
What is Cognition?

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It is quite simply a thought, an automatic thought that is imposed on a person's consciousness, in relation to what they are going through. It's like her inner speech, the way she talks to herself. For example, "I'll never make it", "they're noticing my trembling hands", "she must think I'm weird", "I don't find anything interesting to say", "I'll stammer", "I'll probably die of a heart attack", "I'm sure I'll lose consciousness", "I won't be up to the task", "something terrible will happen", "I was ridiculous", "I'll still have an accident", "no one loves me", "I don't deserve to succeed"...

Cognitions correspond to a kind of inner monologue of the individual, hence the name sometimes given to them as self-verbalizations [1-3]. They are quick to install, almost reflex, in response to certain situations that are part of a person's dreaded situations. Sometimes they originate from a first situation of conflict or abuse, from a moment when these thoughts for ourselves have been proposed, imposed, injected by a hostile environment [4-7]. Sometimes they come from childhood, sometimes from a more recent event. But in both cases, we accepted them as true.

Cognitions are imposed on consciousness as plausible, as quasi-certainties, and not as the hypothetical evaluations they are [8-10]. In this sense, they sometimes escape logic. They are involuntary, automatic, and do not require any effort on the part of the person's appreciation. They are more or less conscious, sometimes indistinct to the mind of an individual, like a background noise in his mind [11-15]. They are recurrent, that is, they tend to resettle in the subject's consciousness every time, even if the facts have denied them. They then end up characterizing a usual style of thinking in response to certain situations. To be modified, they require significant effort. But perhaps the most interesting thing is that by working hard at it, we can change our cognitions and direct them towards well-being, freedom, recovery, realizing our potential and surpassing our personal limits [16-19].

The most wonderful thing is that for those who really dwell on it, cognitions can be modified in a direction that promotes the full development of the human being. What has marked cognitive psychology in the long term is the recognition, now widely shared, of a general objective: to establish a conception of human cognition inspired by the concepts provided by information processing theory. In this case, it is a question of accounting for the mental functions that apply to information in general, and more specifically to information that may constitute knowledge. This involves a whole series of steps, such as the initial

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capture of perceptual information, its transformation and storage in memory, its organization and evolution within that memory, and finally its recovery for subsequent use, in the context of new situations involving, for example, the search for a solution in response to an unprecedented problem [4,11,19-22].

The general notion of "cognition" encompasses all the functions that have occupied psychology since its origins: sensation, perception, learning, memory, reasoning, without forgetting all the activities that involve the production and understanding of language. In this sense, it can be characterized as "all the devices whose function is to produce and use knowledge". The notion is also invoked when it comes to formulating hypotheses on how knowledge is organized in human memory (in terms of individualized symbolic entities or networks) and on the architecture that links all its components. Cognitive activity is thus conceived as the interfacing between two sets of entities: representations (information structures stored in memory) and processing processes applicable to these representations (activation, comparison, combination, transformation) [1, 12, 16].

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