Education 173
Cognition and Learning in Educational Settings

Need Theories of Motivation
Fall Quarter 2007

Early Theories

• Drive Reduction
  – The organism tries to reduce its motivations by satisfying drives
  – Hull: Reduce “tissue deficit”
• Optimal Arousal
  – Yerkes-Dodson Law (1908)
  – Implies that the organism will seek an optimal state of activity, rather than a minimal one

Cognitive Consistency

• Cognitive Dissonance Theory
  – Beliefs & behavior: Are they consistent?
  – Failed cult prophecy of doomsday
    • Cult members accommodated rather than rejected beliefs
    • “The aliens spared the planet”
• Self-Perception Theory
  – We observe ourselves and make inferences about what we believe, just as we do when we observe other people
Maslow’s Theory of Needs

- Maslow Promoted the Study of Psychologically Healthy People
- Humanistic Psychology
- Hierarchy of Needs
- Precedence
- Behavior Can Serve Multiple Goals
- Relevance to Teaching and Learning?

Carl Rogers’ Client-Centered Therapy

- Applied Humanistic Psychology to Psychotherapy
- Assumed: Actualizing Tendency
  - Self-Healing
  - Client, not patient
- Unconditional Positive Regard
- Active Listening
- Lasting Effects on Our Culture?

Achievement Motivation

- A Personality Trait
- Achievement Motivation
  - Also: Need for Achievement (nAch)
  - Individual differences
  - Cultural Differences
  - Renaissance Florence
- Thematic Apperception Test
  - Ambiguous pictures
  - Make up a story
  - Themes of achievement or avoidance?
Expectancy-Value Theory

• For Every Decision We Make, Each Option Includes:
  – An Expectancy
    • Probability of success
    • Probability of failure
  – A Value
    • Payoff for success
    • Cost of failure
• The Theory Recognizes Success and Failure as Possible Outcomes

Self-Worth Theory

• Desire to Be Viewed as Able
  – Covington’s Self-Worth Theory
• Avoid Being Seen as Unable
  – Set very low goals
  – Set unrealistically high goals
  – Claim low effort
  – Claim low practice/preparation
  – Dismiss importance of the task
• Is Protecting Self-Worth Adaptive?

Implicit Theories:
How do we think about our abilities?

• Entity Theory
  • “I’m not good at math.”
  • Assumes fixed ability
• Incremental Theory
  • “I’ll get these problems if I keep working at them.”
  • Assumes potential for growth
Task/Ego Involvement:

How do we engage in tasks?
How do we judge our performance?

- Ego Involvement
  - Ability judged by social comparison
  - Fostered by competition

- Task Involvement
  - Ability judged by task performance alone
  - Fostered by cooperation
  - Encourages higher intrinsic motivation

Performance Orientation

Goal emphasis is on:

- Performing well in the eyes of others
- Appearing to be intelligent
- Avoiding failure or looking ignorant
- Performing better than others
- Attaining external rewards

Mastery Orientation

Goal emphasis is on:

- Learning
- Mastery
- Intrinsic interest
- The Value of Skills/Concepts Being Learned
Performance Orientation
• Ego Goals
• Ability-focused Goals
• Entity Theory
• Ego Involved
• Extrinsic Motivation

Mastery Orientation
• Mastery Goals
• Task-focused Goals
• Incremental Theory
• Task Involved
• Intrinsic Motivation

Factors that Encourage...

Performance Orientation
• Competitive Classrooms
• Standardized Testing
• Large Class Sizes
• Curricular breadth without depth
• Societal Pressure
  – Grades, college admission, accountability

Factors that Encourage...

Mastery Orientation
• Collaborative Classrooms
• Multiple/Differentiated Assignments and Assessments
• Intrinsically Motivating Tasks