**Questions to Consider**

Chapter 7: Memory Errors

* **Does memory work like a video camera, fully recod­ing each experience? Why not?**

Research has shown that memory is reconstructive, putting the pieces of our memories back together when we retrieve them. The memory errors seen in individuals support this idea, rather than a “video camera” mechanism of memory.

* **In what ways does memory fail in normal individuals?**

Schacter (2002) described seven “sins” of memory as normal memory failures: transience (normal loss of information over time), absentmindedness (forget­ting due to lack of attention), blocking (forgetting due to interference from other information), source misattribution (memory errors due to misattribu­tion of the source of information), suggestibility (memory errors due to suggestions from outside sources), bias (memory errors due to our own expe­riences after the information was originally encoded), and persistence (unwanted memories of information that persist).

* **What factors contribute to memory inaccuracies?**

In general, normal memory processes can contribute to memory errors. For example, use of schemata, scripts, and our previous knowledge of events and concepts to reconstruct memories can result in errors. In cases of eyewitness memory, exposure to misleading information or inaccurate suggestions can result in memory errors.

* **How have researchers studied memory errors?**

The DRM procedure has been used to study how memory errors occur and what influences their cre­ation. In this procedure, themed lists are presented and subjects typically show false memories for the themes that are not presented. Researchers have also studied memory for events by presenting subjects with a video or slides of an event, questioning them about the event or exposing them to other accounts of the event, and then testing their memory for the event they saw. These studies have helped us under­stand the factors that influence witness memory accuracy.

* **How can different types of brain damage or deteriora­tion affect memory accuracy?**

Amnesia can occur due to brain injury or disease. It can happen suddenly, caused by an accident or ill­ness, or progressively, as in Alzheimer’s disease. Both retrograde amnesia (loss of memory for events before the injury) or anterograde amnesia (loss of memory for events after the injury) can occur.