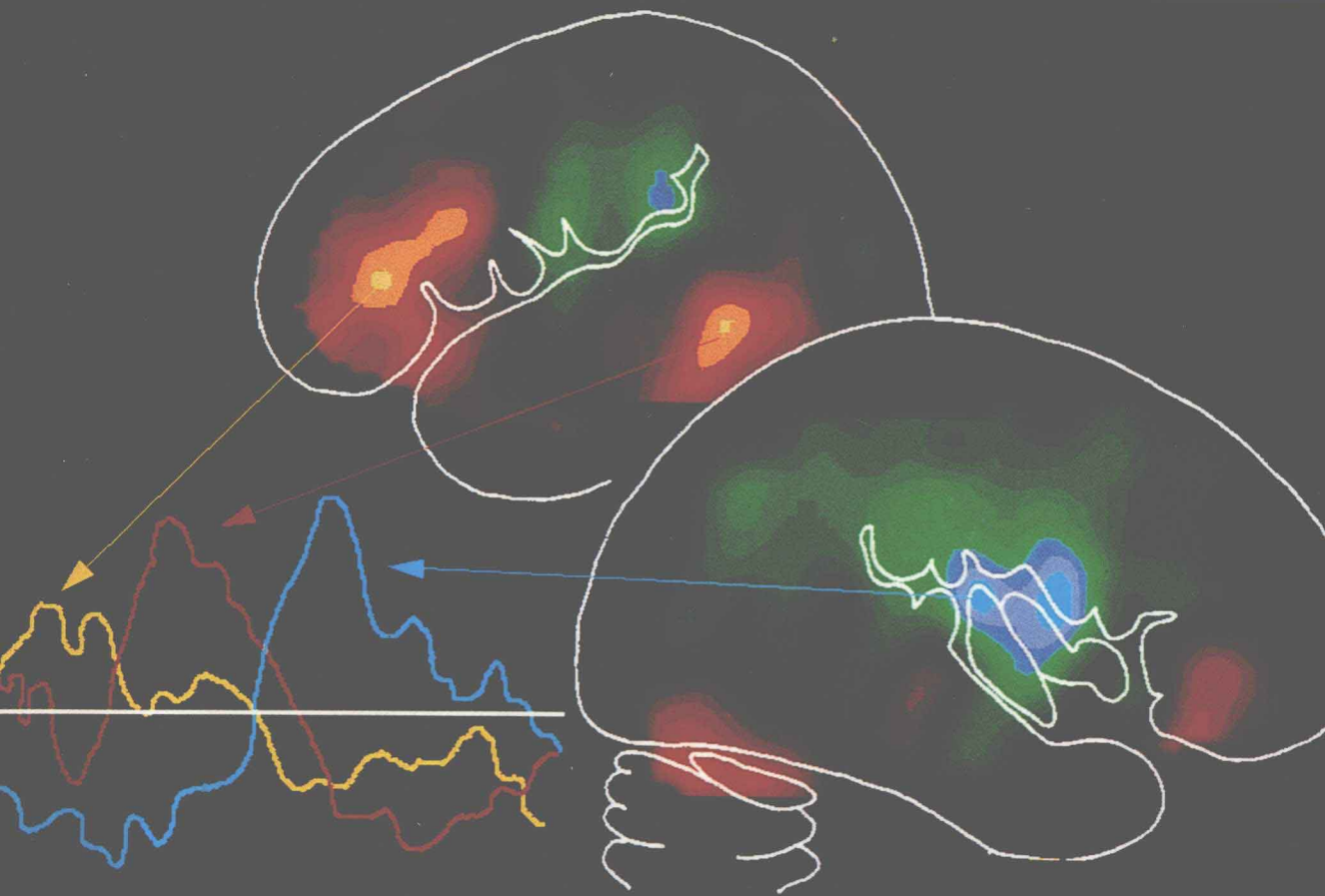


Cognition

Fourth Edition



Stephen K. Reed



COGNITION

Theory and Applications

Fourth Edition

Stephen K. Reed

San Diego State University



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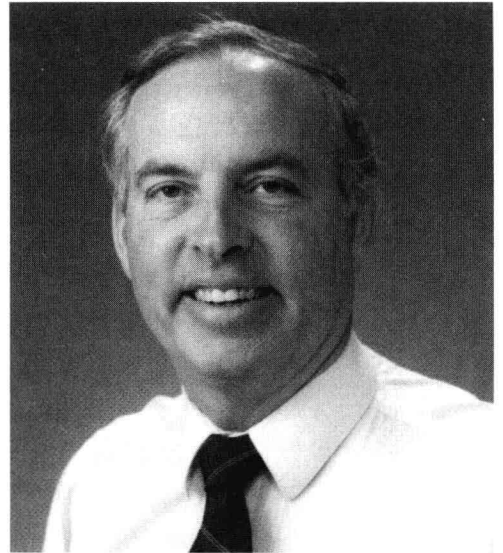
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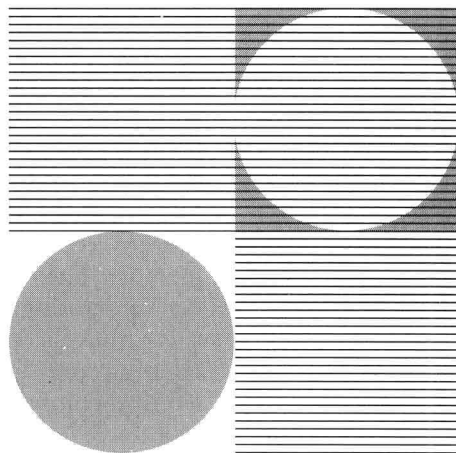
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Preface



The most exciting development in the field of cognitive psychology is not a particular theory or experimental finding but a general trend. Cognitive psychologists have demonstrated an increasing interest in studying complex, real-world tasks and are making significant progress in understanding how people perform on these tasks. I hope that one result of this trend will be that undergraduates discover the direct relevance of cognitive psychology to many of their daily activities. A course about cognition should be useful not only to psychology students but also to those who have selected other fields of study.

In this book I have attempted to place a greater emphasis on the application of cognitive psychology than is typically found in an undergraduate text. The study of reading, for example, is discussed in the chapters on pattern recognition, attention, language, and text comprehension. Efficient learning strategies are major topics in the chapters on long-term memory and visual imagery. The chapter on expertise and creativity shows how the study of problem solving is currently being extended to include the kinds of problems students encounter in their courses. The chapter on language discusses how the implications of sentences influence legal testimony and advertising, and the chapter on decision making includes a section on applications to medicine and to emergency situations. In order to help students relate the study of cognition to popular articles they are likely to read, I have included many magazine and newspaper clippings on such contemporary topics as

implanting false memories and determining the value of a human life in order to justify life-saving decisions.

The 14 chapters in the book cover a wide range of topics, and instructors should be able to expand on whatever topics interest them. The book is divided into three parts: Information-Processing Stages, Representation and Organization of Knowledge, and Complex Cognitive Skills. Part I consists of an introductory chapter followed by chapters on pattern recognition, attention, short-term memory, and long-term memory. The chapters describe what occurs during the different information-processing stages and how the stages interact. Part II contains chapters on levels of processing, visual images, categorization, and semantic organization. The first two chapters in this part describe qualitatively different memory codes, and the next two chapters discuss the organization of knowledge in long-term memory. Part III consists of chapters on language, comprehension and memory for text, problem solving, expertise and creativity, and decision making. The discussion of these complex cognitive skills is often related to ideas presented earlier in the book.

The organization of a book on cognition should reflect what we actually know about cognition. Research suggests that a hierarchy is a particularly effective way to organize knowledge (see Chapter 9). Recall is facilitated when information is partitioned into categories, which are further partitioned into smaller categories. Hierarchical organization seems to be particularly effective when the number of partitions varies from two to five. I deliberately selected such a structure for this book in the hope that the material would thereby be more accessible to students.

The fourth edition retains the same organization as the previous editions. I had two objectives in revising the book: I wanted to help the reader master the information more easily by putting key terms in bold type, by providing a glossary in the margins as well as an alphabetical glossary at the end of the book, and by adding discussion questions at the end of each chapter. Also, I wanted to report on some of the new research that had been done since the publication of the third edition.

Examples of new material include, in Part I, an expanded discussion of the relation of cognitive psychology to other fields including neuropsychology, neural network models, automatic encoding, working memory models, and very long-term retention. Part II, on the representation and organization of knowledge, now contains additional material on the distinctiveness of memory codes, mood-dependent memory, neuropsychological evidence relating imagery and perception, reinterpretation of images, the power of suggestion on the creation of false memories, effect of expertise on categorization, assumptions of schema theory, and autobiographical memory. Additions to Part III, on complex cognitive skills, include new material on vowel discrimination, speech errors, aphasia, individual differences in comprehension, local and global coherence in

text, situation models for text, improving readability, transfer of problem representations, pragmatic reasoning schemata, effect of examples on creativity, inventing products, effect of mood and decision frames on estimated probabilities, and action-based decision making.

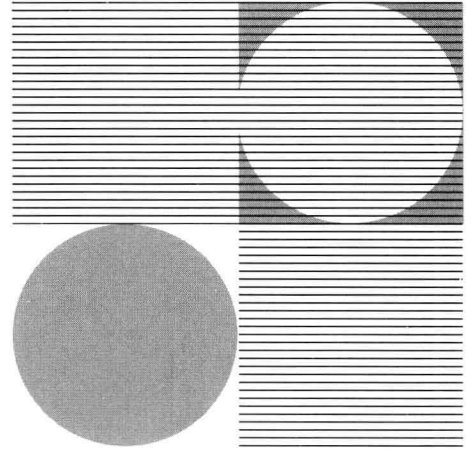
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I wrote the first edition of this book while spending a sabbatical year at the University of California at Berkeley. I am grateful to Case Western Reserve University and the Group in Science and Mathematics Education at Berkeley for providing financial support during that year. The Group in Science and Mathematics Education also furnished me with a stimulating environment, and the Institute of Human Learning provided an excellent library. Shortly after arriving at Berkeley, I had the good fortune to meet C. Deborah Laughton, a psychology editor at Brooks/Cole. She expressed confidence in the book long before it was deserved and, with the assistance of an excellent staff at Brooks/Cole and first-rate reviewers, helped in the development of the text.

I am grateful to Marianne Taflinger, Fiorella Ljunggren, Anne Draus, Betty Berenson, Lillian Campobasso, and all the others who have contributed to this fourth edition. I would also like to thank the following reviewers for their helpful suggestions on this edition: Charles K. Allen, University of Montana; Stephen Christman, University of Toledo; Ira Fischler, University of Florida; Dennis Kerkman, Southwest Texas State University; John Kruschke, Indiana University; Thomas P. Pusateri, Loras College; Laurette Reeves, Rowan College of New Jersey; and Stephen Schmidt, Middle Tennessee State University. The comments of others are always welcome, and I would appreciate receiving suggestions from readers.

Stephen K. Reed

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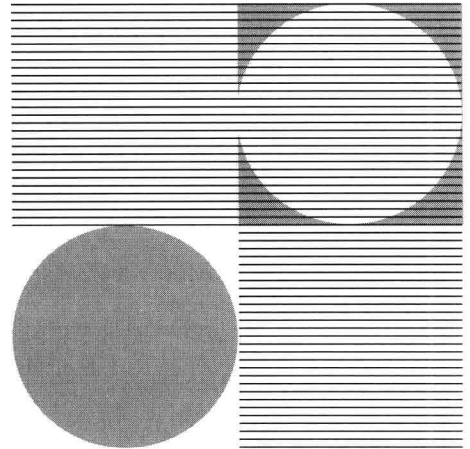


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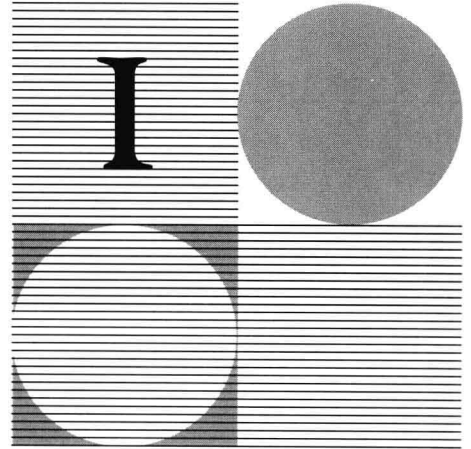
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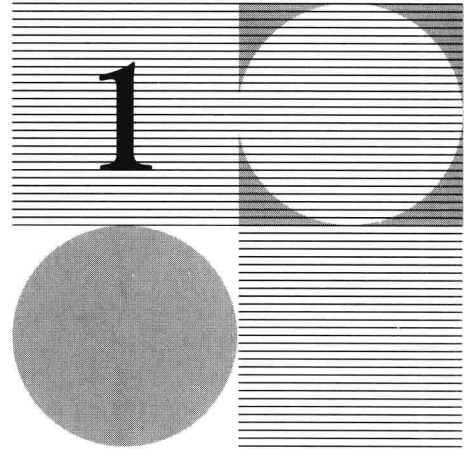
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INFORMATION- PROCESSING STAGES



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- 2 Pattern Recognition
- 3 Attention
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Introduction



Cognitive psychology refers to all processes by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered, and used.

ULRIC NEISSER (1967)

COGNITION IS USUALLY defined simply as the acquisition of knowledge. However, both the acquisition and the use of knowledge involve many mental skills. If you glanced at the table of contents at the beginning of this book, you saw a list of some of these skills. Psychologists who study cognition are interested in pattern recognition, attention, memory, visual imagery, language, problem solving, and decision making.

The purpose of this book is to provide an overview of the field of cognitive psychology. The book summarizes experimental research in cognitive psychology, discusses the major theories in the field, and attempts to relate the research and theories to cognitive tasks that people encounter in their daily lives—for example, reading, driving, studying, judging advertising claims, evaluating legal testimony, solving problems in the classroom, and making medical decisions.

Neisser's definition of cognitive psychology quoted on the preceding page reflects how psychologists study cognition. Let me repeat it for emphasis: "**Cognitive psychology** refers to all processes by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered, and used."

This definition has several important implications. The reference to a sensory input implies that cognition begins with our contact with the external world. Transformation of the sensory input means that our representation of the world is not just a passive registration of our physical surroundings but an active construction that may involve both reduction and elaboration. That is, we can attend to only a small part of the physical stimulation that surrounds us, and only a small part of what we attend to can be remembered. Reduction occurs when information is lost. Elaboration occurs when we add to the sensory input. For example, when you meet a friend, you may recall many shared experiences.

The storage and the recovery of information are, of course, what we call memory. The distinction between storage and recovery implies that the storage of information does not guarantee recovery. A good example of this distinction is the "tip of the tongue" phenomenon. Sometimes we can almost, but not quite, retrieve a word to express a particular thought or meaning. Our later recall of the word proves that the earlier failure was one of retrieval rather than one of storage. The word was stored in memory; it was simply hard to get it back out.

The last part of Neisser's definition is perhaps the most important. After information has been perceived, stored, and recovered, it must be put to good use—for example, to make decisions or to solve problems. We will learn more about problem solving and decision making in Part III, after we review the progress that has been made in understanding perception and memory.

Cognitive psychology

The study of the mental operations that support people's acquisition and use of knowledge