

### 3) Automatic Schemata

a)- Frequently activated schema may become chronically accessible (Higgins).  
- e.g. self schema, other schema, relational schemas,  
world view schemas

b)- Primed schema, activated by situational cues may become temporarily accessible

c) - Characteristics of Automatic Schemas

- 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).

d) Stereotyping

- Simplifies the process of thinking about the social world.
- Instead of keeping information about individuals we lump individuals into groups. When we need information about an individual (especially new people) we access the information about the group. Or 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.” (i.e., the exceptions wouldn’t stand out so much if it were not true).
  - They impoverish our perception of the world and ourselves.
  - we can become slaves to the stereotypes we hold for our own group and incapable of individual action.

e) - Perseverance Effect - Well Learned Schemata are resistant to change.

- Summative Nature = large bodies of info dilute the influence of a single piece of new info. A large amount of schema incongruent information must be encoded to exert meaningful change on well established schemas.

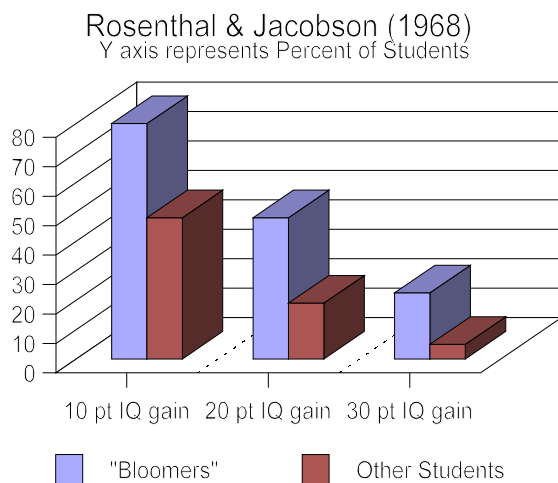
- e.g., a spoon full of sugar in a lake vs. in a shot-glass
- Subtyping - Extremely Schema incongruent information may be categorized into its own schema rather than resulting in change of the existing schema.
  - College professor Schema
    - intelligent, old, boring, serious, plain looking
  - Schema Incongruent Professor
    - intelligent, young, energetic, funny, extremely attractive.
  - Results in a Young College Professor Schema.

f)- Self-Fulfilling Prophecy (Merton, 1948)

- Behavioral Confirmation of Stereotypes
- Self-Confirming/fulfilling Nature of Schemas.
- When we hold a set of expectations about other people's behavior (especially when our expectations are inaccurate) then we may behave in ways that evokes the very behavior we expect of others.
- If I think you are unfriendly then I may avoid interacting with you or limit my interactions. Thus you come to see me as unfriendly and avoid interacting with me or limit your interactions. This provides me with information that is consistent with my view of you as unfriendly.

f1) 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.



- 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

f2) - Snyder, Tanke, & Bersheid (1977)

- males given 1 of 2 photos (1/2 attractive, 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.