Perception

- **Perception**: The process of gathering sensory information and assigning meaning to it.
- **Interpersonal Perception**: The process of gathering sensory information about people and assigning meaning to their actions.
- **Active vs. Passive** Perception

Where does perception occur?

- **S**ource
- **M**essage
- **C**hannel
- **R**eceiver

Three basic stages

- Selection
- **Organization**
- **Interpretation**
Selecting amongst all those stimuli

- Selection is necessary (Selective perception)
- Selective attention – focusing on specific stimuli (active)
- Selective exposure – selecting what we are exposed to (active); reinforcement
- Selective recall – remembering or forgetting

What influences selection?

- Intensity
- Repetition Repetition Repetition
- Contrast or Change
- Motives/Interest/Needs
- Limitation of the senses
- Expectations

Selection: Expectations

Finished Files are the Result of Years of Scientific Study Combined with the Experience of Many Years
Organization
Imposing the Familiar on the Unfamiliar
- Figure/Ground
- Categorizing/Patterns
  - Perceptual schema
- Punctuation
- Proximity
- Closure (Good form)

Organization:
Figure/Ground

Organization:
Categorizing/Patterns
Organization: Categorization
Perceptual Schema

- Physical constructs: appearance
- Role constructs: social positions
- Interaction constructs: social behaviors
- Psychological constructs: psychological traits
- Membership constructs: groups to which people belong

Organization: Punctuation (Proximity)

Organization: Closure/Good Form
Organization: Closure/Good Form

It's hard work digging clay
Save it for a rainy day.

Interpretation

- The process of explaining what has been selected and organized in a way that makes sense

Factors Affecting Interpretation

- Relational satisfaction
- Personal moods
- Past experience
- Assumptions about human behavior
- Expectations
- Knowledge
Putting it all together as we perceive others

Perception creates impressions (impression formation theory)
- Can be based upon the order we receive information (primacy & recency effects)
- We generalize based upon perceptions (implicit personality theory)
- We interpret based upon perceptions
  - Motives (attribution theory)
  - Comparison with self (standpoint theory)

Impression Formation Theory

How you develop perceptions about people; how you maintain & use those perceptions to interpret their behavior.
- **Primacy Effect** - The first impression we receive about a person is the most decisive in forming our impression
- **Recency Effect** - The last impression we receive about a person is also decisive in forming our impression

Primacy Effect: Example

People who know him consider him to be a rather **WARM** person: intelligent, skillful, industrious, determined, practical and cautious.

People who know him consider him to be a rather **COLD** person: intelligent, skillful, industrious, determined, practical and cautious.
Implicit Personality Theory

- Your own set of beliefs and hypotheses about what people are like
  - **Halo effect** – attributing a variety of positive qualities to those you like
  - **Horn Effect** – attributing a variety of negative qualities to those you dislike
  - **Construct** – A bipolar quality you associate with people as you conceptualize them.

Attribution Theory

- Attribution Theory – Develop in the most credible explanation for the behavior of others
  - Causal Attribution Theory – What **caused** the person’s actions?
    - Circumstance
    - Stimuli
    - Person himself/herself

Standpoint Theory

- Who **you** are influences your perception of others
Factors Influencing the OVERALL Perceptual Process

- Physiological influences
- Cultural influences
- Social roles
- Self Concept

Perceptions....

...are inaccurate and may differ among people.

Fundamental Perception Errors

- Insufficient information
- Expectations/Stereotyping
- Overgeneralizing
- Oversimplifying
- Imposing consistency
- Focusing on the negative
- Filtering via our own characteristics
- Attribution error
- Self-serving bias
Improving perception skills

- Avoid rushing to judgments
- Become aware of others’ perceptions of YOU
- Increase your awareness
- Become “other-oriented”
- Validate your perceptions

Validating Perception Accuracy

- **Indirect Perception Checking** – seeking additional information through passive perception
  - **Multisensory Cross Check** – use more than one sense to interpret
  - **Consensus** – Compare your perceptions with those of other people (Look - Ask - Compare)
- **Direct Perception Checking** – Consult the person you are perceiving

Perception Check

- A description of the behavior you noticed
- At least two possible interpretations of the behavior
- A request for clarification about how to interpret the behavior