lead to negative transfer.

**Zero Transfer:** This type of learning reveals no link between the previously learnt task and the recent one. The evidence of zero transfer is hardly seen, it reveals no clear positive or negative effect.

### 3.2 Theories of Transfer of Learning

**Theory of Mental Faculties:** This theory was propounded by the Greek Philosophers, notable among them was Aristotle. The basic tenet of the theory is that human mind is sub-divided into different powers of faculties like memory, judgment, reasoning or thinking. It is therefore believed that each of these faculties is reinforced and developed by cast and continuous memorization of poetry/poem and similar works. This theory believes that exercises and regular practice will strengthen the mental faculties. The theory therefore dismisses the concept of transfer of learning, to it a well-trained and disciplined mind is the ingredient needed for understanding of new information.

**Theory of Identical Elements:** The theory which was developed by the duo of Thorndike and Woodworth (American Psychologists) indicates that it is possible for an individual to transfer the prior skills and knowledge to recent ones because both experiences are identical (share things in common). This theory suggests that a successful or effective learning will happen if there are connections or interrelatedness between the old and the new experiences. For example, it is expected that a student who has learnt about anatomical parts of human being in a Biology lesson, should be able to do well when he/she is asked to name anatomical parts of a goat during Agriculture lesson.

**Theory of Generalization:** This theory was advocated by a Psychologist named Charles Judd. The assumption of the theory is that general principles aid transfer of learning better than segregated facts. This theory believes in Gestalt, an assertion which views learning from a whole or complete form rather than in isolated form. For example, the theory of generalization indicates that a learnt experience should be useful in other day-to-day related activities.

### 3.3 Classroom Implications of Transfer of Learning

1. The teacher should know that transfer of learning will not take place when both the old and new are unrelated. Hence, the teacher should endeavour to teach his/her subject-matter in a more meaningful and detailed way rather than by rote.
2. The teacher should provide the opportunity for his/her students to practice a subject-matter being discussed along with him/her. When the learners are allowed to take active part in teaching-learning activities, they will be able to repeat the task at another time.
3. For a transfer of learning to take place, the teacher should always emphasize the relationship that exists between one subject-matter and another.
4. The teacher should endeavour to develop positive attitudes towards a learning task so that the students can be motivated to like the task rather avoiding it.
5. It is believed that what students see, touch, feel or manipulate will be better remembered than the one they are not familiar with. Hence, for a meaningful transfer of

learning to take place, the teacher should incorporate exercises that task the various senses of learners in the learning process.

### Self-Assessment Exercise

1. List six ways of enhancing transfer of learning
2. Why do you consider Transfer of Learning a very important aspect in teaching?
3. Write short notes on:
  - Positive Transfer
  - Negative Transfer
  - Zero Transfer.

## 4.0 Conclusion

The relevance of transfer of learning has been stressed in this unit. It will help the teachers on the action programmes that can facilitate learning transfer.

## 5.0 Summary

In this unit, learners have learnt about:

- meaning of transfer of learning
- theories of transfer of learning
- classroom implications of transfer of learning.

## 6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What is transfer of learning
2. Discuss the three theories of transfer of learning
3. What are the implications of transfer of learning on pedagogical activities?

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## Unit 3 Motivation in Learning and Its Implication in Classroom Situations

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### 1.0 Introduction

The knowledge of how to stimulate the students to participate meaningfully in classroom will go a long way in assisting the teachers. This unit therefore provides the learners the opportunity to understand different theories of motivation and how to apply these theories to their day-to-day classroom teaching/learning activities.

### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define motivation
- mention the two types of motivation
- discuss Maslow and Murray's theories of motivation
- write on the classroom implications of Maslow's theory of motivation.

### 3.0 Main Content

#### 3.1 Motivation

Motivation can be defined as an inspiration that propels someone into an action. It is an internal state or condition that activates and gives direction to our thoughts, feelings, and actions (Lahey, 1995). In the opinion of Oladele (1998), motivation is a process by which the learner's internal energies are directed toward various goal objects in his/her environment. These energies or arousals push an individual in achieving his goals. An individual may be highly motivated to perform well in a task and completely unmotivated in another. This means that when people are motivated, they will work tirelessly to achieve their aspirations.

Maslow (1970) believed that motivation leads to growth and development, and that need satisfaction is the most important sole factor underlying motivation. Maslow furthered explained that man is perpetually in needs and that the resources to satisfy those needs are limited.

In view of this, man places his/her wants on the scale of preference, that he/she selects the most pressing need. After this need has been satisfied, it becomes less important, paving way for the next on the rank.

The needs of man may either be primary or secondary. Primary needs are the physiological wants of man. It may be the need for water, rest, sexual intercourse, hunger and thirst. Secondary needs are the desire for autonomy, affection, or the need for safety and security. For example, the desire of a labourer to take a glass of water after thirst is a primary need. At the same time, craving of the students to stay in a serene classroom environment is a secondary need.

## 3.2 Types of Motivation

There are two types of motivation or arousals. They can either be internally or externally driven. The desire for food or sex arises from within us (intrinsic), while the yearning to obtain recognition or approval is influenced by the conditions in our environment (extrinsic).

In view of the above explanation, motivation is divided into intrinsic and extrinsic.

**Intrinsic Motivation:** Is an internal force or motive within the individual which propels him/her into emitting certain behaviour. It is an innate or genetically predetermined disposition to behave in a particular way when he/she faces a particular situation.

This type of motivation can make an individual to have the feelings of self-confidence and competence (Deci & Ryan, 1985). A student who is intrinsically motivated may carry out a task because of the enjoyment he/she derives from such a task. In another way, a dog that sees a bone and runs for it, did that because of the satisfaction it derives from eating bone. This type of behaviour does not require any prior learning. Sighting the bone changes the behaviour of the dog and propels it to act.

**Extrinsic Motivation:** Is the external or environmental factor which sets the individual's behaviour into motion. It is the incentive/reinforcer that drives an individual's behaviour towards a goal. A student that is extrinsically motivated will execute an action in order to obtain some reward or avoid some sanctions. For example, a student who read hard for the examination did so because of the desire to obtain better grade. The case also goes for a runner who wants to win a prize, he/she will need constant practice than a person who wants to run for the fun of it.

Extrinsic rewards should be used with caution because they have the potential for decreasing existing intrinsic motivation. For example extrinsic incentive may spur a student to actively participate in the task for which the student has no interest, but may undermine intrinsic and continuing motivation in him/her (Deci et al, 1985). Therefore, students' motivation automatically has to do with the students' desire to participate in the learning process. It also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement or non-involvement in academic activities.

## 3.3 Theories of Motivation

Several theories on motivation have been developed by different psychologists. Notable among them are Abraham Maslow, Henry Murray and Sigmund Freud. In this paper, attempt will be made to discuss that of Maslow and Murray.

### 3.3.1 Maslow's Theory of Motivation

Abraham Maslow was a foremost Psychologist. He developed a theory

(Human Needs) in which he identified seven vital human needs according to level of urgency or exigency. These needs according to the Maslow are:

- Physiological Needs
- Security and Safety Needs
- Love and Belongingness Needs

- Achievement Needs
- Aesthetic Needs
- Self-Actualization Needs.

**Physiological Needs:** These are the biological or survival needs of man. They are the most basic needs that control the other needs. Until these needs are fulfilled or satisfied, man will not be able to go to the next level. Examples of these needs are the desire to eat food when hungry, drink water when thirsty or the need for rest, sex, air or to excrete unwanted materials from the body systems. After these survival needs have been adequately taken care, they become less important and one moves to the next which is the desire for security and safety.

**Safety and Security Needs:** Human beings require safety and protection from danger or external aggressors. After one has successfully dealt with physiological needs, it is desirable to cater for psychological needs. At this point, Man will be thinking of where to live and efforts will be made to keep him/herself from impending dangers, threats or hazards. The hallmark of these needs is the quest by an individual to seek for conducive or peaceful abode. For example, the desire of war victims to migrate from their original country to become refugees in another country is the need for safety and security. Also, a chicken that quickly hibernates under its mother on sighting an eagle did so because of its desire for safety.

**Love and Belongingness Needs:** This involves the aspiration of man to establish a cordial relationship with others. It is the need of man to love and be loved. At this level of need, people will like to extend their hands of fellowship or comradeship to their friends, mates, co-workers or neighbours. They equally will expect that such gestures be reciprocated by others. Onyehalu (1988) believes that this need is manifested in our affiliations and friendships.

**Achievement Needs:** Achievement needs are divided into two. These are the need to achieve success and the need to avoid failure or setback. The need to attain success or freedom drives man to go extra miles. This need motivates an individual to emit a behaviour that will make him/her command respect from others.

**Self-Esteem Needs:** These are the things we desire in order that our ego will be boosted. After the individual has been accorded respect or recognition by others, the next thing for him/her is to start seeking for the things that will make him/her enjoy considerable influence from others. The ability of someone to fulfill this condition makes him/her feel superior and self-confident. Inability to fulfill this need, makes a person feel dejected or inferior.

**Aesthetic Needs:** These needs include the desire of people to pursue or admire beautiful things; their desire for beautiful and expensive cars, houses, materials, gorgeous and expensive dresses and beautiful surroundings with well-trimmed and maintained flowers.

**Self-Actualization Needs:** When a person has successfully achieved or gained the most basic needs or wants, then such an individual will want to get a rare opportunity. It is the time when a person will like to distinguish him/herself, by seeking for power or extraordinary achievement. At this point person is said to have reached the peak of his potentials.

### 3.3.2 Henry Murray's Theory of Motivation

Murray like Maslow also propounded the theory of motivation. He divided his theory into two, viscerogenic and psychogenic needs.

**Viscerogenic Needs:** These are referred to as biological or physiological needs. They are the primary needs and these include the desire for water, sex, sleep, food, air and excretion of waste products. They are the higher order needs.

**Psychogenic Needs:** These needs correspond with other needs in Maslow's theory. They are secondary needs. Examples of these are the longing for safety and security, love and comradeship, self-esteem, beautiful things or serene environment, rare or dominant positions etc.

### 3.4 Classroom Implications of Theory of Motivation

1. It is important for the teacher to know the basic needs of his/her students and cater for these according to level of their importance. For example, the teacher needs to think first of students' food, rest or health before thinking of teaching them.
2. When the teacher praises his/her students for doing well in their study or assignment, they will be spurred to sustain that effort.
3. A classroom which is well decorated or adorned with beautiful charts and learning materials will be students' friendly. The students' minds will always be attracted to the activities in a beautifully adorned classroom.
4. In the classroom, students like being recognized or respected. When their views are recognized or respected, they will have their confidence boosted and developed.
5. From the beginning of the lesson, the teacher should endeavour to make his/her students know possible outcome of the lesson. It is when the students know what they are likely to achieve from the lesson that their attention will be arrested and sustained.
6. Feedback is necessary if the interest of the students must be sustained in the classroom. So the teacher should always strive to let them know how they are performing in the teaching-learning activities.
7. The teacher should also provide/plan for extra-curricular activities for his/her students. When the teacher does this, the students will have opportunity of establishing a genuine interaction among them. Besides, they will be able to showcase their hidden talents.
8. When dealing with the students in the classroom, the teacher should take into consideration, the developmental changes and differences in the students before deciding on the particular motivation pattern to be employed.

### Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What problems are associated with the use of extrinsic reward?
2. How does learning objectives affect student motivation?
3. How can you promote intrinsic motivation in student?
4. Write short notes on the following:

- Physiological Needs
- Viscerogenic Needs
- Aesthetic Needs

5. What are the implications of the following on students?



- Safety Needs
- Love and Affection Needs
- Self-Esteem Needs

## 4.0 Conclusion

This unit has prepared the teachers for the various strategies they can employ to keep the attention of the students in the teaching-learning activities. It will be of great benefit if they can adopt these strategies in their classrooms.

## 5.0 Summary

In this unit, the learners have learnt about:

- Definition of motivation
- Types of motivation
- Theories of motivation
- Classroom implications of motivation.

## 6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Define motivation
2. Differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
3. Distinguish between Maslow and Murray theories of motivation
4. What is the relevance of motivation to students learning?

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