


*Fundamentals of*  
**Organizational Behavior**

**3e**

**Chapter 3**  
 Learning, Perception,  
 and Attribution



PowerPoint Presentation by Charlie Cook  
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Andrew J. DuBrin

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**Learning Objectives**

*After reading and studying this chapter and doing the exercises, you should be able to:*

1. Explain the basics of modeling and shaping, cognitive learning, and e-learning.
2. Describe how learning styles influence workplace learning.
3. Describe key aspects of the perceptual process, along with common perceptual problems.
4. Describe how attribution theory contributes to an understanding of human behavior in the workplace.

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**Learning**

- A relatively permanent change in behavior based on practice or experience.
  - ⚡ Is beyond innate inborn patterns of behavior.
  - ⚡ Is necessary for satisfactory job performance.



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## Modeling and Shaping

- Modeling (or imitation)

- ⌘ Occurs when a skill is learned by observing another person performing that skill.
- ⌘ Requires careful observation followed shortly thereafter by use of the newly acquired skill.
- ⌘ Elicits new behaviors in motivated capable learners.



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## Modeling and Shaping (cont'd)

- Shaping

- ⌘ Learning through the positive reinforcement or rewarding of small steps that build to the final or desired behavior.



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## Cognitive Learning

- Cognitive learning theory

- ⌘ Learning is a complicated process in which reasoning and analytical skills are used in acquiring knowledge.

- Informal learning

- ⌘ Learning that is not determined or designed by the organization. It can be divided into four categories:
  - ⌘ Practical skills
  - ⌘ Intrapersonal skills
  - ⌘ Interpersonal skills
  - ⌘ Cultural awareness



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## E-Learning

- Aspects of e-learning

- ≍ Web-based computer training that is carefully structured, specific lessons plans for an individual student
- ≍ Learner motivation and participation are enhanced through reinforcement by managers.
- ≍ Success in completing online courses is dependent upon individual self-motivation and self-discipline.
  - ≍ Practice
  - ≍ Effort

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## Learning Styles

- Concepts of learning style

- ≍ People learn best in different ways.
  - ≍ Certain material is best mastered in certain ways (e.g., learning to swim by practicing in a pool).
- ≍ Some people learn best alone, others in groups (cooperative learning).
- ≍ Learning is a continuous process controlled and directed by an individual's internal needs and goals.

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## Learning Styles (cont'd)

- Four modes (stages) of learning styles:

- ≍ Concrete experience
- ≍ Reflective observation
- ≍ Abstract conceptualization
- ≍ Active experimentation



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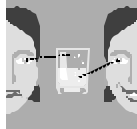
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## Perception

- Perception

- ⌘ Deals with the ways in which people interpret things and how they act on the basis of these perceptions.
- ⌘ Has important effects on job satisfaction and motivation which, in turn, lead to better job performance.



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## Perception (cont'd)

- Aspects of perception important to managers:

- ⌘ Perceptual distortions and problems
- ⌘ How people attribute causes to events



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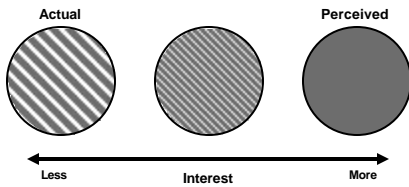
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## Perceptual Distortions and Problems

- Characteristics of the stimulus

- ⌘ Having a strong interest (i.e., emotions, needs, attitude, or motivation) in an issue tends to cause misperceptions of a stimulus.



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## Mental Processing Shortcuts

- **Denial**—refusing to admit that the information even exists.
- **Stereotyping**—reducing ego discomfort by evaluating individuals on the basis of the group to which we perceive that they should belong.
- **Halo Effect**—allowing one recognizable or unfavorable trait to color all that we know about a person.
- **Projection**—projecting personal faults onto others and not making an objective appraisal of the situation.
- **Selective Perception**—filtering out information with which we do not agree.

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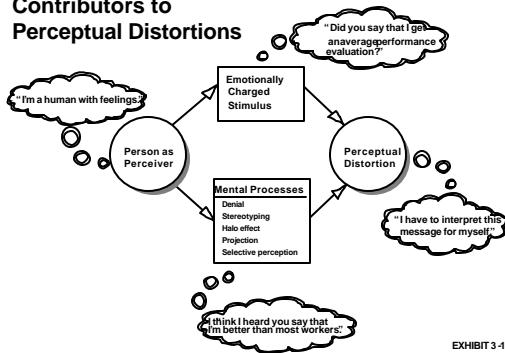
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## Contributors to Perceptual Distortions



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## Attribution Theory

- The process by which people ascribe causes to the behavior they perceive.
  - ⚡ **Fundamental attribution error:** the tendency to attribute behavior to internal causes when focusing on someone else's behavior.
  - ⚡ **Self-serving bias:** takes place when focusing on our own behavior causes us to attribute our achievements to good inner qualities and our failures to adverse factors within the environment.

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## Attribution Theory (cont'd)

• People ascribe causes of behavior based on information gathered on three dimensions:

- ⌘ **Consensus**—how *similar* is the person's behavior to the behavior of others on the same task.
- ⌘ **Distinctiveness**—how much does the person's level of performance on the task at hand *differ* from their performance on other tasks.
- ⌘ **Consistency**—how *stable* is the person's level of performance over time.

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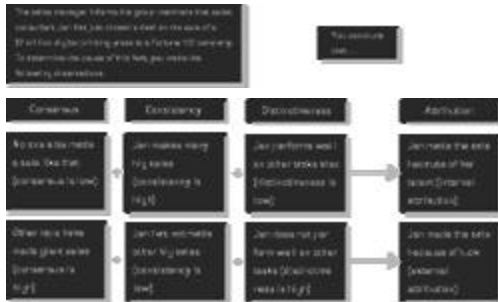
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## Kelley's Theory of Attributing Causes—an Example



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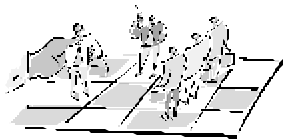
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## Locus of Control

- **Internal locus of control**
  - ⌘ Persons who perceive themselves to be in control of their lives; creating their own opportunities.
- **External locus of control**
  - ⌘ Persons who believe that their lives are controlled by circumstances and attribute their success or failure to luck.



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