Psychology 2200

Developmental Psychology I: Fundamentals

Self-Esteem

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learning objectives

- list several outcomes associated with high and low self-esteem
- using a study by Kamins & Dweck (1999), describe what happens when adults boost the self-esteem of children
- describe "engine model" and "thermometer model" of self-esteem and distinguish which one is better supported by evidence
- discuss how attributions and the zone of proximal development promote self-esteem
- explain what happens when the government creates incentives for high achievement in school

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self-esteem is linked to positive outcomes

high self-esteem

- believe that school is important
- willing to try hard
- liked by peers
- invested in & perform well in sports
- sociable & conscientious

self-esteem ——— outcomes

low self-esteem

- aggressive, antisocial behavior
- anxious
- lack focus
- depressed

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Kamins & Dweck (1999)

5-year-olds role-play through 5 scenarios

in first 4, they do well and receive praise... random assignment to

person condition (self-esteem boost) - "you're really smart"

process condition - "you tried really hard"

in #5, they get a difficult scenario. The kids don't quite get the task right.

Does the condition affect whether and how much **self-esteem** takes a hit?

DV1: measure self-esteem before and after difficult task

Does the praise affect whether they **persist** with difficult tasks in the face of failure?

DV2: ask children if they want to do easy or difficult tasks

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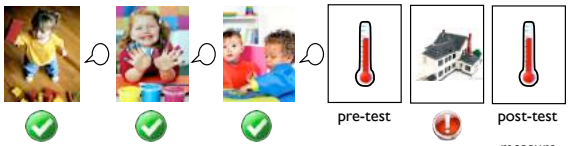
Kamins & Dweck (1999)

put away blocks | wash hands | clean up after snack | measure self-esteem | lego house | measure self-esteem



pre-test | post-test

measure persistence

you're a good girl!

you're really good at this

hypothetical stories

person condition

self-esteem boost

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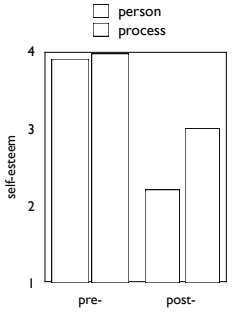
self-esteem

- self-esteem decreases after failure
- decrease is largest when kids are used to getting self-esteem boosts
- self-esteem boosting makes kids fragile



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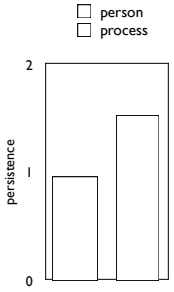
persistence

- persistence was higher in the process condition
- conclusions: offering process (rather than person) feedback
  - makes self-esteem more durable
  - increases persistence on difficult tasks



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How does self-esteem work?

an engine
self-esteem *drives* behavior

A

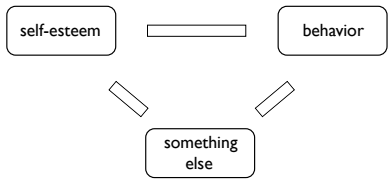
a thermometer
self-esteem *reacts to* behavior

B

post hoc fallacy

correlation does not imply causation

when two variable (A, B) are correlated
- A might cause B
- B might cause A
- and/or C might cause A and B



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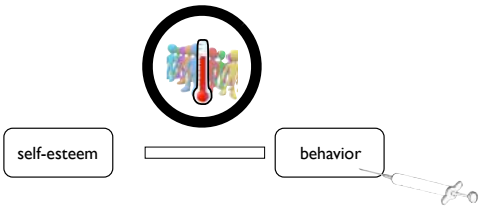
how to help children



1. attributions
2. zone of proximal development

e.g., Leary (1999)

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1. attributions

- two stable patterns

attributions of performance	view of ability	task goals	response to failure	
success = luck failure = ability	entity "I am a smart person"	judgment "I want people to think I'm smart"	helplessness "nothing can be done. I'm no good"	quit task learning stagnates self-esteem drops
success = ability failure = effort	incremental "I am growing little by little"	development "I want to learn"	mastery "time to try harder"	try task again learning continues self-esteem increases

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Zone of Proximal Development

- very low challenge is bad for learning (no stimulation)
- very high challenge is bad for learning (overwhelming, scary)
  - induces learned helplessness
  - impedes future performance
  - lowers self-esteem
- somewhere between high and low challenge is optimal
  - Vygotsky called this the **Zone of Proximal Development**
    - a range of tasks too difficult for the child to do alone but possible with the help of adults and more skilled peers

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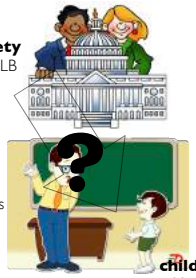
how can society help?



society
1. NCLB

teachers
1. attributions
2. ZPD

children
achievement

- No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; 2001)
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA; 2015)
  - set high performance goals
  - standardized tests

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raising achievement in schools
Flink, Boggiano, & Barrett (1990)

- question: does providing structure and motivation to teachers improve achievement in schools?
- field experiment
- participants
  - 15 grade four teachers with class (267 students)
- method
  - teach tasks (e.g., anagram) to children for 10 mins
    - videotaped
  - randomly assigned (IV)
    - performance goals condition
    - learning goals condition
- **student performance** evaluated by experimenter (DV #1)
- videotapes coded by blind raters for **teacher's level of interest** (DV #2)

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experimental conditions
Flink, Boggiano, & Barrett (1990)

instructions for each condition

1. learning condition (~8 teachers & their students)

   "Your role will be to **facilitate the children's learning** how to solve the anagrams problems. Your job is simply to help the students learn how to solve the problems."

2. performance condition (~8 teachers & their students)

   "Your role will be to ensure that the children **perform well on the problems**. It is a teacher's responsibility to make sure that students perform up to standards. If, for example, your students were tested on the problems, they should be able to do well."

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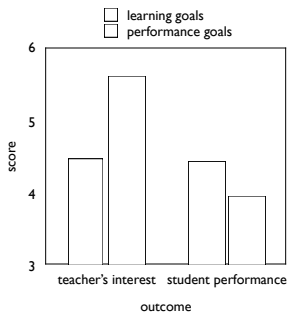
results
Flink, Boggiano, & Barrett (1990)

- teacher's interest
  - from video tape
  - "blind" coders
  - ratings of teacher's behavior
- student performance
  - test grades



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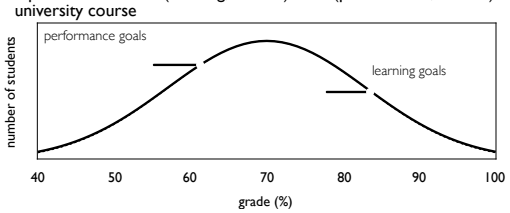
the effect of performance goals

Utman (1997)

- meta-analysis of 24 experimental studies
  - learning goals = attempting to attain mastery
  - performance goals = attempting to demonstrate that one has high ability
- difference in achievement
  - learning > performance, effect size, *d* = 0.53
  - equivalent of class B (learning; M = 70) vs. C (performance; M = 63) in university course



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summary

- self-esteem is linked to many important outcomes
- boosting self-esteem by rewarding the child as an **person** backfires
  - can make child fragile
- boosting a child's **process** by rewarding effort and strategy works well
- giving children tasks that are within their ZPD along with appropriate scaffolding (that you withdraw with time) leads to optimal development
- motivating teachers to increase performance goals backfires
  - best strategy is to motivate learning

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