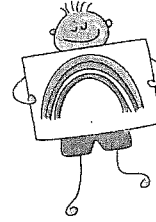




Forming Concepts "Thinking"



Thinking or **Cognition**, refers to all the mental activities associated with processing, understanding, and communicating. Cognitive Psychologists study these mental activities including the logical and sometimes illogical ways in which we create concepts, solve problems, make decisions, and form judgments.

The Building Blocks of Thinking:

1. CONCEPTS:

- to think about the countless events, objects, and people in our world, we simplify things.
- We form **CONCEPTS**- mental groupings of similar objects, events, and people.

For example:

- **Birds**- this concept includes all birds from a blue-jay, to a flamingo, to a penguin.
- **Chairs**- this concept includes a baby's high chair, a reclining chair, dining room chairs, dentist chairs, and so on.

To simplify things even further, humans organize concepts into hierarchies. Cab drivers organize their cities into geographical sectors, which subdivide into neighbourhoods, and again into blocks.

Even scientists organized the 5 million + living species on the planet into two groups: The Plant and Animal Kingdoms. Then they divided these basic categories into smaller and smaller sub-categories: vertebrates, bony fish, and Atlantic Salmon for example.

Sometimes we form concepts by definition. Told the rule that a triangle has 3 sides, we thereafter classify all three-sided geometric forms as triangles.

More often, however, we form our concepts by developing **PROTOTYPES**: a mental image or best example that incorporates all the features we associate with a category.

The more closely something matches our prototype of a concept, the more readily we recognize it as an example of the concept.