Unit 3: Chapters 5 and 6

Chapter 5: Sensation and Perception

- **Sensation** (detection)
  vs.
  Perception (interpretation)
- External stimulation:
  - **sensory adaptation**
  - **sensory thresholds** = minimum stimulation
    * *absolute threshold*
    * *difference threshold*

- **subliminal stimulation**
    * below threshold (subconscious)
        - some anesthetized patients subconsciously "absorb" information during surgery
    * subliminal ads are *not* persuasive
        - **expectancy effect**
        - **"backward masking"**

• Perception is affected by *attention*.
  - Gestalt perceptual principle of **selective attention**:
      * **figure-ground relations**
      * **"cocktail-party effect"**
  - advertisers often appeal to our needs & interests in order to attract attention

• Psychological principles used to gain attention:
  1. **contrasts**
      * color, shape, size, movement, and mood
      * fluorescent colors for highway signs
  2. **changes in intensity**
      * louder radio, TV, and movie promotions
      * ads with flashing lights and neon signs
  3. **repetition**
      * **mere-exposure effect**
      * but must avoid **habituation**

4. **novelty**

　　* clever, eye-catching TV commercials

5. **social insinuations**

　　* our interest peaks if everyone else appears
　　　interested in something

　　* TV ads with products endorsed by famous people

- Perceptions are unique.
  * modern art
  * crime scenes
- Factors affecting perception:
  1. **perceptual set**
     * learning history provides a frame of reference
     * scoring biases in gymnastic events
     * "urban legends" (<u>Bigfoot</u>, <u>Loch Ness</u>, <u>UFOs</u>)

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2. cultural factors

　　* **in-group bias & out-group homogeneity effect**:
　　　> perceiving media stereotypes *against* our own
　　　　group because we know it better

　　* **carpentered-world hypothesis** (Segall, 1960s):
　　　> "carpentered" vs. "non-carpentered" regions of
　　　　the world
　　　> **context effects**

3. motivations

   *perceptions of grades among college students with varying levels of motivation

4. emotions (e.g., "love is blind")

• Perceptions and personality assessment:

- **projective tests**

   * Rorschach inkblot test
   * Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

• **Perceptual illusions** (caused by nature, sense receptors, or cognitive factors):

- **Muller-Lyer illusion** = cognition

- **Hermann's grid** = receptor cells in retina

- **horizontal-vertical illusion** = cognition

- **Zollner illusion** = "crosshatched illusion" (cognition)

- **Ponzo illusion** = *perceptual constancy*

- **KANIZA triangle** = *closure* (visual cortex)
- **irradiation illusion** = size distortion
- **devil's tuning fork** = ambiguous depth cues
- **phi phenomenon** = apparent movement
- **autokinetic effect** = stationary light against total darkness (eye movements + *perceptual set*)
- **"op art"** of the 1960s and 1970s = pulsation (eye focus)

- Practical applications of illusions:
    - * magicians' acts
    - * implicated in many tragic accidents
    - * possible UFO explanation (**autokinetic effect**)
    - * flashing neon signs (**phi phenomenon**)
    - * <u>art</u>
    - * architecture

- * improving physical appearance:
    - > beauty experts (e.g., eye shadow)
    - > fashion designers
        - ~ **horizontal-vertical illusion**
        - ~ **irradiation illusion**

- *Parapsychology*
    - special challenges for paranormal researchers:
        - * <u>vagueness and generalities</u>
        - * *fallacy of positive instances* (laws of probability??)

Chapter 6: Social Psychology

Interpersonal Attraction

Factors involved in interpersonal attraction:

1. **proximity**
2. **mere-exposure effect**
3. **social-exchange theory**
4. **matching hypothesis**
5. **heterogamy**
6. **emotional distance**

Interpersonal Communication

- Openness to new or contrary ideas (e.g., resisting **belief perseverance**)
- **Active listening**:
  - "listening with a third ear"
  - interpret underlying feelings and meanings
  - **reflect** what is being said
  - demonstrates empathy
- Avoiding the "rumor mill":
  - **sharpening**
  - **leveling**
  - **assimilation**

- Using **open-ended questions** as opposed to **closed questions** (see <u>Q chart</u>)
- Speaking with due speed
- Watching for annoying mannerisms:
  - "Ya know what I mean ..."
  - shifting your weight from leg to leg
  - folding your arms
  - not standing upright

- **Psycholinguistics** (the study of written & spoken language by psychologists):
  - **denotation** = dictionary definition of a word
    - many words have more than one denotation
    - *context* is a key factor
  - **connotation** = emotional feelings & associations aroused by a word
    - important to work settings:
      - ❖ job titles
      - ❖ "corporation" vs. "company"
  - gender issues
  - used in advertisements

- **Nonverbal communication** sends a much stronger message than verbal expression.
  - In one interesting study, 7% of the emotional impact of communication was influenced by words; 38%, by **paralanguage** (*vocal tone* and *quality*); and 55%, by **body language** (*facial expressions* and *gestures*).
  - Body language can communicate feelings of *warmth* or *empathy*.
  - In contrast, body language can also communicate *dislike* or *disgust*.
  - *Clothing* transmits wearer's feelings and attitudes.

- *Baldness* in males unconsciously communicates intelligence, age, and status.
- *Beards* in males unconsciously communicate unfriendliness.
- **Personal space** (varies widely):
    * *across cultures*
    * *within intimate relationships*
    * Anthropologist **Edward Hall (1969) i**dentified 4 spatial zones for interpersonal relationships:

1. **intimate distance** (0-1.5 ft.): reserved for intimate relationships, close personal family, attending medical professionals, & certain contact sports
2. **personal distance** (1.5-4 ft.): reserved for personal conversations with friends, allowing for appropriate touching and handshaking
3. **social distance** (4-12 ft.): reserved for impersonal business contacts and casual conversations with co-workers and acquaintances
4. **public distance** (12 ft. +): reserved for contacts between actors, athletes, or politicians and the general public

▪ Communication based on seating arrangements:
   ~ circular formations = best for group discussion
   ~ for one-to-one communication (in order):
       1. sitting across the corner of a desk
       2. sitting directly across a desk
       3. sitting side by side

- **Assertiveness:**
  - different from aggression
  - techniques for improving assertiveness:
    - * not feeling guilty when you say "no"
    - * using "I" rather than "you" statements
    - * concentrating on behavior, instead of attacking personalities or others' character
    - * following your assertive message with a positive suggestion for change

Attribution Theory

- **Fundamental attribution error**
- **False consensus bias**
- **Illusion of control** (e.g., **gambler's fallacy**)
- **Self-serving** vs. **self-effacing (modesty) bias**

Attitude Formation and Change

- Attitude formation:
  - **cognitive dissonance theory**
  - **impression management**
  - **primacy effect**
  - linked to the **self-fulfilling prophecy**
  - generational differences (**cohort effect**) impact attitudes: 16-24 yrs. critical for lifelong views

The psychology of prejudice and helping behavior

- Prejudice:
  - **prejudice** *not* necessarily linked to **discrimination**
  - sources of prejudice include:
    - * fear of the unknown
    - * social categorization (**in-** vs. **out-groups**)
    - * conflict and perceived competition (**realistic conflict theory**)
    - * blaming others (**scapegoating**; **just-world hypothesis**)
    - * social learning (**modeling**)

- Helping:
  - **altruism**??
  - Helping behavior depends on:
    - * *number of observers* (**bystander effect**)
    - * *location*
    - * *appearance*
    - * *personal observations* (**pluralistic ignorance**)
    - * *weather*
    - * *state of mind* (**feel-good, do-good phenomenon**)
    - * *self-esteem*

Interacting with Others in Groups

- Group processes (**group dynamics**):
  1. **social facilitation**
  2. **social inhibition**
  3. **social loafing**
  4. **deindividuation**
  5. **social contagion** (*mass hysteria*)

Social Influence and Persuasion

- Seeking **compliance** falls under these 8 categories:
  1. **reciprocation**
     - * "I'll scratch your back if you'll scratch mine"
     - * perceived compromise (**door-in-the-face**)
     - * **that's-not-all**
  2. **scarcity principle**
  3. **low-ball technique**

4. **principle of social proof**

   factors affecting peer/group conformity include:
   - * *self-esteem*
   - * *size of the group*:
     - ~ rapid > as group size approaches 5
     - ~ more gradual > up to 15
     - ~ impact dwindles significantly after 15
   - * *presence of even one dissenter*
   - * *task difficulty*
   - * *public vs. secret choices*
   - * *cultural factors*

5. **authority** (blind obedience)
6. **liking**
7. **foot-in-the-door technique**
8. **negative psychology** (**reactance** & "reverse psychology")