

Definition Slides

Cognition

= the mental activities associated with thinking, knowing, remembering, and communicating.



Concept

= a mental grouping of similar objects, events, ideas, or people.



Prototype

= a mental image or best example of a category. Matching new items to a prototype provides a quick and easy method for sorting items into categories (as when comparing feathered creatures to a prototypical bird, such as a robin).



Algorithm

= a methodical, logical rule or procedure that guarantees solving a particular problem.
Contrasts with the usually speedier – but also more error-prone – use of heuristics.



Heuristic

= a simple thinking strategy that often allows us to make judgments and solve problems efficiently; usually speedier but also more error-prone than algorithms.



Insight

= a sudden and often novel realization of the solution to a problem; it contrasts with strategy-based solutions.



Creativity

= the ability to produce novel and valuable ideas.



Confirmation Bias

= a tendency to search for information that supports our preconceptions and to ignore or distort contradictory evidence.



Fixation

= the inability to see a problem from a new perspective, by employing a different mental set.



Mental Set

= a tendency to approach a problem in one particular way, often a way that has been successful in the past.



Functional Fixedness

= the tendency to think of things only in terms of their usual functions; an impediment to problem solving.



Representativeness Heuristic

= judging the likelihood of things in terms of how well they seem to represent, or match, particular prototypes; may lead us to ignore other relevant information.



Availability Heuristic

= estimating the likelihood of events based on their availability in memory; if instances come readily to mind (perhaps because of their vividness), we presume such events are common



Overconfidence

= the tendency to be more confident that correct – to over-estimate the accuracy of our beliefs and judgments.



Belief Perseverance

= clinging to one's initial conceptions after the basis on which they are formed has been discredited.



Intuition

= an effortless, immediate, automatic feeling or thought, as contrasted with explicit, conscious reasoning.



Framing

= the way an issue is posed; how an issue is framed can significantly affect decisions and judgments.



Language

= our spoken, written, or signed words and the ways we combine them to communicate meaning.



Phoneme

= in language, the smallest distinctive sound unit.



Morpheme

= in a language, the smallest unit that carries meaning; may be a word or a part of a word (such as a prefix).



Grammar

= in a language, a system of rules that enables us to communicate with and understand others.



Semantics

= the set of rules by which we derive meaning from morphemes, words, and sentences in a given language; also, the study of meaning.



Syntax

= the rules for combining words into grammatically sensible sentences in a given language.



Babbling Stage

= beginning at about 4 months, the stage of speech development in which the infant spontaneously utters various sounds at first unrelated to the household language.



One-word Stage

= the stage in speech development, from about age 1 to 2, during which a child speaks mostly in single words.



Two-word Stage

= beginning about age 2, the stage in speech development during which a child speaks mostly two-word statements.



Telegraphic Speech

= early speech state in which a child speaks like a telegram – “go car” – using mostly nouns and verbs.



Linguistic Determinism

= Whorf's hypothesis that language determines the way we think.

