Lesson Plan - Social Perception and Attributions

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Class Period Duration: 90 minutes

To be read before class:
Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Sommers, S.R. (2019). Social perception: How we come to understand other people. *Social psychology*. 10th edition. (pp. 104-138). New York, NY: Pearson.

Syllabus Learning Objectives (SLOs):
1.0 Describe the core theories in social psychology.
2.0 Apply theories of social psychology to real-world situations.
4.0. Examine the potential for bias in yourself, others, and information sources.
6.0. Work effectively in groups and individually to develop basic skills for information-seeking, discussion, and communication.

Lesson Learning Objectives (LLOs):
1) Students will be able to describe how humans form impressions and draw inferences about other people.
2) Students will be able to describe the attribution process and potential biases that may impact their judgments.
3) Students will be able to identify the role that culture plays in social perception and attribution processes.

Lesson Activities:
- **Warm-Up Activity & Quick Write (SLO 2.0; LLO1) - 10 minutes**
  - Show students pictures of psychologist colleagues and ask students to guess their professions (write it down).
    - How did you come to that guess? What features or qualities did you notice first? What stood out in the photo?
    - More generally, what do you notice first when meeting someone new? What characteristics leave you with a good impression as opposed to a negative one?
- **Class Discussion (SLO 1.0, 2.0, 4.0, 6.0; LLO1) - 15 minutes**
  - Have students share their guesses/supporting reasoning from Quick Write. Then reveal answers regarding colleague professions.
  - As part of discussion, connect student responses from Quick Write to textbook concepts (write on the board):
    - *example:* That answer sounds like a concept from the chapter we read for today. Can anybody name what that concept is?
    - Alternatively, the instructor may also directly ask students to define textbook concepts.
      - e.g., nonverbal communication; encoding vs decoding; thin-slicing; primacy effect, belief perseverance.
- **Attribution Activity** (adapted from existing APA Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools activity) **(SLO 1.0, 2.0, 4.0, 6.0; LLO2) - 10 minutes**
  - Students should be divided into small groups of 3-4.
  - Instructors should pass out the **folded** worksheet (also at end of this lesson plan) to the class and tell students not to unfold or turn it over yet.
  - Instructors should explain the activity.
  - Students complete page 1 of the worksheet
  - Instructors should then direct the entire class to unfold the worksheet and complete part 2 of page 1 individually (~1 minute).

- ○ Students answer the questions on page 2 of the worksheet in their small groups.
  - ■ Instructor should walk around the classroom and provide support as needed.
- **Class Discussion (SLO 1.0, 2.0, 4.0, 6.0; LLO2) - 15 minutes**
  - ○ Aggregate student data. Method may vary depending on the size and technology constraints of the class:
    - ■ For a larger class, the instructor could project a QR code and/or a bit.ly link onto the screen for students to record their responses to "the instructor" (Q1) and "the self" (Q4) through a Google Form. Conveniently, the form can be linked to a Google Spreadsheet, wherein the instructor can demonstrate calculating an average from the collected data.
    - ■ For a smaller class, the instructor may consider verbally collecting data from students and recording numbers on the board. The instructor can then ask students how to calculate an average.
  - ○ Discuss responses to Q7 and Q8 on Worksheet, i.e., whether students tended to use "it depends" for themselves or for their professor
    - ■ Do we tend to select "it depends" when evaluating ourselves or other people? Why? What is this phenomenon called? (Fundamental Attribution Error)
    - ■ *NOTE:* If students do not demonstrate the FAE, refer to the textbook reading and ask what trend previous research found. If students do demonstrate the FAE, likewise connect the class results to the trends of previous findings (see below).
  - ○ As part of discussion, connect student responses to textbook concepts (write on the board):
    - ■ *example:* That answer sounds like a concept from the chapter we read for today. Can anybody name what that concept is?
    - ■ Alternatively, the instructor may also directly ask students to define textbook concepts.
      - ● e.g., two-step attribution process; internal/dispositional vs external/situational.
- **Transition Discussion (SLO 6.0) - 10 minutes**
  - ○ In the same small groups, students discuss individual differences in amounts of "it depends" and possible explanations for those differences. Share out.
    - ■ Instructor should walk around the classroom and provide support as needed.
- **Role of Culture Activity (SLO 2.0, 6.0; LLO3) - 20 minutes**
  - ○ As a class, students watch clips of Olympic athletes' interviews and take notes.
    - ■ [Evgenia Medvedeva (Russia), Jason Brown (USA)](#)
      - ● Come from different countries, train under the same coach. In turn, they discuss the difficulties of undergoing such big life changes (moving to Canada) and working toward the Olympics. They share what they have learned from each other, some successes they have since achieved, and how the key to success is working harder.
    - ■ [Sui Wenjing & Han Cong (China)](#) (6:04 - 10:08)
      - ● Pair skaters. They discuss their respective anxieties and the challenges they faced as Sui Weijing finally returned to the ice after a major surgery, as well as how they overcame those difficulties with the help of their coaches and support of their fans/families. They explain the honor and pressure they feel to be representing their country in the Olympics.
  - ○ Think-Pair-Share, then share out. Discuss similarities and differences that they noticed.
    - ■ Who/what were the main subjects of athletes' interviews (e.g., their career, their family, their coaches)? Who/what was most important to the different athletes? How did different athletes talk about setbacks or failures? Who/what did different athletes owe their success to? Were there any patterns across the different

athletes? Do these patterns align with different cultural values (e.g., collectivism vs individualism)?
- As part of discussion, connect student responses to textbook concepts (write on the board):
    - *example:* That answer sounds like a concept from the chapter we read for today. Can anybody name what that concept is?
    - Alternatively, the instructor may also directly ask students to define textbook concepts.
        - e.g., self-serving attributions; bias blind spot.
- **Exit Slip (SLO 2.0, 4.0, 6.0; LLO2) - 10 minutes**
    - What implications do the FAE and the various biases (e.g., self-serving attributions; belief in a justice world) have in the real world? How do they show up in your life, if at all? How will you prevent yourself from making the FAE? How could you prevent others from making the FAE?
    - Quick Write from beginning of class and Exit Slip are both collected as students leave the classroom.

Social Perception Activity Worksheet

Instructions:
In each row, circle the trait that best describes your psychology instructor. If neither descriptor is particularly characteristic of them, please circle "it depends."

outgoing	OR	quiet	it depends
creative	OR	analytical	it depends
bold	OR	reserved	it depends
follower	OR	leader	it depends
easy-going	OR	contrarian	it depends
agreeable	OR	contrarian	it depends
carefree	OR	serious	it depends

---fold here--

Instructions:
In each row, circle the trait that best describes YOU. If neither descriptor is particularly characteristic of you, please circle "it depends."

outgoing	OR	quiet	it depends
creative	OR	analytical	it depends
bold	OR	reserved	it depends
follower	OR	leader	it depends
easy-going	OR	contrarian	it depends
agreeable	OR	contrarian	it depends
carefree	OR	serious	it depends

Instructions:
Answer the following questions in small groups.

1) How many times did you circle "it depends" for **the instructor**?

2) How many times did your classmates circle "it depends" for **the instructor**? Record all sums here.

3) On average, how often was "it depends" circled for **the instructor** within your group?

4) How many times did you circle "it depends" for **YOURSELF**?

5) How many times did your classmates circle "it depends" for **themselves**? Record all sums here.

6) On average, how often was "it depends" circled for **yourselves** within your group?

7) Look at your answers to Q3 and Q6. Which average is higher?

8) Why might that be the case? Discuss within your group and jot down some possibilities.