

Perceiving and Understanding

Chapter Three

Focus Questions

- What processes are involved in perceiving?
- What factors influence our perceptions?
- How does the self-serving bias affect the accuracy of our perceptions?

Focus Questions

- Does mind reading help or hinder communication?
- How can we use language to enhance skill in perceiving?

The Perception Process

- Selection
 - What you define as important in a moment
 - External phenomena
 - Things that stand out
 - Change

The Perception Process

- Organization
 - We organize our perceptions
- Constructivism
 - Theory of how we organize & interpret our experiences by applying cognitive schemata

Cognitive Schemata

- Prototypes
- Personal Constructs
- Stereotypes
- Scripts

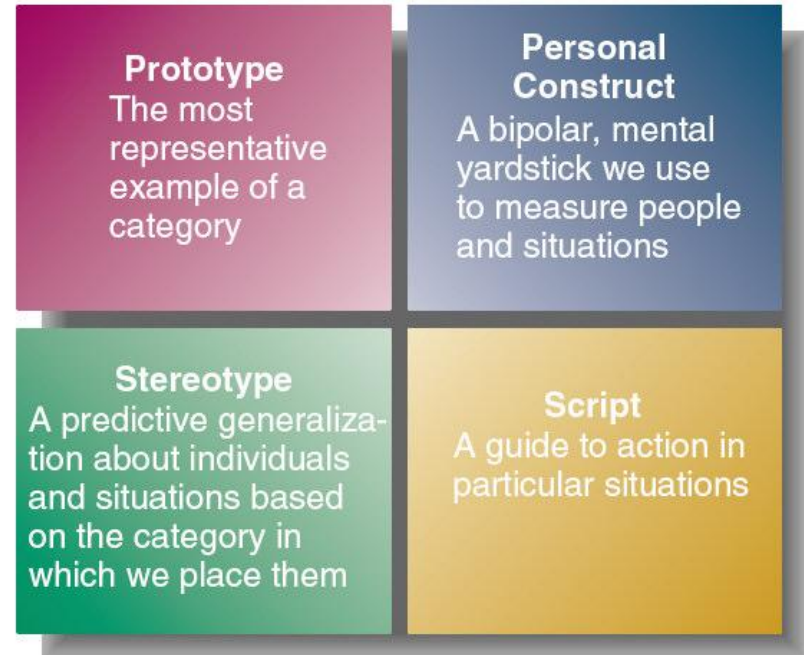


Figure 3.2 COGNITIVE SCHEMATA

Interpretation

- The subjective process of creating explanations
 - Observation
 - Experience
- All ages are interested in this process

Attributions

- The act of explaining why:
 - Something happens
 - A person acts a particular way

Dimension

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Locus | Internal | External |
| 2. Stability | Stable | Unstable |
| 3. Specificity | Specific | Global |
| 4. Responsibility | Within personal control | Beyond personal control |

Figure 3.3 THE DIMENSIONS OF ATTRIBUTION

The Self-Serving Bias

- We tend to construct attributions that serve our personal interests
- How we perceive ourselves determines how we react to situations

Influences on Perception

- Physiological factors
- Expectations
 - Expectancy Violation Theory

Cognitive Abilities

- Cognitive complexity
- Person-centeredness
 - Empathy
- Social roles

Membership in Cultures & Social Communities

- Culture consists of:
 - beliefs
 - values
 - understandings
 - practices
 - ways of interpreting experience

Guidelines for Improving Skill in Perceiving

- Avoid mind reading
- Check perceptions with others
- Distinguish facts from inferences & judgments
- Monitor the self-serving bias

Summary

- The Perception Process
- Cognitive Schemata
- Interpretation
- Attributions
- The Self-Serving Bias
- Influences on Perception
- Cognitive Abilities
- Membership in Cultures & Social Communities
- Improving Skill in Perceiving