**Questions to Consider**

Chapter 4: Attention

* **How do we define attention?**

Attention can be difficult to define because it over­laps with many other cognitive processes. One pro­posed definition is the focus of our consciousness to the exclusion of other things.

* **What descriptions of attention have helped research­ers study attention?**

Attention has been described as a filter, a spotlight, a limited mental capacity, and as feature glue.

* **How do researchers study what someone is and is not paying attention to?**

There are multiple methods described in this chapter. One task involves a target search to determine the ease of this task and the amount of attention it requires. Another method involves two tasks with interference on these tasks measured as someone performs them together versus separately.

* **What environmental factors have been found to influ­ence our attention abilities?**

The current limits on mental resources influence our attention abilities. Arousal states can affect the capac­ity of our mental resources. The difficulty of a task and our interest in a task can also affect our attention abilities.

* **How does our automatic processing affect what we pay attention to?**

Automatic processing can interfere with an atten­tional task, as it does in the Stroop task. However, according to Treisman’s model and Schneider and Shiffrin’s model, automatic processing can also aid in cognitive tasks by either preparing our atten­tion or requiring less attention as tasks become more automatic.