Persuasion & Influence

Cognition Lab

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Course evaluations

https://sirs.ctaar.rutgers.edu/blue

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What Is This Session About?

Introduction

Topic overview

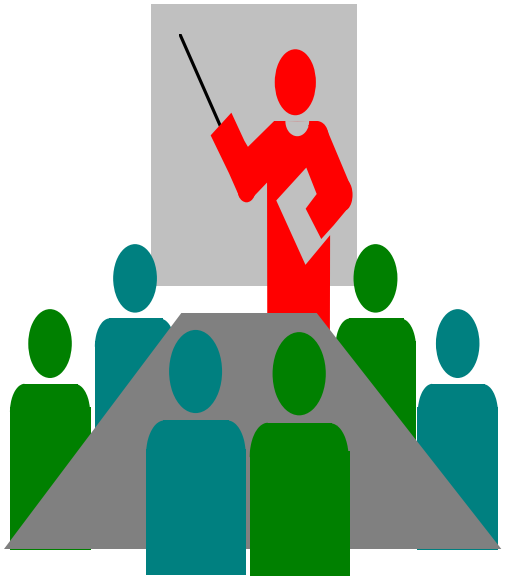
The presentation in three parts

- Cognitive illusions and Biases (*Inevitable Illusions*—Palmarini, with a sprinkle of *Iconoclast*, by Berns)
- Weapons of Influence (*Influence*--Cialdini)
- Persuasive communication (*Making it Stick*, Heath & Heath)

Slides based on Steve Edison's presentation (UA Little Rock)

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Persuasion



An attempt to change attitudes or behaviors (or both) without using coercion or deception.

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Argumentation vs Persuasion

Argumentation

- Presenting facts and data in logically sound ways in order to help someone to change his/her belief or behavior

Persuasion

- A delicate mix of….
  - Rational argument
  - Social forces
  - Psychological forces

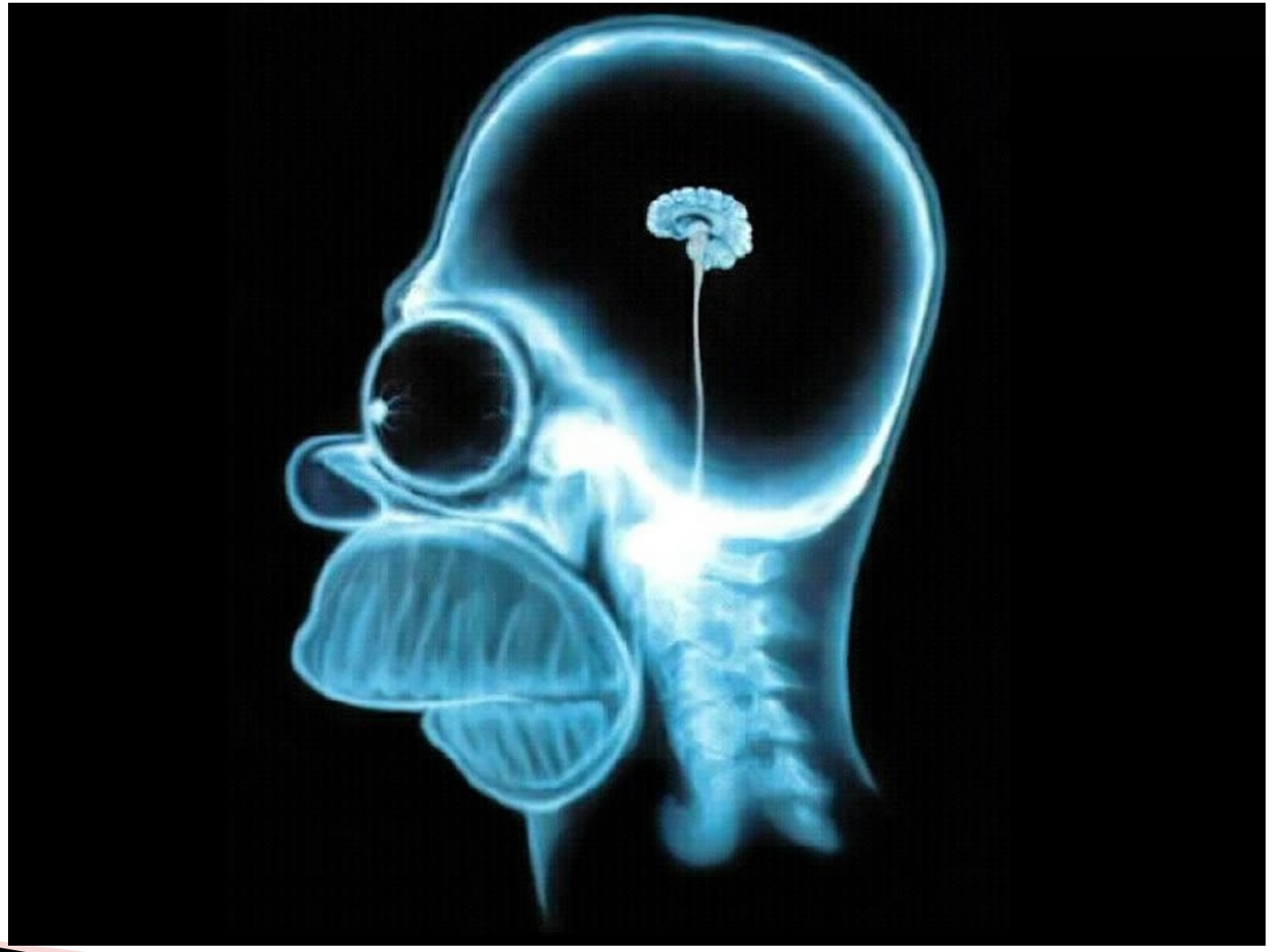
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Influence Strategies

- Legislation
- Coercion
- Subterfuge
- Circumvention of awareness
- Manipulation
- Promotion
- Persuasion
- Facilitation

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This is Your Brain on a Budget!



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This is Your Brain on a Budget!

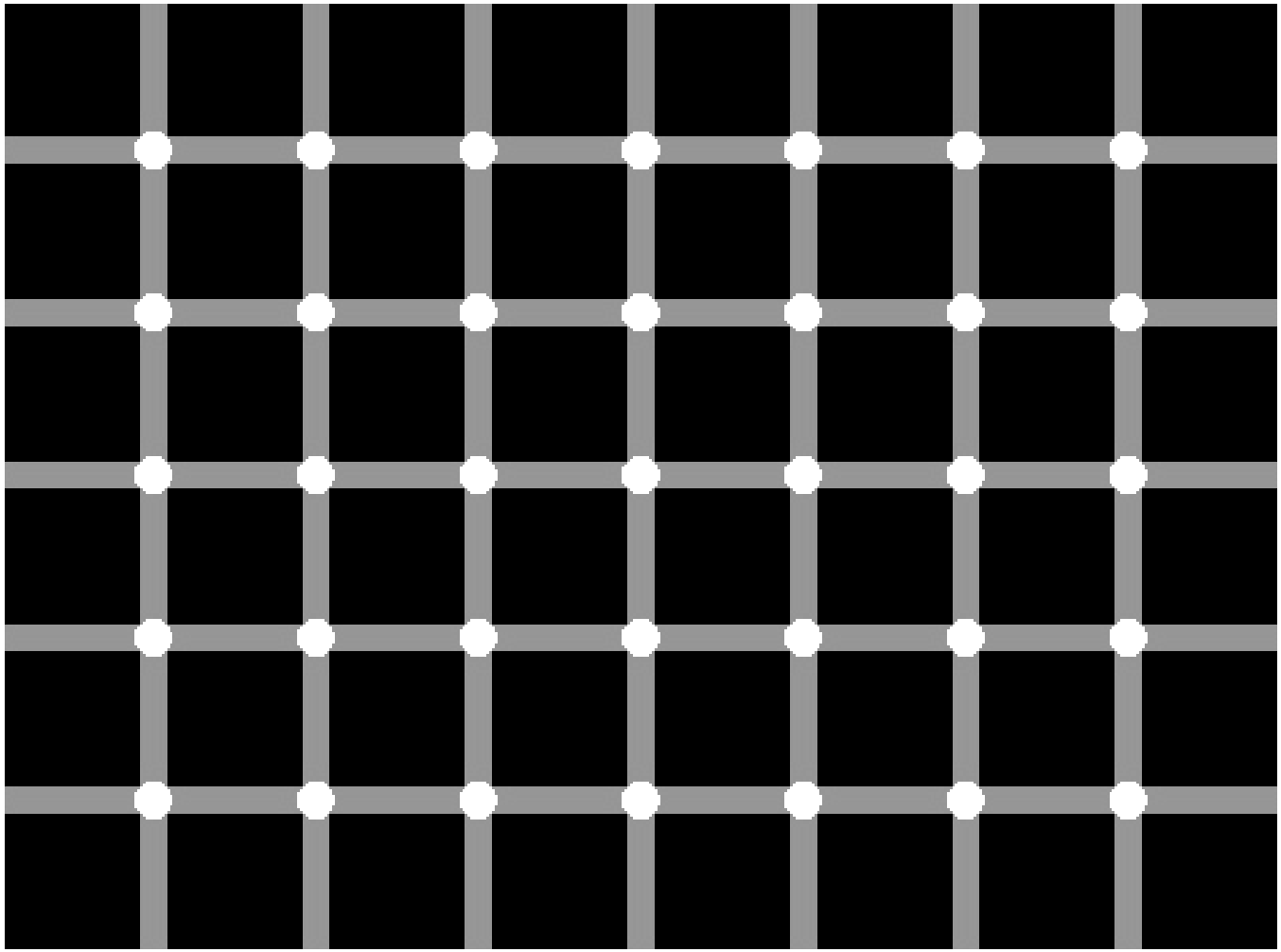
The average adult brain has an energy budget of 40 watts (+/- 3 watts)

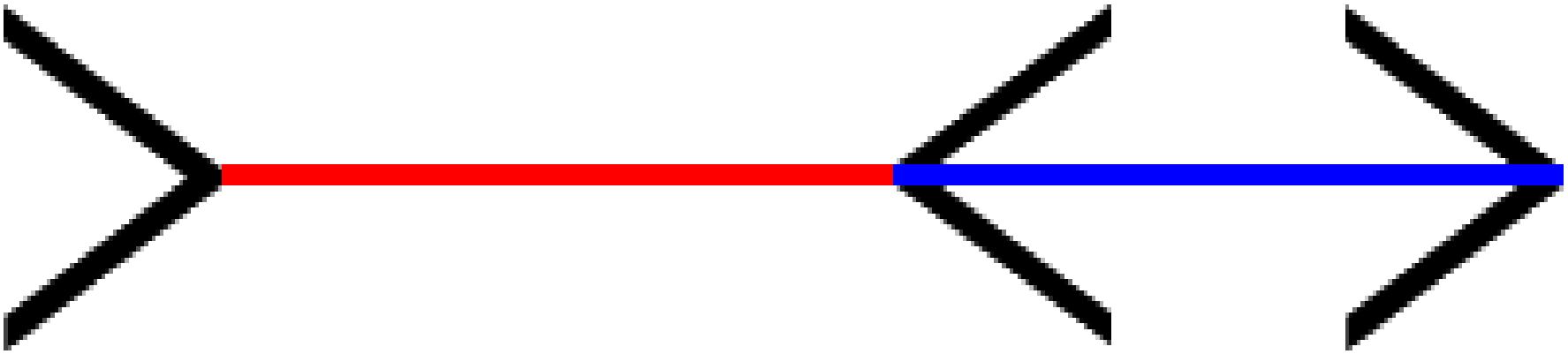
For millennia, the world has become increasingly complex

The brain is thought to have evolved, specializing in key processes

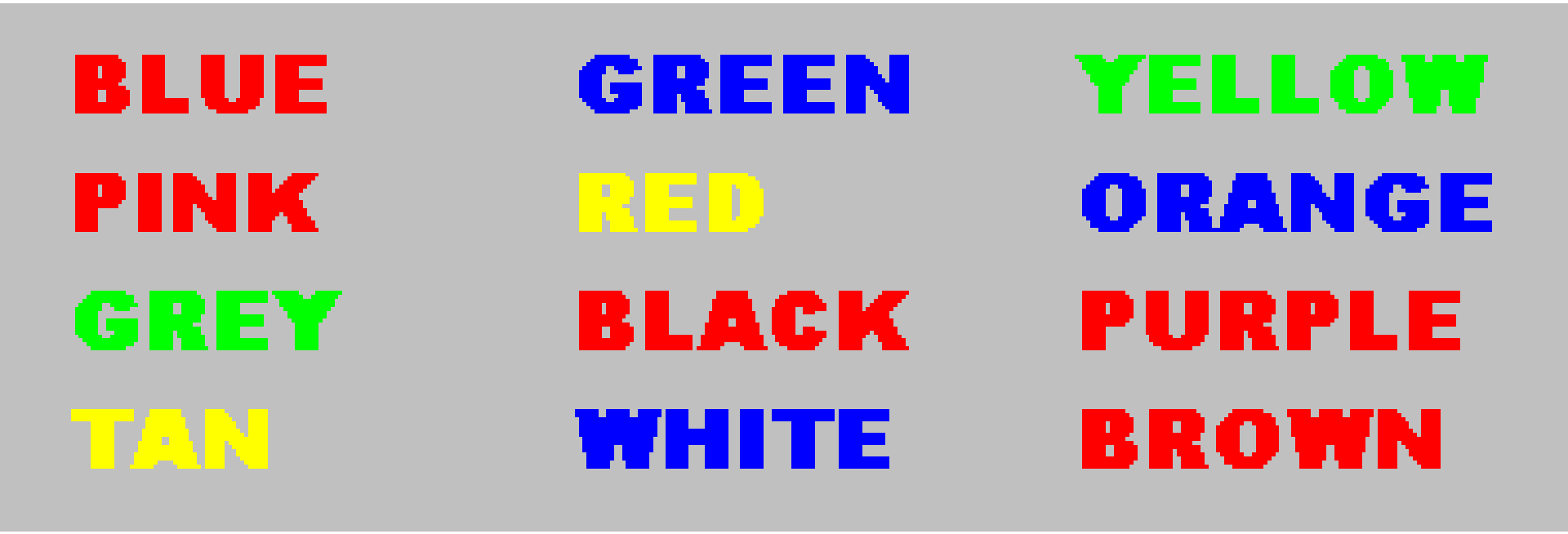
Keeping the budget in mind, shortcuts are common

How Many Black Dots vs White Dots?





Conversely, we may be forced to use inappropriate information



Stroop Effect

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Cognitive Illusions

Information in some parts of the brain are inaccessible to other parts of the brain

- Applies to judgments, decision-making. and attitude adjustment
- Facets of the general population
- Less-Than-Rational
- Mental equivalents of visual illusions

http://www.michaelbach.de/ot/



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Biases

- **Framing/Priming** - Don't think of an elephant!
- **Anchoring** - Forecasts of new products start with historical data

Overconfidence - We start with the assumption that we are right

- **Illusory Correlation** - We see what we expect to see
- **Predictability in hindsight** - **Hindsight** bias: the tendency to overestimate the **predictability** of past events based on current knowledge of the outcome
- **Ease of representation** - When questions change behavior

WEAPONS OF INFLUENCE

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I. Social Psychology

1. Reciprocity
2. Consistency
3. Social proof
4. Authority
5. Likeability
6. Scarcity

Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (revised; New York: Quill, 1993)

1. Reciprocity

One of the most potent weapons of influence and compliance:

We want to repay, in kind, what another person has provided us

1. Reciprocity

Technique 1: If someone makes a concession, we are obligated to respond with a concession
Making a concession gives the other party a feeling of responsibility for the outcome and greater satisfaction with resolution

1. Reciprocity

Technique 2: Rejection then retreat: exaggerated request rejected; desired lesser request acceded to

1. Reciprocity

Technique 3: Contrast principle: sell the costly item first; or present the undesirable option first

2. Consistency

Our nearly obsessive desire to be (and to appear) consistent with what we have already done

Consistency is usually associated with strength, inconsistency as weak; we want to look virtuous

2. Consistency

Technique 1: Elicit a commitment, then expect consistency

2. Consistency

Technique 2: Public, active, effortful commitments tend to be lasting commitments

2. Consistency

Technique 3: Get a large favor by first getting a small one (small commitments begin to shape a person's self-image and position them for large commitment)

2. Consistency

Outcome 1: Commitments people own, take inner responsibility for, are profound

Outcome 2: Commitments lead to inner change and grow their own legs

3. Social Proof

One means we use to determine what is correct is to find out what other people think is correct.

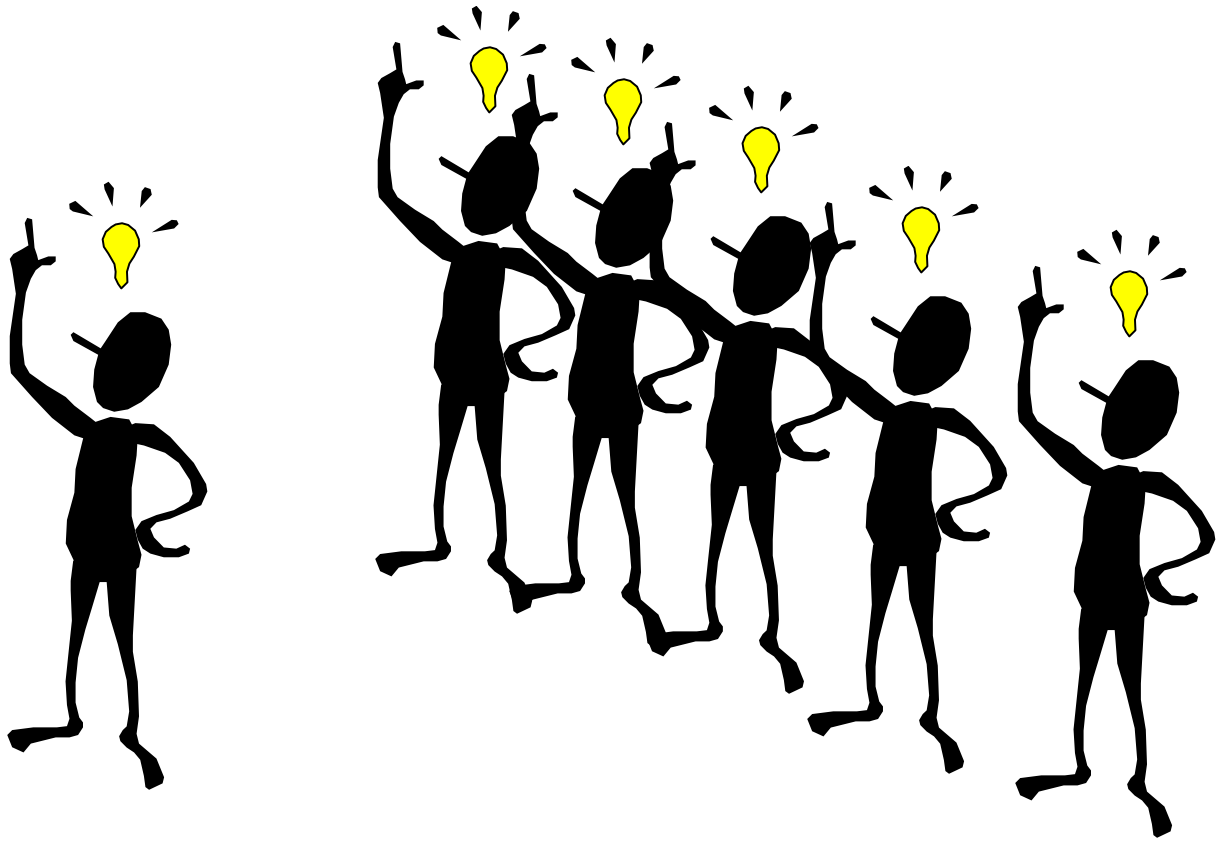
The greater number of people who find an idea correct, the more the idea will be correct.

Pluralistic ignorance: each person decides that since nobody is concerned, nothing is wrong

Similarity: social proof operates most powerfully when we observe people just like us

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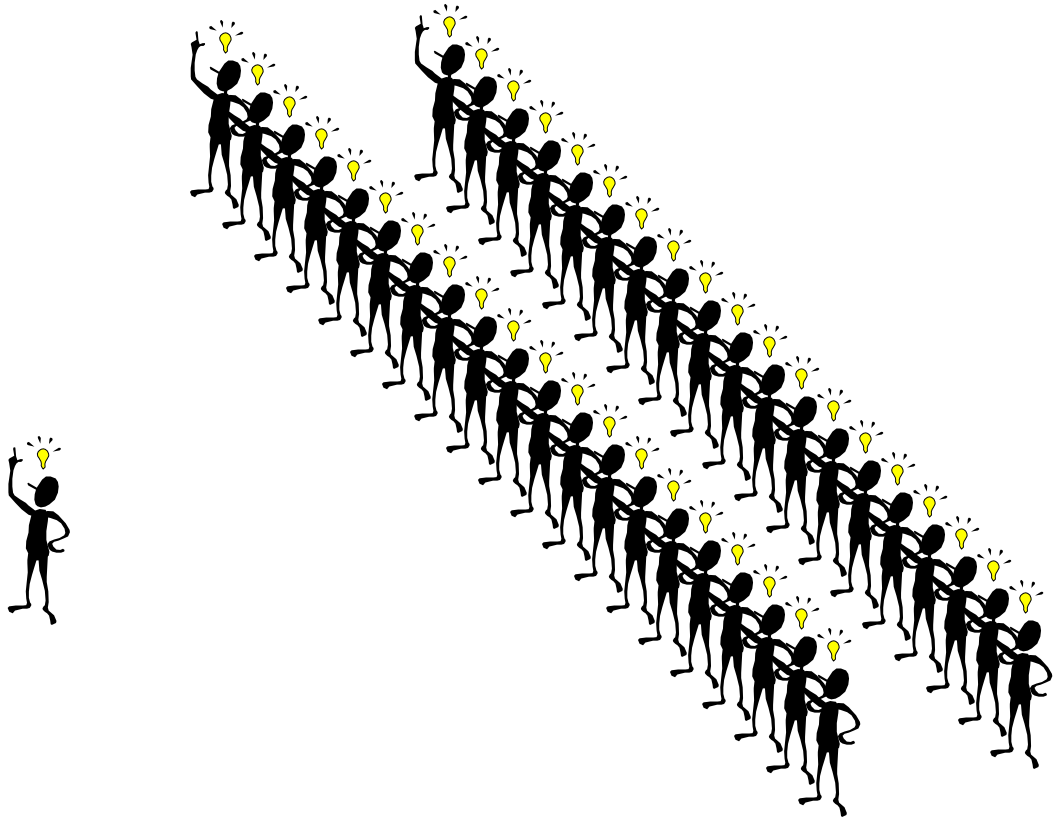
Consensus & Group Think



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Consensus & Group Think

POWER IN NUMBERS



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4. Authority

We have a **deep-seated sense of duty to authority**

Tests demonstrate that adults will do extreme things when instructed to do so by an authority figure

Milgram, 1961



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4. Authority

Titles

Uniforms

Clothes

Trappings of status









Cialdini

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5. Likeability

We prefer to say yes to someone we know and like

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6. Scarcity

Opportunities seem more valuable to us when their availability is limited

We want it even more when we are in competition for it

But then the market may crash

PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die

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Windows of Opportunity

When you are in a good mood

When your world view no longer makes sense

When you can take action immediately

When you feel indebted because of a favor

Immediately after you have made a mistake

Immediately after you have denied a request

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Some Ideas Naturally Stick

Urban Legends

Proverbs (where there is smoke….)

A few professors lectures ?

Politicians' sound bites (A chicken in every pot)

Preachers pronouncements (fire and brimstone)

Activists (global warming, Don't mess with Texas)

Making an Idea Stick

- 1. **Simplicity** (any idea over one is too many)

  2. **Unexpectedness** (a surprise grabs our attention)

  3. **Concreteness** (the more dimensions of details the more hooks our minds use to create a memory)

  4. **Credibility** (even untrue stories don't stick unless there's a hint of truth, the urban legend)

  5. Incite **Emotions** (emotional experiences; individuals; things that reflect our identities)

  6. Messages in **Stories** (memorable and meaningful in a story form)

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Making an idea Stick

Simplicity

- Find the essential core of the idea
- Simple AND profound -proverbs
- Relentlessly prioritize
- Example: “The Golden Rule”

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Making an idea Stick

Unexpectedness

Violate expectations...Be counter-intuitive

“Gap theory”---perceived hole in our knowledge

Surprise leads to increased alertness and focus

But, is short-lived…need to continually surprise

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Making an idea Stick

Concreteness

Only way to ensure that all receive same message

Our brains are wired to remember concrete info

Proverbs are abstract truths encoded in concrete language



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Making an idea Stick

Emotions

Make people “Feel” something



LBJ’s “Daisy Girl” aired September 1964

“These are the stakes! To make a world in which all of God’s children can live, or to go into the dark. We must either love each other, or we must die.”

Making an idea Stick

Story

Stories are flight simulators for the brain

Subway's TV ad vs "7 under 6"





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The Communication Framework

For an idea to stick, for it to be useful and lasting, it's got to make the audience:

- Pay attention
- Understand and remember
- Agree/believe
- Care
- Be able to act

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The Communication Framework

For an idea to stick, for it to be useful and lasting, it's got to make the audience:

- Pay attention → Unexpected
- Understand and remember → Concrete
- Agree/believe → Credible
- Care → Emotional
- Be able to act → Story

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So, What's the Moral?

Logic doesn't always persuade

Humans are susceptible to illusory thinking

Having influence in the short term can yield long-term persuasion and

Compliance Professionals have an influence tool kit

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On the Media

Listen Segments Scarlet E Series Team About

LISTEN FOR FREE SUPPORT US

A History of Persuasion: Part 3

▶ LISTEN Download </> Embed

August 28, 2019

Share



(Eleanor Shakespeare)

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Title

This is the first thing someone reads and so should summarise the content of the report using no more than 20 words

Gives some indication of the overall theme of the work that is to be reported

Catchy titles should generally be avoided, as should titles using superfluous words



- An Empirical Investigation into Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in Children with High Socioeconomic Status Parents.



- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in Children with High Socioeconomic Status Parents.

NB: Capitalize major words & centre the title at the top of the page

Title



- Don’t be too vague
  - The ‘Beer-Goggles’ Effect.



- Don’t be too specific
  - An Investigation Into the Effects of Drinking 6 Pints of Guinness in a Nightclub in Brighton at 11:30, While Listening to Drum and Bass Played at 100 db Through a Good Sound System, on 12 Men’s and 15 Women’s Ability to Accurately Judge the Attractiveness of Members of the Opposite Sex.

Title



About right

- The ‘Beer-Goggles Effect’: The Effects of Alcohol on Attractiveness Ratings of the Opposite Gender.

Sometimes it is useful to refer to the things you are manipulating (the IV) & what you are measuring (DV) within the title

The example above does just this

- IV = Alcohol (as levels are manipulated in this study)
- DV = Ratings of attractiveness

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Abstract

The abstract is a short précis (about 200-250 words) of the study that is about to be presented below it

It is often what a reader will use to determine whether to bother to read the rest of the study

- E.g. A literature search online will often provide the abstract of the paper

Abstract

It should ideally contain

- a brief statement of the problem being investigated & motivation for the study
- the participants investigated
- the experimental method of study
- the principal findings/results obtained
- the main conclusions drawn

Try not to finish with empty statements such as *'The findings were discussed'.*

It is normally easier to write the abstract *last,* once you know what key points of the study should be summarised.

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Beer-Goggles example abstract

Ugly (1993) has shown that the propensity to misclassify members of the opposite sex as attractive is increased in nightclub settings. This study was designed to ascertain whether this effect is due to the dim lighting employed in these venues, or the consumption of alcohol in this setting. Ratings of the attractiveness of a set of stooge participants were taken in both a well-lit and dimly-lit nightclub by both sober and drunk participants. A 2 way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of alcohol consumption, but not of the lighting used. The results suggest that, contrary to Ugly's hypothesis, dim lighting does not contribute to the inflated attractiveness of opposite--gender mates; instead these ratings are influenced solely by alcohol intake.

You can see that this abstract is short, but summarises what was done and why, and finishes with what was found from the results and how this fits with previous studies/theories.

Discussion

This section is where you can interpret your findings and relate them to previous research/predictions.

Often you will make reference to material you raised in your introduction.

General structure:

- State what the results are by providing a précis (**in words**) of the results.
- Account for the findings.
- Explore the implications of the findings.

Discussion – State main results

What were the key findings?

Were there any significant differences between conditions?

- If so, then what **direction** were those differences in?

Do they support the hypothesis/hypotheses?

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Discussion – Account for the results

Discuss what these results mean

- You will either have
  1. Rejected the null hypothesis (in favour of the experimental hypothesis) , or
  2. Failed to reject the null hypothesis

- If 1. then are you sure that the effect was due to your manipulation of the IV or could confounding variables explain the result?
- If 2. then try to convince the reader that there is no relationship between the IV and DV.
- Either way, try your best to explain the findings

Discussion – Implications

Are there any implications based on your results?

Are there any weaknesses of your study that may suggest factors to be improved?

- Don't tear apart your study! Constructive criticism is OK

This may pave the way to discuss any future research

Finally, conclude with a short paragraph summarising the main findings / implications

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References

Follow the APA style of referencing

- See Referencing/APA
- References cited in the report (in text citations) must also appear in your end reference list (and vice-versa)
- Don’t directly cite articles/books that you haven’t actually read:
  - Learn to use Secondary source citations
    - E.g. ‘Jones (1999) suggested that cats were more neurotic than dogs (as cited in Eysenck & Keane, 2006)’, then just list the source (E & K) in the end reference list.

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References (in text)

Example 1: *'Evidence suggests that old people cause more road traffic accidents than new drivers (Killers, 2005).'*

Example 2: *'A study by Killers (2005) highlighted that road traffic accidents were more likely to be caused by older drivers than drivers who had only recently passed their test.'*

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Abstract

About 250 words in length

Summary of the whole project

The abstract is written from the prospective of *having already run* the study

Think about the sections of your paper: the sections become *sentences*

Final Tips

A good book

- Andy Field & Graham Hole (2003). How to design and report experiments. Sage: London.
  - Chapter 9, p. 287 onwards

Write in the past-tense throughout (apart from any predictions made in the intro can be phrased in the future tense)

Avoid personal grammar (‘I’, ‘We’ etc.)

Thanks to Andy Field from whom much of this material has been stolen!