

## Interference theory

interference theory is made of proactive and retroactive interference. Interference is when two pieces of information conflict with each other resulting in forgetting or distortion of memories.

## Retroactive interference

Retroactive interference - when a new memory interferes with an old one. Eg. A teacher has too many new students that their names are conflicting with the old students names from last year.

## Retroactive interference research

### POSTMAN

Aim- to investigate how retroactive interference affects long term memory

procedure - participants were split into two groups.

both groups had to remember a list of paired words

- Eg. Cat - Tree, jelly - moss, book - tractor.

the experimental group also has P.D. to learn another list of words

where the second word on each pair is different. Eg. Cat - glass, jelly - time, book - revolver.

The control group were not given the second list

All participants were asked to recall the words on the first list.

Findings - the recall of the control group was more accurate than that of the experimental group.

Conclusion - the results suggest that the learning items on the second list interfered with the participants' ability to recall the first list. This is retroactive interference.

## Proactive interference

Proactive interference - when an old memory interferes with a new one. Eg. A teacher who had so many students last year that their names are conflicting with the new students names.

## Proactive interference research

### UNDERWOOD

Aim - to examine the effect of proactive interference on long term memory.

procedure - conducted a meta-analysis

Findings - he found that most studies showed that when participants had to learn a series of word lists they do not learn the lists of words encountered later on in the sequence as well as the lists of words encountered earlier on. Also if participants learned 10 or more lists the 24 hours later they remembered about 20% of what they learnt but if they learnt one list they remembered about 70%.

Conclusion - proactive interference has taken place as each word list makes it harder to learn subsequent lists.



