

MEMORY: LEVINGER & CLARK EMOTION AND FORGETTING

Aim: To investigate the retrieval of associations to words that were emotionally charged, compared with the retrieval of associations to neutral words

Procedures:

- ❑ The time taken to produce associations was recorded
- ❑ Immediately after the word associations had been generated, the participants were given the original cue words and were asked to recall their associated words

Findings:

- ❑ Participants took longer to provide free associations to the negatively charged words compared with the neutral words
- ❑ Compared with the neutral words, the negatively charged words produced higher galvanic skin responses (GSR) in the participants
- ❑ Participants found it more difficult to recall their associations for the negatively charged words compared with the neutral words

Conclusions:

- ❑ Repression led to the emotionally negatively charged words being more difficult to recall. This may have arisen from the arousal these words produced (as shown by GSR data)
- ❑ Results therefore support Freud's theory that repression (or anxiety provoking responses) causes forgetting

Criticisms:

- ❑ More recent evidence challenges these findings. Bradley & Baddeley ran a similar experiment using 32 students & found that when words were recalled after 28 days, the emotional associations were better recalled than the neutral associations.
- ❑ Holmes reviewed a number of studies of repression & forgetting and concludes that there is no convincing experimental support for repression causing forgetting