

Chapter 3

Social Cognition

I. Social Cognition

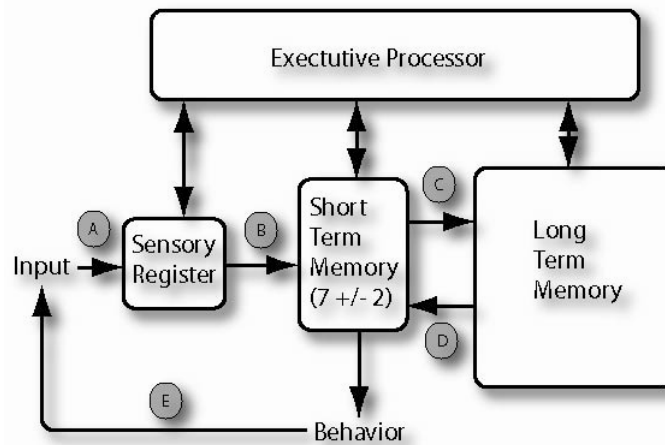
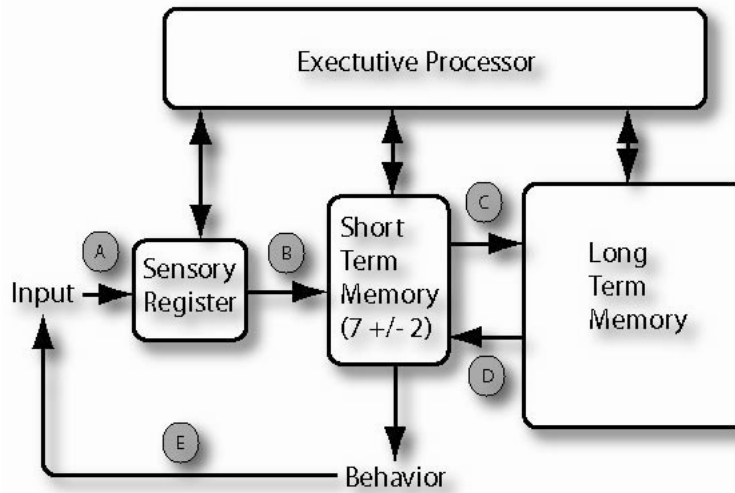
A. Application of Cognitive Psychological Perspective to Social Psychological Phenomenon.

B. The Information Processing Metaphor

1. Previous Metaphors in Social Psychology

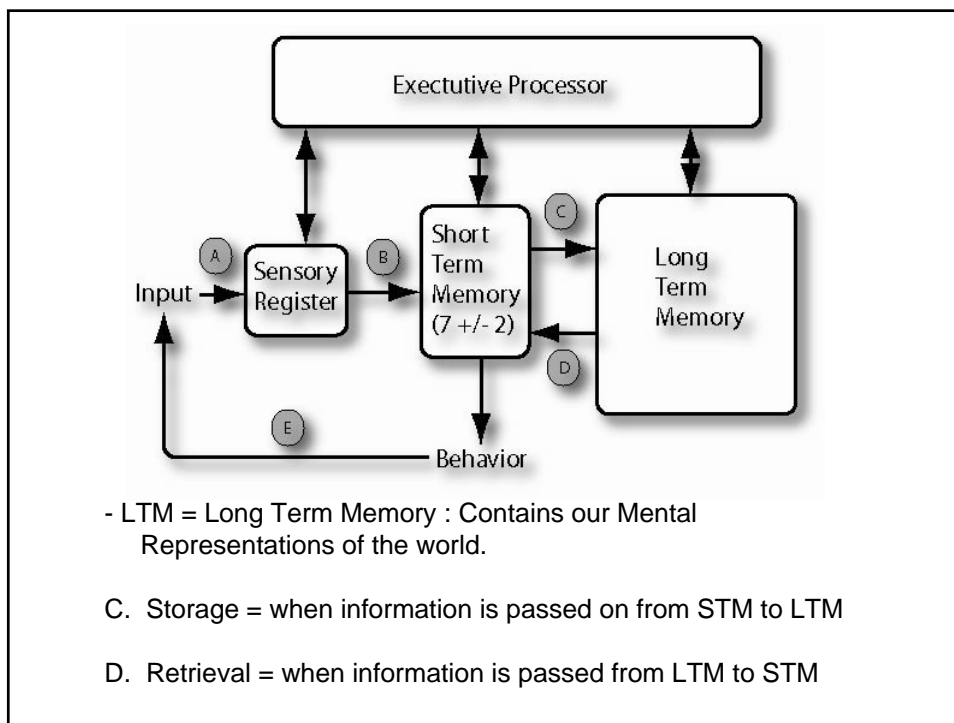
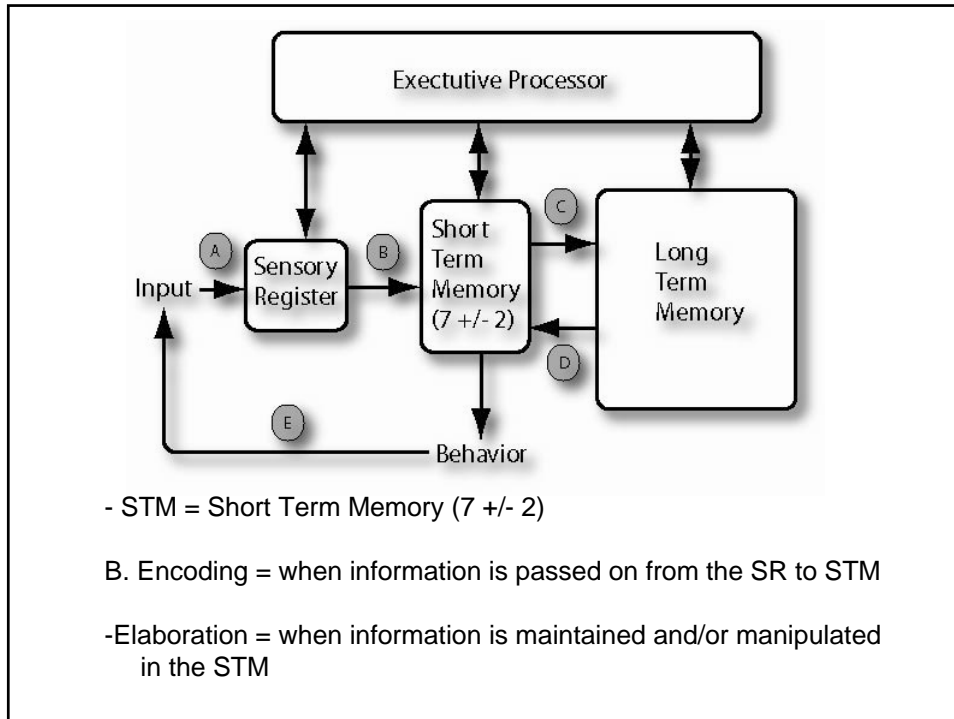
- People as Consistency Seekers (Heider, Festinger)
- People as Naive Scientists (Kelly, Jones & Davis)

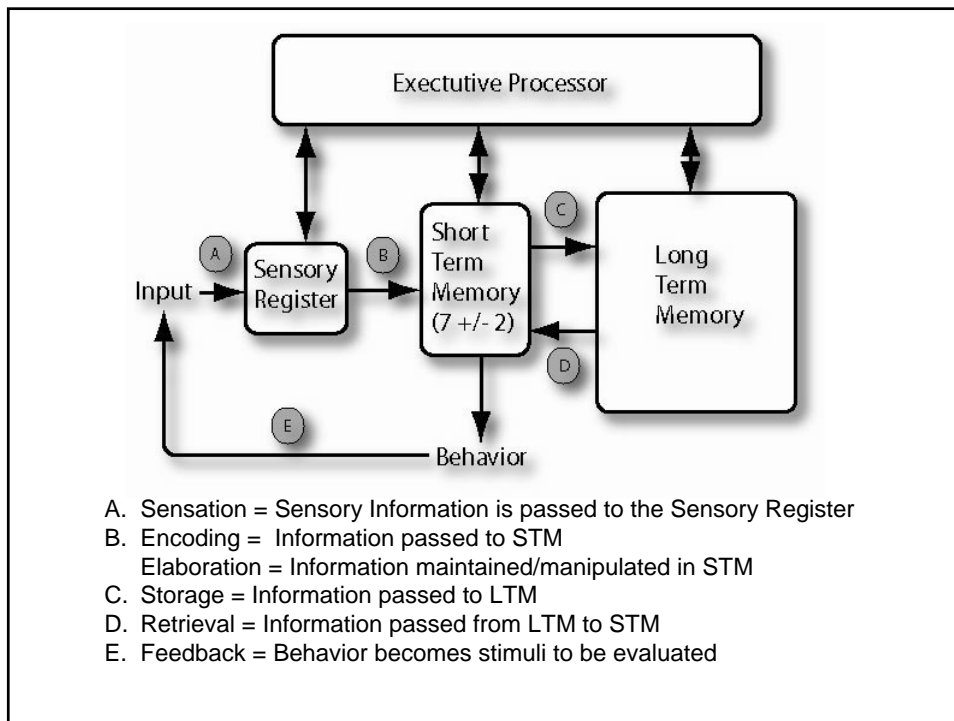
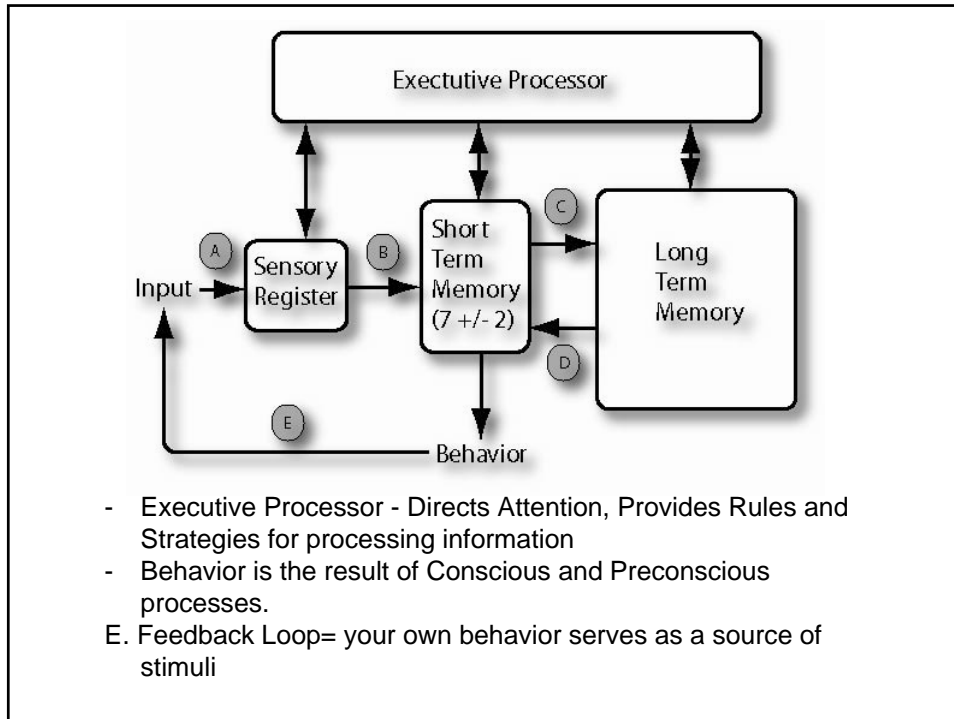
2. People as Information Processors (computers) - The Flow chart



Sensory Register = Filters out irrelevant sensory information. Is directed by Central Processor which directs attention.

A. Sensation = sensory cells react to environmental / proprioceptive stimuli and transmit information to the brain.





3. Automatic vs. Controlled Processing

- Controlled Processing = Effortful, Intentional, Serial, Saps Cognitive Resources.
 - Cognitive Load will interfere with Controlled Processes
- Automatic Processing = Effortless, May be Unintentional, Parallel, Does Not Sap Cognitive Resources.
 - Over-learned activities will become automatic
 - Cognitive Load will increase the reliance on Automatic Processes

Group 1

The _____ Story

Group 2
The Photo Copy Story

Group 3
The Laundry Story

Quiz:

Write down each step of the procedure that you remember.

1. How many Correct Steps remembered?

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

2. How many Incorrect Steps Included?

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

Quiz-

1. Distinguish Automatic from Controlled Processing.

2. What phone number were you asked to remember on Wed?

831-5521

If I get drunk on my 21st birthday, I can't drive 55.

C. Schemas

1) Schema (plural Schemata vs Schemas)

= a highly organized abstract mental representation of a particular event, group, person, or topic.

- Abstract = it is a generalization based on specific pieces of information

e.g. Italian Restaurant Scrip
Group Stereotypes
Bird Prototype

3) Function of Schemas

a. Generate Expectancies

- help resolve ambiguity (filling in the gaps)

b. Guide Attention and Encoding (a result of expectancies)

- look for information that we expect to find (Schema consistent information).
- often ignore or don't notice schema incongruent or irrelevant info.
- Extremely schema incongruent information may capture our attention.

Group 1

**Ocean Moon Tree
Building Chair Salt
Sand Fire**

Group 2

**Smile Face Lips
Cheerful Teeth Party
Eyes Happy**

3) Function of Schemas

c. Influence Elaboration & Storage

- Information that is attended to may be interpreted and stored with respect to one's schema.

d. Influence Retrieval

- Schemas guide retrieval of specific information
 - Laundry Detergent?
 - Priming – Temporary Increase in Accessibility
- Schemas can cause us to retrieve information that was never experienced
- Retrieval of Congruent vs. Incongruent Information
 - Default (bias) is to retrieve schema congruent information
 - Depends on whether we are asked to make use of the incongruent information.

3) Automatic Schemata

a)- Frequently activated schema may become chronically accessible (Higgins).

- they are active even when we are not aware of them
- they are more likely to be activated than other schemas.
- they may be active even when they are not appropriate (as is the case with negative stereotyping).

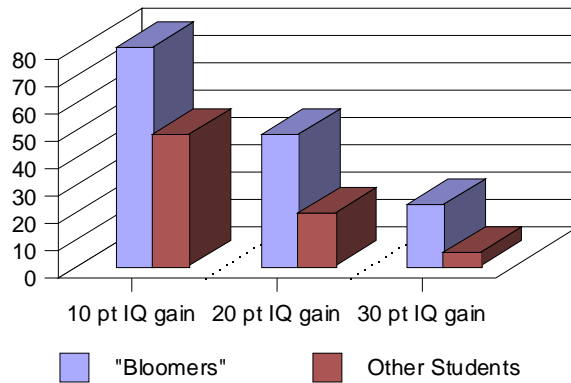
- b) - Perseverance Effect
 - Well Learned Schemata are resistant to change.
- b1-Summative Nature = large bodies of info dilute the influence of a single piece of new info.
- b2-Subtyping - Extremely Schema incongruent information may be categorized into its own schema rather than resulting in change of the existing schema.
 - College professor Schema
 - intelligent, old, boring, serious, plain looking
 - Schema Incongruent Professor
 - intelligent, young, energetic, funny, extremely attractive.
 - Results in a Young College Professor Subtype.

- c)- Self-Fulfilling Prophecy (Merton, 1948)
 - Self-Confirming/fulfilling Nature of Schemas.
 - Behavioral Confirmation of Stereotypes (Snyder)
 - Confirmatory Hypothesis Testing (Text)
- When we hold a set of expectations about other people's behavior, then we may behave in ways that make others act out our expectations.

c1) Rosenthal & Jacobson (1968) -

- Gave Teachers False Feedback regarding student's "IQ". Randomly selected "Bloomers" from each class.
- 8 months later, "Bloomers" showed greater increase in IQ.

Rosenthal & Jacobson (1968)
Y axis represents Percent of Students



- Followup studies (Jussim 1989; Meichenbaum et al. 1969) identified differences in teachers behavior toward "Bloomers"

- 1) Warmer Socioemotional Climate
- 2) Gave more feedback to Bloomers
- 3) Challenged Bloomers More
- 4) Gave Bloomers Greater Opportunity to Respond

c2) - Snyder, Tanke, & Bersheid (1977)

- males given 1 of 2 photos ($\frac{1}{2}$ attractive, $\frac{1}{2}$ unattractive) randomly distributed.
- had telephone conversation with a female (males believe she is the one in the photo).
- Prior to call
 - male given attractive photo expected to meet socially poised, humorous, and social adept people
 - male given unattractive photo expected to meet unsociable, awkward, serious, and socially inept people.

- During the call
 - attractive photo = males behaved with warmth, friendliness, humor, and animation
 - unattractive photo = males were cold, uninteresting, and reserved.
- Female's Behavior
 - attractive photo = friendly, likeable, and sociable.
 - unattractive photo = cool, aloof, and distant.
- Anderson and Bem did this with females getting the photo of the males = Same Results

D. The Cognitive Miser Metaphor.

- Though we may be Information Processors, the processing we do is incomplete and potentially error prone.
- Thought takes effort/Cognitive Resources. We are stingy when it comes to expending effortful cognition.

1) Stereotyping

- Simplifies the process of thinking about the social world.
 - We lump individual's information into groups.
 - When we need information about an individual (especially new people) we access the information about the group.
 - If we have gaps in our information about a person, we can fill in the gaps with the group information (the stereotype).
- For the most part, stereotyping is helpful, but it can lead to mistakes. (Robert L. Heilbroner)
- Positive Aspects
 - Stereotypes clarify the "one great, blooming, buzzing confusion" William James
 - Make perception of an ambiguous world manageable.
 - We cover up the confusion with recognizable cutouts
 - Walter Lippman "For the most part we do not first see, and then define; we define first, and then see."

- Negative Aspects

- Stereotypes may be based on inaccurate information

-e.g. racial/ethnic stereotypes

– “The danger of stereotypes lies not in their existence, but in the fact that they become for all people some of the time, and for some people all of the time, *substitutes for observation.*” (Italics in the original)

– When stereotypes are believed to be true, they are not revised even in the face of contradictory evidence. “The exception proves the rule.”

– we can become slaves to the stereotypes we hold for our own group and incapable of individual action.

a) Representativeness

- Classification judgements are often made based on how similar a target is to the category. (Does it look like an X).

- Ignoring Base Rate Probabilities : people base judgement on similarity rather than on the actual frequency with which events happen in the world (Base Rate).

b) Availability

- We base our estimates of frequency or likelihood on the ease with which we can generate examples, or on the number of example we can generate.

The effects of Priming:

- Priming Increases Availability (accessability) of information

c) Anchoring & Adjustment

- When making numerical estimates, we tend to be influenced by primed values (anchors) and then insufficiently adjust our estimates in the desired direction.

- d) Simulation (Counter Factual Reasoning)
 - The strength of our reactions to actual events (positive or negative) is shaped by the ease with which we can mentally undo an event. Easier = Stronger

Downward Counter-factuals

- We won the football game by 1 point vs. We won by 50 pts.

Upward Counter-factuals

- We lost the football game by 1 point vs. We lost by 50 pts.

E. The Motivated Tactician

- Research has shown that we are not always cognitive misers
- Sometimes we are lazy, Sometimes we are careful. It often depends on how we feel and what our current goals are.
 - E.g. the ELM model of persuasion. If it matters we will be careful processors. If it does not matter, we will do a less than thorough job.
- Affect (emotion) can impact our strategies.
 - Park & Banaji = Positive mood leads to more stereotyping
- Also, we may choose cognitive strategies depending on how we want to feel.