THE SCINDIA SCHOOL

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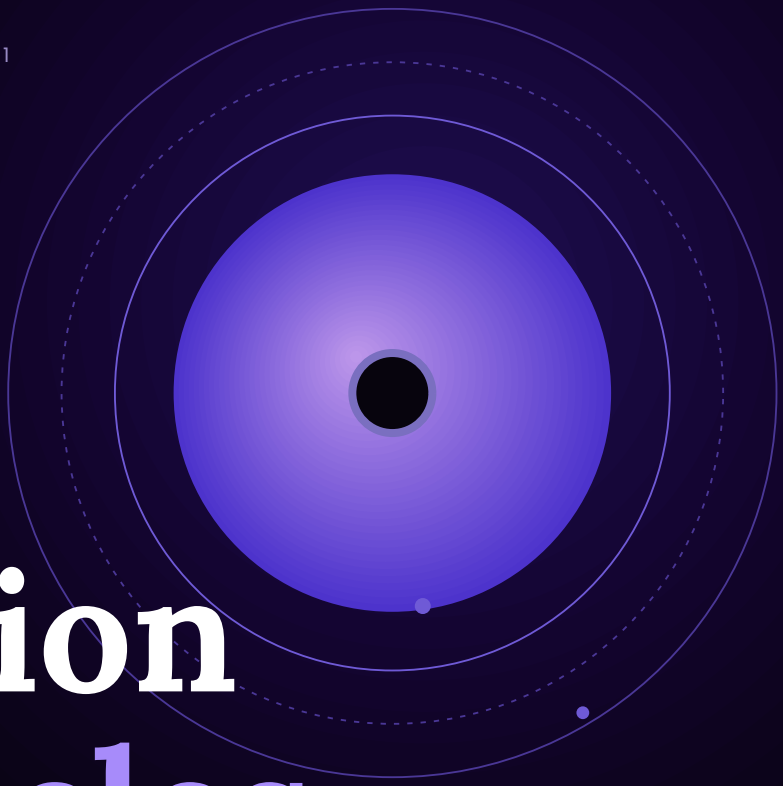

Cognition Chronicles

Essays on attention, connection and the online self, written by students, for students.

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Sanidhya Singh

SENIOR EDITORS Krishdeep Singh Sidhu · Agrim Pratap Yadav

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MASTHEAD Editor-in-Chief: Sanidhya Singh | Senior Editors: Krishdeep Singh Sidhu, Agrim Pratap Yadav
Cognition Chronicles is the psychology magazine of The Scindia School.

PRINCIPAL'S NOTE

From the Principal's Desk

Mr. Ajay Singh
Principal, The Scindia School

A school is judged by more than its results. It is judged by the kind of young people it sends into the world: thoughtful, curious, and able to understand both themselves and the people around them. Cognition Chronicles, the magazine of our Psychology Department, is a fine example of that effort, and I am delighted to see it in print.

The essays in this issue were written by our students, and they ask questions that matter. Why do we feel lonely in a crowd? What does constant multitasking do to our attention? How do we cope when pressure builds? These are not questions only for textbooks. They are part of daily life in a school, and it takes courage and maturity for young people to think about them openly.

At Scindia, we want every student to know that their thoughts and feelings deserve attention. Academic excellence, sport, the arts and leadership all matter, but so does the ability to pause, reflect, and ask for help when it is needed. Understanding the mind is a strength, and I hope this magazine helps our community talk about it more easily.

I congratulate the editors, the contributors and the Psychology Department, along with Mr. Kamlesh Singh, the staff editor, for their effort and care. I hope readers will take something from every page, and that some of you will be inspired to write in the next issue.

Understanding the mind is a strength, and I hope this magazine helps our community talk about it more easily.

Ajay Singh
Principal, The Scindia School

VICE PRINCIPAL'S NOTE

From the Vice Principal's Desk

Ms. Smita Chaturvedi

Vice Principal, The Scindia School

In a school, education must go beyond academic achievement to nurture young people who understand themselves, respect others, and have the confidence to express what they think and feel. It is in this context that Cognition Chronicles, the magazine of our Psychology Department, assumes particular significance.

We live in a time when mental health has become both a focus of conversation and a growing challenge. Our students navigate expectations, competition, relationships, uncertainty, and the pressures of a rapidly changing world. While we encourage them to strive for excellence, we must equally ensure that they know it is all right to ask questions, acknowledge their emotions, seek help, and speak about what troubles them. Having a voice changes it all. Sometimes, being heard is the first step towards being understood; sometimes, putting a feeling into words is the beginning of finding a way forward.

As educators, our responsibility is not merely to prepare students for examinations and future careers, but to create an environment in which they feel safe to express themselves without fear of judgement. We must teach them that strength does not always mean having the answers or managing everything alone. It also means recognising when they need support, reaching out, and being willing to listen when someone else does. A school community becomes stronger when empathy accompanies ambition and asking for help is seen as a sign of self-awareness, not weakness.

Psychology offers our students the language and understanding to make sense of their thoughts, emotions, and behaviour. It encourages them to look beyond appearances, question assumptions, appreciate individual differences, and respond to others with sensitivity. Through this magazine, I hope our students will find the confidence to explore ideas, share perspectives, raise difficult questions, and engage in conversations that matter.

My appreciation goes to the Psychology Department and the students who have brought Cognition Chronicles to life. May this initiative remind us that every voice matters, every emotion deserves to be acknowledged, and every young person deserves to be heard.

Let us build a school where students have not only the courage to speak, but also the confidence that someone will listen.

Smita Chaturvedi

STAFF EDITOR'S NOTE

From first draft to finished page

Mr. Kamlesh Singh
Staff Editor, Cognition Chronicles

It has been a pleasure to watch this magazine grow from a conversation into a printed issue. The students gathered ideas, argued over headlines, rewrote paragraphs and met their deadlines, and the result shows their effort.

Good writing about psychology has to do two things at once. It must be accurate about what research actually says, and it must be readable by someone who has never opened a psychology textbook. The contributors in this issue have worked hard at both.

To the writers: thank you for your patience with edits and your willingness to keep improving. To the readers: we hope you find something here that makes you think, and perhaps something that makes you want to write for the next issue.

It must be accurate about what research actually says, and readable by someone who has never opened a psychology textbook.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S NOTE

Welcome to Cognition Chronicles

Sanidhya Singh
Editor-in-Chief, Cognition Chronicles

Why do we scroll when we should study? Why can we feel alone in a crowded room? Why do we act differently around different people? Questions like these started this magazine.

We wanted a place where students could write about the mind in their own voice, using real psychology to make sense of everyday life. In this issue you will find writing on social behaviour, the myth of multitasking, the pressure of curating our online selves, and the surprising science of loneliness.

None of it would exist without our contributors, our Senior Editors Krishdeep Singh Sidhu and Agrim Pratap Yadav, our staff editor, and the support of the school. Thank you all.

Read it slowly, disagree with it, and if it sparks an idea, write it down. The next issue could carry your name.

Read it slowly, disagree with it, and if it sparks an idea, write it down.

COGNITION CHRONICLES · NO. 01

Social Behaviour

Why we act the way we do around other people, and how we can do it better.

WRITTEN BY KRISHDEEP SIDHU

Human beings are social creatures by nature, meaning that they cannot survive alone and need other people in their lives. Family, friends, classmates, and people in general – we interact with all of them every single day. The way we act in public is defined as social behaviour, and psychology helps us understand what stands behind it.

Social behaviour examples

Social behaviour can be both positive and negative. We have all met a person who helped a friend in trouble or shared something nice with us. That is an example of positive social behaviour. Unfortunately, there are also people who hurt others by insulting them, picking on them, or even bullying.

What affects our social behaviour

There are several factors that affect our social behaviour. First and foremost, it is our family, as we are taught the basics of socialisation by our parents and close relatives. For example, if you were encouraged to respect others, you are likely to behave respectfully yourself.

Another factor is your friend group. In teenagers' lives, it plays a particularly important role, as they may adopt their habits and likes and dislikes. Moreover, if your friends motivate you to do things like studying or sport, they may also persuade you to do things you may not want to do.

WHAT SHAPES OUR SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

1. **Family**
   We learn the basics of socialisation from our parents and close relatives.
2. **Friend group**
   In teenagers' lives, it plays a particularly important role.
3. **Culture & society**
   We unconsciously adapt to certain social norms.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that cultural background and the society you live in also affect your social behaviour, as you unconsciously adapt to certain social norms.

Importance of communication

Communication is vital in socialisation. We may communicate non-verbally – for instance, by body language – but words are also very important. We need to learn to express ourselves clearly so that people can understand us. Just as importantly, we need to learn to listen to other people. That way, we would be able to understand how they feel or what they mean.

> *We need to learn to express ourselves clearly, and just as importantly, to listen.*

Moreover, many disputes emerge from misunderstandings, so being able to express yourself clearly helps prevent arguments. For example, if you had an argument with a friend, discussing the problem rationally could help you both understand each other.

Helping and cooperating

Sometimes one person cannot accomplish something on their own, and they need the help of other people. We call it cooperation, and it is a vital part of socialisation. For instance, students cooperate with each other when doing assignments, family members help each other at home, and even strangers cooperate when, for example, an ambulance passes by.

We also need to learn to help others when they need assistance. You can help a friend with their homework, give directions to someone who is lost, or simply support a person who is feeling sad. Another important quality is empathy, which means putting yourself in other people's place and feeling what they feel. For example, instead of making fun of a friend who is upset, you can try to comfort them and understand why they are sad.

How groups of people influence us

Our social groups significantly influence our social behaviour. We act in a certain way with friends and in a different way with family or at school. Sometimes we deliberately want to adapt to a certain group so that we can become a part of it. This phenomenon is called conformity.

For example, a student may begin to behave in a certain way just because their friends do so. In some cases, it is normal and even beneficial, as groups of people set rules for their members so that they can function properly and safely. Moreover, we also conform to laws, such as traffic rules, when we are alone. Nevertheless, there are also situations when we should not follow others blindly.

Negative social behaviour

Unfortunately, there are negative types of social behaviour as well. We may fight or bully other people, insult them, pick on them, or harm them in any way. Such social behaviour may emerge from aggressive feelings like anger or jealousy, but it may also be caused by anxiety, stress, confusion, or several other reasons. For example, if a person is angry, they may say cruel things to other people without thinking about how those people feel. Nevertheless, it is essential to learn how to regulate our emotions so that we do not hurt others.

Bullying is also a serious problem, as it makes people feel lonely, anxious, and depressed. Therefore, it is essential to be kind to others in order to improve our socialisation.

Social behaviour online

A significant part of our communication nowadays happens online. We chat with our friends, post pictures and videos, and share our thoughts. On the one hand, technology has made our lives easier because we can connect with others easily. On the other hand, virtual channels of communication also have disadvantages, such as online bullying. We can easily say mean things

to people on the Internet. That is why we should be careful about what we write online so that we do not offend anyone, as there are real people behind social media accounts.

How can we improve our social behaviour

We can improve our social behaviour by learning to be kind and supportive. Moreover, it is essential to learn to control our anger and aggression and accept other people's point of view. We also should be honest, apologising when we are wrong and supporting others when they need help. Lastly, we should learn to negotiate and solve conflicts.

FIVE WAYS TO IMPROVE

1. Be kind and supportive
2. Control anger and aggression
3. Accept other people's point of view
4. Be honest – apologise when we are wrong
5. Learn to negotiate and solve conflicts

Conclusion

Overall, social behaviour plays a major role in our everyday life, and it influences who we are. Our family, friends, cultural background, emotions, and several other factors affect it. Nevertheless, it is vital to improve our social behaviour so that we can develop healthy relationships with others. We should be kind and supportive, respecting others' opinions and needs.

COGNITION CHRONICLES · NO. 02

The Illusion of Multitasking

Why your brain hates it when you switch tabs.

WRITTEN BY MANVIK NAGA

Have you ever scrolled through media while trying to study, only to find that you have read the same paragraph five times? You are not just easily distracted; your brain really cannot multitask. Your brain cannot juggle two tasks at once.

In science about the mind, we often say "multitasking." That is a trick of the mind. Your brain cannot actively handle two tasks at the same time. What you really do is task-switching, quickly moving your focus from one thing to another. When you jump from a history book to a group chat, your brain does not work on both at once. Your brain must stop the task, remember where it stopped, and then set up the next task.

> *Your brain cannot actively handle two tasks at the same time.*

This nonstop gear-shifting costs your mind a lot. Each time you flip back and forth, you lose seconds and a huge amount of mental energy just to reorient. Studies show that this chaotic habit can lower your productivity by up to 40% and sharply raise your cortisol, the stress hormone. Over time, chronic task-switching exhausts your cortex, shortens your attention span, and rewires your brain to seek constant low-effort dopamine hits from quick distractions.

WHAT "MULTITASKING" REALLY IS

1. **Stop the task**
   You leave the history book.
2. **Remember where you stopped**
   So you can find your way back.
3. **Set up the next task**
   Hello, group chat.

...and then you do it all again in reverse.

Real productivity and deep learning do not come from doing many things at once. The next time you have a big assignment, try putting your phone in another room and working in dedicated, single-focus bursts. Your overloaded brain will thank you.

COGNITION CHRONICLES · NO. 03

The “Edited” Self

How curating our digital lives impacts reality.

WRITTEN BY YASHWIN SALUJA

It usually starts with a perfectly normal moment. Maybe it’s a quick video of your pug sleeping on the rug, a goofy picture with friends outside a store, or a short clip from a weekend trip. But before we actually post it, it has to pass a strict test. We open InShot or our phone’s photo editor, and the work begins. We trim the awkward pause at the start. We bump up the brightness to make the colors pop. We crop out the messy background and add that one perfect filter. What started as a raw, real moment is now a carefully edited mini-movie.

We have all become the directors of our own lives. Since we have amazing editing tools right in our pockets, we get to choose exactly how the world sees us. But as we keep tweaking our digital selves, a quiet stress starts to build up. We get stuck playing a game of tug-of-war between the flawless version of ourselves we show online and the messy, real version of who we actually are. For teenagers, this constant editing is really messing with our self-esteem and how we act around others.

To understand why this happens, we have to look at how our brains handle social approval. We are wired to want our peers to like us. In the past, we got this approval by actually hanging out in person, where reactions were real and immediate. Today, we measure approval in likes, views, and comments on heavily edited clips of our lives.

The problem is that the person getting all those likes isn’t totally real. When a perfectly angled, color-corrected photo gets hundreds of likes, our brain gets an instant hit of happiness. But right after that rush, there’s often a weird, uncomfortable feeling. Deep down, we know what the original photo looked like. We know it took fifteen tries to get it right. We know what a mess the room was just outside the frame. We start to feel like fakes, getting praised for a character we’re playing instead of who we really are.

> *We start to feel like fakes, getting praised for a character we’re playing instead of who we really are.*

In psychology, there is something called “Social Comparison Theory.” It basically means we figure out our own worth by comparing ourselves to the people around us. When we constantly compare our messy, behind-the-scenes life to the perfect highlight reels of our friends, our idea of “normal” gets completely twisted. It is no longer just celebrities setting crazy beauty standards; it is the kid sitting next to you in class. When everyone looks flawless online, looking in a regular mirror can feel like a massive letdown. It makes us feel like our real, unedited selves just aren’t good enough to show the world.

KEY IDEA · SOCIAL COMPARISON THEORY

We figure out our own worth by comparing ourselves to the people around us.

You can actually see how heavy this pressure is by looking at how we use apps today. So many of us have a “spam” account or a specific “Close Friends” list just so we can post the real stuff: the terrible selfies, the daily complaints, the messy rooms. We literally had to carve out a hidden, private corner of the internet just to be normal. The main feed has become so stressful and strictly judged that we are afraid to be seen on it without a filter. It just goes to show that deep down, we are all desperate for a space where we don’t have to edit out our flaws.

This editing culture is also changing how we live our lives. We start acting like we are just location-scouting for our next post. Whether you are stepping up to the podium for a Model UN debate, traveling to a new city, or waiting your turn at a karting track, there is a constant thought running in the background: How is this going to look online?

This totally fractures our attention. Instead of just enjoying the moment and making real memories, our brains get distracted by trying to capture and edit the perfect shot. Having fun becomes less important than making it look like we are having fun. Because of this, we start treating our friends less like a community and more like an audience. Hanging out turns into a photoshoot, and a good day is judged by how cool the pictures turned out, not by how much we laughed or actually talked.

Trying to keep up this perfect digital image is exhausting. Every post, story, and comment is a calculated move. It leaves zero room for vulnerability, which is really just letting your guard down and showing your true self. Psychologists agree that being vulnerable is the main thing we need to build real friendships. When we are terrified of showing our mistakes or our bad days, we build walls. We hide our quirks and our flaws. The sad part is, by trying so hard to be perfectly likable online, we end up feeling super lonely, even when we are constantly “connected.”

So, how do we fix this? We don’t need to delete all our apps or throw our phones away. Social media can still be a great way to express ourselves. The change has to happen in our heads. We have to stop tying our self-worth to our likes and views, and notice when we are trying too hard to look perfect.

We need to make room for the unedited moments. The blurry photos where everyone is laughing too hard to hold the camera still. The videos with terrible lighting but amazing memories. We need to realize that the messy, unpolished, and completely real version of who we are is way more interesting, and much better for our mental health, than a heavily filtered avatar. By daring to show up without the edits, we take a huge weight off our own shoulders, and we give everyone else silent permission to do the same. In a world obsessed with looking perfect, maybe the bravest thing we can do is just let ourselves be seen exactly as we are.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Yashwin Saluja is a student who enjoys exploring psychology, human behavior, and how everyday technology impacts our lives.

COGNITION CHRONICLES · NO. 04

Lonely in a Crowd

Why feeling lonely doesn't mean something is wrong with you.

WRITTEN BY GAURANG AGRAWAL

Have you ever been surrounded by people and still felt completely alone? I have. Last year I was in a group chat with twenty people, and I still felt like nobody would notice if I stopped replying. On the other hand, I've spent quiet Sundays by myself and felt totally fine. I think almost everyone has felt both. What surprised me is that psychologists have been studying this for years, and what they found can change how we think about loneliness.

Being alone and feeling lonely are different things

Being alone just means nobody else is around. Loneliness is a feeling. It shows up when the connection you have is smaller than the connection you want.

That's why two people with the same number of friends can feel very different. A student who just moved to a new city might have classmates around all day and still feel like nobody really knows them. Meanwhile, an older person who lives alone but talks to a close friend every week might hardly ever feel lonely. So it's not about how many people are in your life. It's about whether you feel understood by them.

> *Loneliness is a feeling. It shows up when the connection you have is smaller than the connection you want.*

Loneliness is like an alarm

The neuroscientist John Cacioppo spent most of his career studying loneliness. He suggested that loneliness works like hunger. When your stomach is empty, hunger tells you to eat. When you're missing connection, loneliness tells you to find people.

This makes sense if you think about early humans. They survived by staying in groups, because being alone could be dangerous. A strong feeling that pushed you back toward other people helped you stay safe.

So feeling lonely isn't a weakness or something to be embarrassed about. It's your brain telling you that something you need is running low. Nobody feels ashamed of being hungry, so why should we feel ashamed of this?

When the alarm gets stuck

The problem starts when loneliness lasts a long time. Researchers found that people who feel lonely for a long time start to notice the bad things in social situations more. They might think a friend is ignoring them when the friend is just busy. A short reply might feel like an insult. A joke might feel like it was aimed at them.

Then they start to pull away or get defensive to protect themselves, which makes it even harder to connect with anyone. It turns into a loop. Loneliness makes you nervous around people, being

nervous makes you back off, and backing off makes you lonelier. I think that's the sad part. The feeling that's supposed to bring us closer to people can end up pushing us away.

THE LONELINESS LOOP

1. **Loneliness**
   makes you nervous around people
2. **Being nervous**
   makes you back off
3. **Backing off**
   makes you lonelier

and the loop starts again.

Loneliness affects your health too

It isn't only about feeling sad. In 2010, a psychologist named Julianne Holt-Lunstad and her team looked at 148 different studies with more than 300,000 people in total. They found that people with strong relationships were much more likely to live longer than people with weak ones. Some researchers have said that being lonely can be as bad for you as smoking, although those comparisons are just rough estimates.

THE EVIDENCE

148
studies reviewed by Holt-Lunstad and her team in 2010

300,000+
people across those studies

1938
the year the Harvard Study of Adult Development began

Another big study is the Harvard Study of Adult Development. It has followed people since 1938, which is over 80 years. One of its main findings is that people with warm, close relationships tend to be healthier and happier as they get older. In 2023, the US Surgeon General even said loneliness had become a serious public health problem.

I should point out that these studies show a link, not proof. Loneliness might hurt health, but being sick can also make people lonely. Most researchers think it goes both ways. Either way, it clearly matters.

So what actually helps?

You'd think the answer would be simple: go out more and meet more people. But research shows that isn't enough. One big review of loneliness programs found that the ones that worked best helped people change the way they think about social situations. Programs that only put people in the same room did less.

So here are some things that psychology suggests might help.

Question your first thought. If someone doesn't text back, your first thought might be "they don't like me." I did this in that group chat. I assumed nobody would notice if I left, but I never

actually tested it. Try asking if there's another explanation. Maybe they're busy or just forgot. You're not pretending everything is fine. You're checking whether your loneliness alarm is going off too easily.

Go deeper, not bigger. One real conversation where you feel heard can be better than a whole night at a loud party. Sharing something small and honest, like "I've had a hard week," often makes other people open up too.

Do things with people. Joining a club, volunteering, or helping a neighbor gives you something to do together, and that makes it easier to talk. Friendships often grow out of shared activities more than out of small talk.

Keep in touch with the people you already have. A quick weekly call or a regular coffee does more than one big effort every few months.

Ask for help if it doesn't go away. If you feel lonely for a long time, or you also feel very sad or anxious, talking to a counselor or doctor is a smart move. It doesn't mean you're weak. Some kinds of therapy, like cognitive behavioral therapy, are designed to help with the thinking habits that keep loneliness going.

Changing how we see it

I think the biggest thing we can change is how we talk about loneliness. Many people are embarrassed by it, so they hide it. But hiding it just keeps them further from the people they need. If we treated it like any other normal feeling, more people might say "hey, I've been feeling kind of lonely lately," and that alone could start a real conversation.

It's also not only a personal problem. Some neighborhoods have no places for people to meet. Some schools and workplaces don't make it easy to make friends. Fixing loneliness means changing those things too, not just telling individual people to try harder.

So the next time you feel that empty, disconnected feeling, try not to see it as proof that something is wrong with you. It's just a signal. It's telling you that you need people, and that's a very human thing to need.

Looking back at that group chat, I wish I had known this. I thought the feeling meant nobody cared, but it was really just telling me I wanted a closer connection. Maybe I should have just messaged one person. That's what I'd try now: listen to the feeling, and reach out.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Gaurang Agrawal is an 11th grader who is interested in psychology and mental health.

COGNITION CHRONICLES · NO. 05

The Role of Memory in Everyday Life

Why remembering is about far more than exams.

WRITTEN BY AADIT PUNAMIYA

Memory is one of the most important psychological processes in our daily lives. Almost everything we do is connected to memory in some way. Remembering a friend's name, recalling something we studied for an examination, knowing how to ride a bicycle, or thinking about an old school trip are all examples of memory. Without memory, learning from our experiences would be extremely difficult.

In Psychology, memory is generally understood through three basic processes: encoding, storage, and retrieval. Encoding means taking in information and changing it into a form that can be stored. Storage means keeping that information over a period of time. Retrieval is the process of bringing stored information back when we need it.

THREE BASIC PROCESSES

1. **Encoding**
   Taking in information and changing it into a form that can be stored.
2. **Storage**
   Keeping that information over a period of time.
3. **Retrieval**
   Bringing stored information back when we need it.

Memory can also be divided into different types. Sensory memory holds information received through our senses for a very short time. Short-term memory keeps a limited amount of information for a short period. When information is processed and stored for a longer time, it becomes part of long-term memory.

Long-term memory includes different kinds of information. Episodic memory is related to our personal experiences, such as remembering our first day at a new school. Semantic memory stores general knowledge, such as the meaning of words or facts we learn in class. Procedural memory is connected with skills and knowing how to do things, such as cycling or playing a sport.

TYPES OF MEMORY

1. **Sensory memory**
   Holds information from our senses for a very short time.
2. **Short-term memory**
   Keeps a limited amount of information for a short period.
3. **Long-term memory**
   Information that is processed and stored for a longer time.

   Episodic · personal experiences • Semantic · general knowledge • Procedural · skills and know-how

Attention has a major effect on memory. If we are not paying attention when something is being taught, it becomes much harder to remember it later. This is something students experience quite often. When we study while constantly checking our phones or thinking about other things, we may spend a lot of time studying but remember very little.

There are several simple ways to improve memory. Regular revision, meaningful organisation of information, making associations, practising what we have learned, and using mnemonics can all be useful. Understanding a topic properly is often more effective than simply trying to memorise every line of a textbook.

Forgetting is also a normal part of memory. Sometimes we forget because we have not practised the information, because other information interferes with it, or because we cannot retrieve it at that particular moment. Forgetting does not automatically mean that a person has a poor memory.

> *Forgetting does not automatically mean that a person has a poor memory.*

Memory also plays a role in our identity. Our memories of people, places, experiences, successes, and mistakes help connect our past with our present. They influence how we understand ourselves and how we respond to new situations.

Therefore, memory is much more than remembering answers for examinations. It helps us learn, communicate, recognise people, perform skills, and understand our own lives. A better understanding of memory can also help students develop more effective study habits and become better learners.

COGNITION CHRONICLES · NO. 06

Intelligence and Individual Differences

Why being "smart" looks different for everyone.

WRITTEN BY AGRIM PRATAP YADAV

Intelligence is one of the interesting topics in Psychology because it helps us understand why people may solve problems, learn things, and deal with situations in different ways. In simple terms, intelligence can be understood as the ability to learn from experience, understand information, solve problems, and adjust to new situations. However, psychologists have different ideas about exactly what intelligence includes.

One of the early theories was given by Charles Spearman. He suggested that a general mental ability, called general intelligence or 'g', influences performance on different intellectual tasks. According to this idea, a person who performs well in one kind of mental task may also perform well in other tasks because of this general ability.

Later psychologists suggested broader views of intelligence. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences proposed that intelligence is not just one single ability. He described different forms, such as linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal abilities. This idea helps us understand why someone may be very good at music or understanding people even if they are not equally strong in every academic subject.

Robert Sternberg also proposed a broader theory of intelligence. His triarchic theory included analytical, creative, and practical aspects of intelligence. This means that being intelligent can involve solving academic problems, dealing with new situations creatively, and using knowledge effectively in everyday life.

Psychologists use intelligence tests to measure certain mental abilities. These tests are usually designed in a standardised way so that performance can be compared meaningfully. The concept of Intelligence Quotient, or IQ, is also associated with intelligence testing. However, an intelligence test cannot measure every quality that makes a person capable or successful. Motivation, creativity, personality, emotional factors, education, and opportunities can also make a difference.

THREE BIG IDEAS

1. **'g' · Charles Spearman**
   A general mental ability that influences performance on different intellectual tasks.
2. **Multiple intelligences · Howard Gardner**
   Intelligence is not just one single ability.
   Linguistic • Logical-mathematical • Spatial • Musical • Bodily-kinaesthetic • Interpersonal • Intrapersonal
3. **Triarchic theory · Robert Sternberg**
   Three aspects of intelligence.
   Analytical • Creative • Practical

People naturally show individual differences. Two students in the same class may understand the same topic at different speeds or have completely different strengths. One may be very good at mathematics, another may communicate ideas extremely well, while another may be talented in art, music, sports, or working with people.

Both heredity and environment can influence intellectual development. Family environment, education, nutrition, social experiences, and opportunities for learning can all play a role. This is why it would be unfair to decide someone's entire potential from one test or one examination.

Understanding individual differences is especially important in education. Instead of assuming that every student learns in exactly the same way, teachers can recognise different strengths and provide different opportunities to learn.

> *...it would be unfair to decide someone's entire potential from one test or one examination.*

Intelligence, therefore, is a complex concept. Studying it does not mean deciding who is "smart" and who is not. Rather, Psychology helps us understand the different abilities people have and why individuals can show their strengths in different areas.

COGNITION CHRONICLES · NO. 07

Stress and Coping with Stress

What pressure does to us, and how we can cope.

WRITTEN BY AGRIM PRATAP YADAV

Stress is something that almost everyone experiences at some point in life. For students, it may come from examinations, homework, deadlines, expectations, friendships, family situations, or worries about the future. Psychology studies stress because it can affect our thoughts, emotions, behaviour, and even our physical functioning.

A stressor is a situation or event that creates a demand on a person. The way a person reacts to that situation is part of the stress response. It is important to remember that the same situation may not create the same amount of stress for everyone. For example, one student may feel very nervous before an examination, while another student may feel reasonably confident. Our interpretation of a situation can make a difference.

Richard Lazarus explained stress through the idea of cognitive appraisal. According to this approach, people first evaluate a situation and then consider whether they have the resources to deal with it. If someone feels that a situation is threatening and that they cannot handle it, the person may experience greater stress.

LAZARUS: COGNITIVE APPRAISAL

1. **A stressor**
   A situation or event that creates a demand on a person.
2. **First appraisal**
   People evaluate the situation: is it threatening?
3. **Second appraisal**
   Then they consider whether they have the resources to deal with it.
4. **The stress response**
   Threatening and "I can't handle it" means greater stress.

Stress can affect people in different ways. Someone may feel worried, irritated, tired, distracted, or unable to concentrate. Sleep and daily routines may also be affected when a person is under pressure for a long time. These reactions are not necessarily the same for everyone.

People use different coping strategies to deal with stress. One approach is problem-focused coping, where a person tries to deal directly with the source of the problem. For example, if a student is stressed about a large syllabus, making a realistic study timetable and dividing the work into smaller parts can make the situation easier to manage.

Another approach is emotion-focused coping. Here, the person tries to manage the emotional reaction to the stressful situation. Talking to someone trustworthy, taking a break, practising relaxation techniques, or doing an enjoyable activity may help a person feel calmer.

WAYS OF COPING

1. **Problem-focused coping**
   Deal directly with the source of the problem.
   A realistic study timetable • Smaller parts
2. **Emotion-focused coping**
   Manage the emotional reaction to the situation.
   Talk to someone trustworthy • Take a break • Relaxation • An enjoyable activity
3. **Healthy habits**
   Support coping every day.
   Enough sleep • Stay active • Eat regularly • Manage time • Take breaks • Supportive relationships

Healthy habits can also support coping. Getting enough sleep, staying physically active, eating regularly, managing time, taking breaks, and maintaining supportive relationships can all contribute to better psychological well-being. When stress becomes difficult to manage or starts seriously affecting everyday life, speaking to a trusted adult, school counsellor, or mental-health professional can be useful.

Stress is not always completely negative. A reasonable amount of pressure can sometimes motivate us to prepare for an examination or complete an important task. The main issue is when stress becomes overwhelming or continues for too long.

> *For students, learning how to manage pressure is an important life skill, not just something useful during examinations.*

Understanding stress helps us recognise our own reactions and develop healthier ways of dealing with challenges. For students, learning how to manage pressure is an important life skill, not just something useful during examinations. With appropriate coping strategies and support, difficult situations can often become more manageable.

COGNITION CHRONICLES · NO. 08

Are We Living in a Simulation?

But Not in the Way You Think.

WRITTEN BY TANISHQ BAID

I am Tanishq Baid, a Class XI student at The Scindia School, and I sometimes describe myself as an existential polymath. It sounds like a complicated phrase, but to me, it simply means being curious about a lot of different things and constantly wondering how they connect. I find myself thinking about people, ambition, creativity, society, success and, occasionally, questions that probably have no straightforward answer.

One of those questions is: Are we living in a simulation?

Now, I am not talking about the science-fiction version where a computer somewhere controls every movement we make. I mean something much closer to our everyday lives. A kind of simulation created not by machines, but by people, choices and interactions.

Think about a normal morning.

You wake up, get ready, go to school, meet your friends, attend classes, talk to teachers, maybe argue with someone, laugh at something completely stupid, and eventually go back to your room. It sounds ordinary. But somewhere within all of that, hundreds of tiny things happen that can change the course of your day.

Someone says something that makes you feel better.

Someone else says something that stays in your head for hours.

A teacher's criticism makes you work harder.

A conversation with a friend changes your opinion about something.

Even a stranger being kind to you can make you want to be kinder to someone else.

Most of these moments are so small that we barely notice them. Yet they influence us.

And that is what makes human life so strange.

We are constantly affecting one another without even realising it.

Every person we meet carries their own experiences, insecurities, ambitions and ideas about what life is supposed to be. We often see only a tiny part of someone's story. The confident person in your class might be struggling with something you know nothing about. Someone who seems completely ordinary might be working towards a dream you cannot even imagine. Someone you barely notice might remember a small thing you said to them for years.

We are all living inside our own version of reality.

And somehow, all these realities overlap.

That is where I think the simulation analogy becomes interesting.

Imagine life as a massive game. There is no single player. There are billions.

And unlike a normal game, nobody receives the same character, the same abilities or the same starting point.

Some people begin with advantages. Some have to work much harder for the same opportunities. Some discover what they are good at very early. Others spend years trying to figure themselves out. Some know exactly what they want, while others are still trying to decide what they even want from life.

Yet, despite all these differences, everyone is playing.

And more importantly, we are all trying to beat the game of life in our own way.

That, to me, is probably the most interesting part.

There is no universal definition of winning.

For one person, winning might mean becoming extremely wealthy. For another, it might mean having a family they love. Someone might want fame, someone else might want knowledge, and someone else might simply want a quiet and peaceful life.

Even in school, we see this.

One student wants the highest marks. Another wants to become a great athlete. Someone wants to perform on stage. Someone wants to build a business. Someone just wants to find a group of people they genuinely feel comfortable around.

None of these goals are necessarily more important than the others.

We just have different ideas of what “winning” means.

And that is why comparing our lives to everyone else’s can become so exhausting. We look at somebody else’s progress and assume they are ahead of us, without knowing what game they are actually playing.

We see someone’s achievements but not their struggles.
We see someone’s confidence but not their doubts.
We see where someone is today, but not where they started.

The truth is that we are all working with different circumstances.

There is also something else about this game: we are not just players. We are also part of everyone else’s game.

You might think of someone as just a classmate, while to them you might be the person who encouraged them before an important competition.

You might think of a teacher as simply someone who gives you marks, while one sentence from that teacher might completely change how you see yourself.

A friend you met years ago might influence a decision you make tomorrow, which could eventually change the direction of your life.

The strange thing is that we almost never get to see the full impact of our actions.

A conversation can change someone's thinking. Their changed thinking can influence a decision. That decision can affect another person. That person can then make another decision.

And suddenly, something that started with a five-minute conversation has travelled much further than we will ever know.

In that sense, every person is both a player and a variable in somebody else's life.

Of course, we do not control everything.

We cannot choose every situation we are placed in.

We cannot control what other people think of us.

We cannot predict every failure, rejection or unexpected turn that comes our way.

But we can choose what we do with them.

Maybe that is where the real game lies.

Failure does not always mean losing. Sometimes it simply means that a particular strategy did not work. Rejection can hurt, but it can also force us to rethink what we actually want. A mistake can become an experience, an experience can become knowledge, and that knowledge can change the way we approach the next challenge.

Maybe growing up is simply learning how to play a game whose rules nobody ever properly explains.

We watch other people.

We experiment.

We make mistakes.

We adjust.

We try again.

And slowly, we begin to understand ourselves.

Perhaps there is no hidden programmer deciding exactly where each of us will end up. Perhaps there is no predetermined script.

Maybe there are simply billions of people making billions of decisions every day, influencing each other in ways they will never completely understand.

And honestly, I think that makes life more interesting.

Because if everything were already decided, what would be the point of trying?

We are not characters waiting for someone else to make every decision for us. We have the ability to make choices, change direction, learn from our mistakes and create our own definitions of success.

Every day, we wake up and enter another level. We meet familiar people. We encounter unexpected problems. We discover new opportunities. We make decisions. Some work out. Some don't.

And then we wake up and do it all again.

Maybe that is the closest thing we have to a simulation.

Not one controlled by machines, but one constantly being shaped by people.

And perhaps the goal was never to figure out how to escape it.

Perhaps the goal is simply to understand the game well enough to play it in a way that feels like our own.

Because at the end of the day, no two people are playing the same game.

> *We are all just trying to beat the game of life in our own way.*

Ψ

Write for the next issue.

Have a question about how the mind works? Notice something about school life that psychology could explain? Cognition Chronicles is written by students, for students. Talk to any member of the editorial team.

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