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# 8. Attitude

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### Course Website

<http://54.243.252.9/ce-4200-webroot/>

## Readings/References

1. Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, p. 179-211.
2. [Lawson \(2022\), Attitudes Lecture to accompany CE 4200, Whitacre College of Engineering, Texas Tech University](#)
3. [Lawson \(2022\), Attitudes Handout to accompany Attitudes Lecture](#)

# Videos

1. [none](#)

## Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide guidance and preparation for the upcoming **Job Fair**, equipping you with the mindset and foundational strategies to make the most of the opportunity. While this lesson is primarily **motivational**, its impact might not feel immediately tangible. However, upon reflection, you may realize you've absorbed valuable insights that influence how you approach the event and your career development.

## Key Objectives:

- **Motivate and Inspire:**
  - Encourage a proactive and confident approach to networking and presenting yourself to potential employers.
  - Highlight the importance of viewing the Job Fair as a learning experience, regardless of immediate outcomes.
- **Preparation for Action:**
  - Ensure you approach the Job Fair with a clear purpose and realistic expectations.
  - Provide strategies for effective communication, self-presentation, and professional etiquette that can help you stand out.

## Definition of Attitudes

**attitude** [at-i-tood, -tyood]: manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing; tendency or orientation, especially of the mind.

## Synonyms:

- approach	- opinion
- belief	- perspective
- bias	- philosophy
- character	- point of view
- demeanor	- position
- mindset	- posture
- mood	- prejudice
- notion	- reaction
- sensibility	- sentiment
- stance	- stand
- temperament	- view

1. **BOK2 Definition:** Attitudes refer to the “ways in which one thinks and feels in response to a fact or situation.”
2. **BOK3 Definition:** “Attitudes [are] learned predispositions to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner.”

## Intention of “Attitudes”

- At the professional level, one’s attitudes affect how knowledge and skills are applied to solving civil engineering problems (**BOK2**).
- “Professional attitudes are the positive and constructive attitudes that a civil engineer should display” (**BOK3**).

### From Where Do We Get Our Attitudes?

- Life experiences.
- Education and mentoring.

- Professional and cultural influences.
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## Why Attitudes Matter for Civil Engineers (BOK2)

1. Attitudes significantly influence individual and group achievements.
2. Teaching attitudes is a standard practice in professional education.
3. Positive attitudes enhance workplace effectiveness and relationships.
4. Civil engineers with positive attitudes improve public perceptions of the profession and their career prospects.

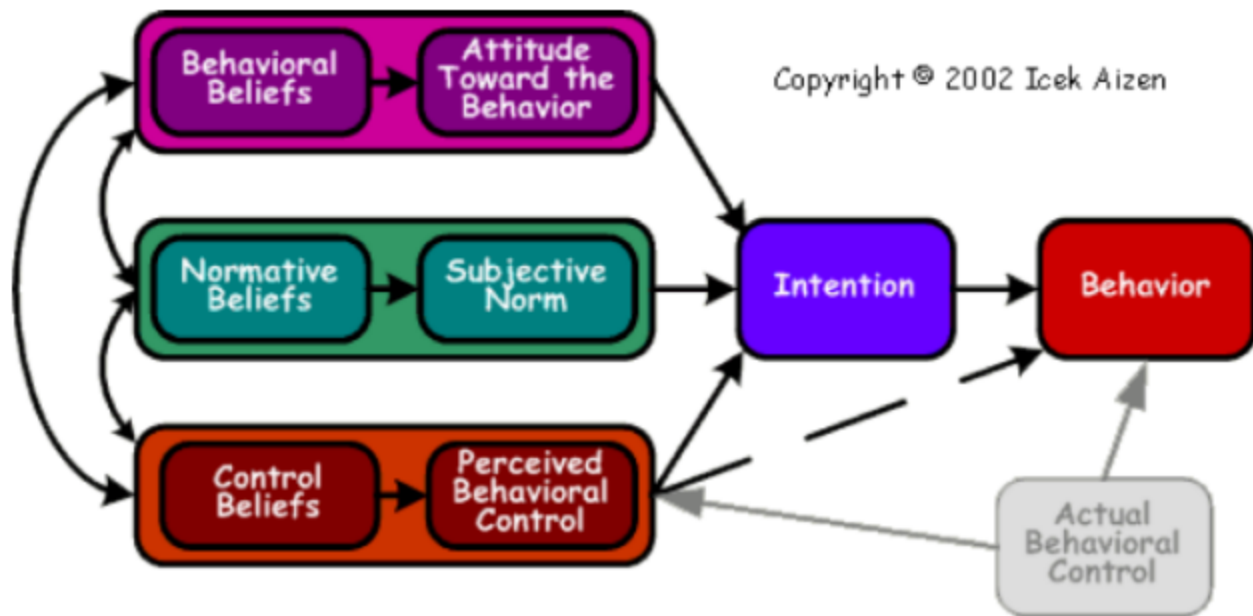
### Discussion Prompt:

- Do you think attitudes matter? Why or why not?
- 

## Theory of Planned Behavior / Reasoned Action

The **Theory of Reasoned Action** posits that behavior is determined by:

1. **Attitude** toward the behavior.
2. **Subjective norms** (beliefs about how others view the behavior).
3. **Perceived behavioral control** (belief in one's ability to perform the behavior).



Source: Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, p. 179-211.

## Key Takeaways:

- Behavior is best predicted by **intention**.
- Intention is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control.
- The more favorable these factors, the stronger the intention to perform the behavior.

## Attitudes That Support Civil Engineering Practice

### BOK2 Examples:

- Commitment	- Confidence
- Consideration of Others	- Curiosity
- High Expectations	- Honesty
- Integrity	- Intuition
- Good Judgment	- Optimism
- Persistence	- Positiveness
- Respect	- Self-esteem
- Sensitivity	- Thoughtfulness
- Thoroughness	- Tolerance
- Fairness	

## BOK3 Examples:

Professional attitudes include	Other professional attitudes include
Creativity	Commitment
Curiosity	Confidence
Flexibility	Empathy
Dependability	Entrepreneurship
	Fairness
	Honesty
	Integrity
	Optimism
	Persistence
	Respect

## Key Professional Attitudes (BOK3)

- **Creativity:** Solving complex engineering problems that lack obvious solutions.
- **Curiosity:** Gaining new knowledge and fostering creativity.
- **Flexibility:** Adapting to diverse teams and changing environments.
- **Dependability:** Being reliable and trustworthy in professional responsibilities.

## Application

### Explore Your Professional Attitudes:

1. **Are you attending the WCOE Job Fair?**

- (It's held in February and September each year.)
- Its a requirement of this course (even if you have a job, get as much SWAG as you can, and a lunch where someone else cleans up the mess)

## 2. **Consider:**

- What positive professional attitudes do you hold?
- How might you communicate these to a prospective employer?
- Can you think of examples or illustrations?
- **Willing to share? (Class participation encouraged.)**

### **Warning**

I am hardly qualified to give advice, but here are some tips if you are having a crummy day - notice none involve "adult beverages" or other chemical crutches!

# Strategies to Improve a (Temporary) Bad Attitude

## 1. **Pause and Reflect:**

- Take a moment to step away from the situation causing frustration or negativity.
- Use deep breathing, meditation, or a short walk to reset your mindset and regain perspective.
- **Tip:** Ask yourself, "Will this matter a week, month, or year from now?"

## 2. **Reframe Your Perspective:**

- Focus on the positive aspects of the situation or look for opportunities to learn from the challenge.
- Replace negative thoughts with constructive ones. For example, instead of thinking, "I can't do this," shift to, "This is tough, but I can figure it out."
- **Tip:** Gratitude exercises, like listing three good things about your day, can help reframe your outlook.

## 3. **Engage in Physical Activity:**

- Physical movement releases endorphins, which improve mood and reduce stress.
- Take a short walk, stretch, or engage in light exercise to reset both your mind and



body.

- **Tip:** Even a 5-minute stretch or deep breathing exercise at your desk can make a difference.

#### 4. **Connect with Others:**

- Talk to a trusted friend, colleague, or mentor to vent or gain perspective.
- Positive social interactions can help you feel supported and offer fresh ideas for tackling challenges.
- **Tip:** Sometimes just expressing your frustration to someone who listens can help dissipate it.

#### 5. **Break Down Tasks:**

- Overwhelm can often lead to a temporary bad attitude. Break larger tasks into smaller, manageable steps.
- Focus on completing one thing at a time to build a sense of accomplishment and regain motivation.
- **Tip:** Celebrate small wins along the way to maintain momentum.

#### 6. **Use Humor:**

- Find ways to laugh, even in difficult situations. Humor can provide a quick mental reset and lighten the mood.
- Watch a short funny video, share a joke, or find something in the situation to smile about.
- **Tip:** Keeping a lighthearted attitude can prevent small frustrations from escalating.

## End of Section