Organization

Stage 2 in the Perception Process

Definition

Organization is the process of arranging stimuli (what you have selected to attend to) into meaningful, understandable, and convenient patterns.

Organization allows you to make sense out of what you observe.

Types of Communication Organization:

- Figure and Ground
- Perceptual Schemes
- Stereotyping
- Punctuation
- Closure
- Proximity
- Similarity

Figure and Ground

In Figure and Gound organization:

Figure is what you notice or focus on.
Ground is less noticeable and serves
as the background for the figure.

Example:

When you pick out a friend's voice in a crowd,
the friend's voice becomes the **figure**.
The other voices become the **ground**.

Figure and Ground

When you see the vase in the illustration above, the vase becomes the figure and everything else becomes the ground.

When you see the silhouettes, the silhouettes become the figure and everything else becomes the ground.

Perceptual Schemes

Perceptual schemes are systems you use to organize your impressions.

Ways to Organize Impressions

- **Appearance:** young, healthy, short, female, ugly

- **Social Roles:** professor, clergy, mother, student

- **Interaction Style:** caring, indifferent, courteous

- **Psychological Traits:** nervous, confident, unsure

- **Memberships:** Humane Society, Student Senate, book club, golf team

After choosing a scheme to classify people, you further organize your perceptions in the following ways:

Stereotyping

After choosing a scheme, you place people into convenient categories. These categories can lead to exaggerated generalizations that miss the unique, individual qualities of a person.

Examples

- Teenagers are irresponsible.

- Old people don't know what's happening.

- People who are unemployed are lazy.

What generalizations do you make that lead to stereotyping?

Complete the following sentences in your head.

1. Men are ...

2. Lawyers are ...

3. Police are ...

4. Republicans are ...

5. Women are ...

Do you stereotype people?

Punctuation

In this type of organization, you determine causes and effects in interactions and then group, divide, separate, and categorize information.

Example

Mary complains that Robert never helps around the house. Robert says he doesn't help around the house because Mary says he never does anything right. When Mary speaks, **her** perspective is punctuated. When Robert speaks, **his** perspective is punctuated.

Closure

In this type of organization, you fill in missing information to provide structure and consistency.
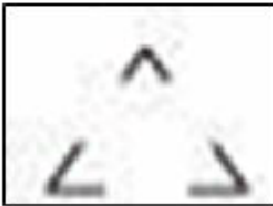
Example

Look at the illustration on the left. What do you see --
three angles or a triangle? If you see a triangle, you filled in the missing lines.

Similarity

At times you group things together because they are similar in size, color, shape, beliefs, interests, and other attributes.

Example

You might assume that a fellow student has the same point of view regarding tests as you do.

You sit with your friends in the cafeteria because you have similar interests.
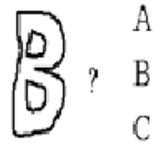
Proximity

Sometimes you group two or more items based on how close they are to each other.

|| || ||

If you see three pairs of parallel lines, you have grouped the lines based on proximity.

Multiple Choice Activity

Directions: Click on the organization term for the pattern depicted below.

$$\text{(drawing) ? }\begin{array}{c} A \\ B \\ C \end{array}$$

If you see the drawing on the left as resembling a letter on the right, which organization pattern did you use?

a. Figure and Ground   b. Proximity

c. Closure   d. Similarity