

Levels of Processing

Psychology

Why what you do with information beats how long you hold it.

Memory strength depends on the depth at which material is processed, not on time in short-term store.

structural < phonemic < semantic

Is the word in capitals?

Poorest recall.

Structural — shallow

Does it rhyme with 'cat'?

Phonemic — intermediate

Does it fit this sentence?

Best recall.

Semantic — deep

THE COMMON MISTAKE

✗ **Re-reading notes to remember them**

✓ **Elaborating on meaning, or self-testing**

Re-reading is shallow maintenance. Semantic elaboration and retrieval both process deeply.

The main criticism is circularity: depth is defined by how well it is remembered, which is what it is meant to explain.