

Common Perceptual Errors

Confirmation Bias: Our natural tendency to color our perceptions of reality by consciously or unconsciously seeking data that support our assumptions about the world around us.

Habituation: Our tendency to become desensitized to any experience, positive or negative, that we experience repeatedly.

Primacy Effect: Our tendency in our first experiences with someone or something to be biased in favor of a particular impression of that person or thing.

Recency Effect: Our tendency in our last experiences with someone or something to be biased in favor of a particular impression of that person or thing.

Stereotypes: Our tendency to prejudge people as having the characteristics of a group (often negative), which blinds us to the unique characteristics of individuals.

as it is, but the exact opposite is actually the case. We make our own meaning out of what we experience, including what we don't understand (in the classroom, a meeting, or coaching conversation), and as a result of these perceptual errors (such as those described in the box above), the meaning we create is often wrong.

In *No One Understands You and What to Do About It* (2015), Heidi Grant Halvorson explains how perceptual errors color our perceptions of reality: "The uncomfortable truth is that most of us . . . can't see ourselves truly objectively" (p. 4). For this reason, instructional coaches and teachers need to start by seeing through perceptual errors and getting a clear picture of reality.

We employ three different strategies to get a clear picture of reality in a teacher's classroom: (a) video recording, (b) learning from students, and (c) gathering observation data. Video is the easiest and most powerful strategy. It is powerful because it provides an objective perspective on a lesson, and it is easy because almost every teacher has a smartphone or some other device that can be used to record a class. Video is what Cat Monroe and I employed to identify current reality and ultimately set a goal when I coached her.



Video 2.1

**Crysta Uses Video
to Get a Clear
Picture of Reality**

[resources.corwin.com/
impactcycle](https://resources.corwin.com/impactcycle)