

Welcome to Social Cognition  
Psychology 380

Professor:  
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## Syllabus

Required Textbooks:

- 1) Pennington, D. (2000). *Social cognition*. London: Routledge.
- 2) Nelson, T. D. (2002). *The psychology of prejudice*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

## Syllabus

Quizzes: 3 quizzes. 1 prior to each exam. Can't make up missed quiz.

Exams: 3 exams, all non-cumulative. Need to decide when Exam 3 will be.

## Syllabus

Extra Credit: Unannounced class activities you can do to get extra credit

Grading: 180 points total.

A's = 15%  
B's = 30%  
C's = 40%  
D's = 13%  
F's = 2%

## Syllabus

Missed Exam: Take a makeup at end of semester with 10% penalty.

Meeting Times: Do you really want to take a 3 hour class?

## What is Social Cognition?

Interface between social and cognitive psychology

Examines how people understand and make sense of their world, themselves, and others

## Attributions

An attribution is an explanation for an event

## Attributions

People make attributions to:

- Predict future events
- Control future events

## Attributions

Two kinds of attributions:

- Internal attribution
- External attribution

## Attributions

Attributions are explanations for events

People make attributions to predict and control the future

Internal attributions assign causality to factors within a person (e.g., personality)

External attributions assign causality to factors outside of a person (e.g., situation)

## Attributions

Attributions affect behavior

## Neatness Study

Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):  
Study 1

Used internal attributions to make kids neater:

- Attribution group
- Persuasion group
- Control group

## Neatness Study

Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):  
Study 1

Step 1: Measured base-line neatness

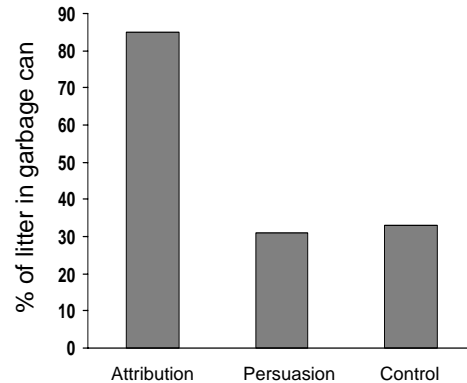
Step 2: Administered Treatment

- Attribution group: repeatedly told they were neat and tidy
- Persuasion group: repeatedly told they should be neat and tidy
- Control group: not told anything

## Neatness Study

Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):  
Study 1

Step 3: Re-assessed neatness



## Math Study

Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):  
Study 2

Used internal attributions to improve kids' math:

- Attribution group
- Persuasion group
- Positive reinforcement group

## Math Study

Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):  
Study 1

Step 1: Measured base-line math performance

Step 2: Administered Treatment

Teachers made statements to students about their math ability for 8 days

## Math Study

Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):  
Study 1

### Attribution Group

- You seem to know your math assignments very well
- You really work hard in math
- You're trying more, keep at it!

## Math Study

Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):  
Study 1

### Persuasion Group

- You should be good at math
- You should be getting better grades in math
- You should be doing well in math

## Math Study

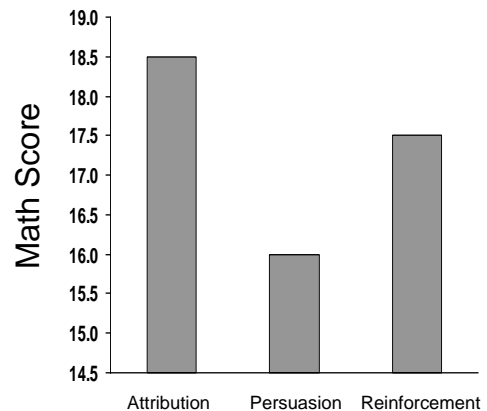
Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):  
Study 1

### Reinforcement Group

- I'm proud of your work
- I'm pleased with your progress
- Excellent progress

## Math Study

Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):  
Study 2



### **Magic Marker Study**

Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett (1975)

Observed that 3-5 year old kids love playing with magic markers

Created 3 groups of kids to see whether external attributions change behavior

### **Magic Marker Study**

Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett (1975)

Expected reward group:

- Expected a reward
- Got a reward

External Attribution:

Should attribute playing with magic markers to reward

### **Magic Marker Study**

Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett (1975)

Unexpected reward group:

- Did not expect a reward
- Got reward

Internal Attribution:

Should attribute playing with magic markers to liking

### **Magic Marker Study**

Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett (1975)

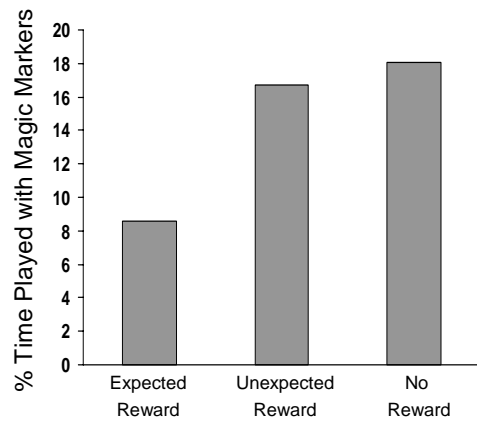
No reward group:

- Did not expect a reward
- Did not get one

Internal Attribution:

Should attribute playing with magic markers to liking

**Magic Marker Study**  
Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett (1975)



Overjustification Effect

When rewards undermine  
intrinsic motivation