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 - M - C - R

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

Where does perception occur?

--- NOISE ---

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)

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**Organization:**

**Figure/Ground**

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**Organization:**

**Categorizing/Patterns**

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**Organization:**

**Punctuation (Proximity)**

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**Organization:**

**Closure/Good Form**

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**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:** 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