Shallow Processing

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Shallow processing is a way individuals process information according to the levels of processing theory developed by Craik and Lockhart. They theorized that memory recall was based on the depth of processing and that deeper and more meaningful processing made recall easier. Shallow processing uses only surface features for information processing and is not as involved as deep processing.

There are two different types of shallow processing: structural and phonemic.

Structural processing is encoding only the physical and visual information about something.

Phonemic processing is the encoding of only the auditory information. Shallow processing usually only results in the short term retention of the information. According to this theory the best way to recall information easily is by using semantic processing which is encoding the meaning of information and relating it to similar ideas and concepts. More analysis of information and its meaning leads to better recall than shallow processing.

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