
Student Success \ Learning and Memory

KAVEH FARROKH (PH.D.)

Stages of Memory

Memory occurs in five general stages (more or less):

PERCEPTUAL

Here we are bombarded by a whole range of stimuli such as taste, smell, vision, and touch. The body and mind are picking up a tremendous amount of signals from the environment.

FILTERING

Here we select a signal that is most important to us. An example is that of someone whispering your name in a noisy party and you “filtering out” everything else in order to “tune in” to the person talking about you.

WORKING MEMORY

Works closely with the “filter” by storing vital pieces of information within itself. Capacity is limited (7+2 pieces of information).

TRANSITION

This is where the items in working memory “transit” to long-term memory (LTM). It is here where you “manage the traffic” of information into LTM. Techniques include organizing, chunking, linking, diagramming, etc.

LONG-TERM MEMORY

After the “transition”, the information is coded into long-term memory. The better you “organize” the information in the transition, the easier it will be to find the information later.