Cognitive Theory

by Sophia

This lesson will focus on what cognitive theory is, and how it works in action. Specifically, you will be learning about:

1. Cognitive Theory Overview

Cognitive theory is the theory which states that a viewer actively arrives at a conclusion through a series of many mental processes.

The series of mental processes involved in cognitive theory are memory, projection, expectation, selectivity, habituation, and salience.

📄 TERM TO KNOW

Cognitive Theory
A theory which states that a viewer actively arrives at a conclusion through a series of many mental processes.

2. Memory

Memory is when images are interpreted by the viewer's recall of all images ever seen.

↗ EXAMPLE Say you have a memory of your grandmother and how her clothes typically had floral designs. Out of all the images you can recall of your grandmother, you always see her in some sort of floral patterned clothing. So, this becomes an image or pattern that you associate with her.

📄 TERM TO KNOW

Memory
Images are interpreted by the viewer's recall of all images ever seen.

3. Projection

Projection is when the viewer projects meaning based on mental state and personal interpretation.

➡ EXAMPLE A manager named Cindy is looking to hire new assistant managers to eventually become managers. A staffer confronts Cindy and tells her that maybe she should have someone else be the manager because she's been the manager for way too long. How does Cindy take this? Cindy might be feeling insulted and a little insecure about her management abilities now, so when someone asks about potential candidates or recommends them, she might be keen to lash out and insist she's a way better manager. At that point, she would be projecting her own feelings and insecurities about new potential staffers being promoted.

➡ EXAMPLE Say you tell your friend that he looks great today. If he's in a good mood, he may be inclined to thank you. But if he just had the worst day of his life, he's going to project those feelings and be inclined to think, "I look great today? Don't I look great other days?"
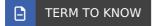
📄 TERM TO KNOW

Projection
The viewer projects meaning based on mental state and personal interpretation.

4. Expectation

Expectation is when the viewer has preconceived notions sometimes leading to false perceptions.

➡ EXAMPLE Say you recently started dating someone, and you've been enjoying spending time with that person. Valentine's Day comes around, and you are excited to make a big production out of the day. But when you actually go through with this, the other person doesn't respond as positively as you expected. This becomes an awkward situation because you've set up certain expectations that weren't met.

📄 TERM TO KNOW

Expectation
The viewer has preconceived notions sometimes leading to false perceptions.

5. Selectivity

Selectivity is when the viewer filters out irrelevant details, and only focuses on what is relevant at the time.

➡ EXAMPLE Say you're running late to class, and all you can think about is the time. You're going to filter out everything and start looking at your watch or pull out your cell phone. Eventually, you decide that you don't even want to look at the time anymore because you're so nervous. Then, you suddenly start noticing clocks. There are clocks on the sides of buildings, there are clocks on top of buildings, and when you make it to where you need to be, there are even clocks in the building.

📄 TERM TO KNOW

Selectivity

The viewer filters out irrelevant details, and only focuses on what is relevant at the time.

6. Habituation

Habituation is when the viewer ignores the familiar to protect from overstimulation.

> ⤴ EXAMPLE Say there's a bully at school. When you walk down the hallway past your lockers on your way to class, he always gets in your face and tries to intimidate you. Normally you'd back away or get scared, but after a while, you learn he's not really going to hurt you—he just wants to frighten you. So when you're having one of those days where there's just way too much going on and you're overstimulated, you completely ignore the situation.

> 📄 TERM TO KNOW
>
> **Habituation**
> The viewer ignores the familiar to protect from overstimulation.

7. Salience

Salience is when the viewer notices that which has meaning to them.

> ⤴ EXAMPLE Say you're out to dinner at a restaurant. You're really hungry, and you notice everyone has food but you. Or maybe you're at an event, and you notice that everyone came in limos except for you. You notice things that have meaning to you for one reason or another.

> 📄 TERM TO KNOW
>
> **Salience**
> The viewer gives notice to that which has meaning to them.

📋 **SUMMARY**

In this lesson, you learned that **cognitive theory** explains how a viewer reaches a conclusion through a series of mental processes. These processes are called **memory**, **projection**, **expectation**, **selectivity**, **habituation**, and **salience**.

Keep up the learning and have a great day!

Source: THIS WORK IS ADAPTED FROM SOPHIA AUTHOR MARIO E. HERNANDEZ

📄 **TERMS TO KNOW**

Cognitive Theory
 A theory which states that a viewer actively arrives at a conclusion through a series of many mental

processes.

Expectation

The viewer has preconceived notions sometimes leading to false perceptions.

Habituation

The viewer ignores the familiar to protect from overstimulation.

Memory

Images are interpreted by the viewer's recall of all images ever seen.

Projection

The viewer projects meaning based on mental state and personal interpretation.

Salience

The viewer gives notice to that which has meaning to them.

Selectivity

The viewer filters out irrelevant details, and only focuses on what is relevant at the time.