

# Psych 345 ch 7



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Carl Hovland (founded Yale Communication and Attitude Program)(Based his research on Clark Hull's Learning Theory  $B = D \times H$  neither D or H can = 0).

1. Message Learning: According to this approach a message must be learned before an attitude can be changed. This is divided into three stages:

Attention (e. g. to learn the material you must read it), Comprehension (e. g. to learn the material you must understand it), and Retention (e. g. to learn the material you must remember it). The Three-Step Model of Attitude

Acquisition(Hull believed that behaviors are acquired through reinforcement, and that reinforcement must reduce a drive if learning is to occur). 1.

Hovland conceived of attitudes as verbal habits, no different in principle from motor habits. You think them, but the thought is an implicit, covert, verbal

statement. (e. g. if you have a positive attitude about flossing everyday, according to Hovland, this attitude is an implicit verbal statement. So, when you think about your attitude you silently say, I like to floss everyday.)2. The

laws of learning govern the acquisition of attitudes. Some attitudes are acquired through processes of association (Classical Conditioning), but most are acquired as a function of reinforcement (Instrumental learning). Thus, in order to change someones attitude you need to provide that person with an incentive that reduces some need or a promise to reduce some need.

Example of The Three-Step Model of Attitude AcquisitionIf you wanted to convince a conservative friend of yours (who typically turns right) to become more liberal (by turning left), according to Hovland you must (1) return the person to the choice point by asking her to reconsider her position (2) present your alternative position (3) give her a greater incentive to adopt your position that she has previously received for being a conservative.

Types of Incentives1. Tangible Rewards: Food and Water: The more food and

water you offer someone for holding a particular attitude, the more likely the person is to adopt that attitude. Money is a secondary reinforcer and is functionally equivalent to food and water. 2. Fear Reduction: Anything that reduces an organism's fear is reinforcing. 3. Social Needs:(1) people want to be right, anything that leads people to believe they are doing the right thing serves as a reinforcer for their attitude. Being right is merely a reinforcer, no different from food or water. It serves as glue to connect the new response (attitude) with the stimulus (question).(2) social approval is important. If we are told that people we admire will like us if we adopt a particular attitude, their approval serves as a reinforcer.(3) The desire to be like someone is also a psychological need relevant to persuasion. (e. g. Sports drink commercial featuring Michael Jordan with the slogan " Be like Mike. " We don't necessarily think we are doing the right thing for our bodies by purchasing the product, and we certainly don't believe Michael Jordan will be our friend if we drink it. Instead, we are persuaded because we want to be like Michael Jordan because we admire him.)Yale Program Empirical FindingsThe researchers considered three independent variable: 1. The Who (or the source). 2. The What (or the message). 3. To Whom (or the audience).(Yale approach: does not portray the message recipient as an active information processor. It not a cognitive approach, it regards attitude change as a passive, mindless process.)Yale Program Source Characteristics1. The source of a high credibility is more persuasive than a source of low credibility is. We are more persuaded by credible sources because we assume they know what they are talking about and we want to be right. 2. Credibility is affected by (1)Expertise (2)Trustworthiness. 3. Source Expertise matters most when an extreme position is being advocated. 4. Trustworthiness is also important,

sources we trust are more apt to persuade us than are sources we distrust.

5. Yale Group thought that discounting and augmenting can explain why self-interest undermines a source's credibility. (e. g. There are two reasons why someone would tell you that a given product is best, (1) the person actually thinks the product is best (2) the person has some other motive, like they are possibly being paid to say they like the product. Source Likability Likable sources tend to be more persuasive than unlikeable sources are. Likable sources tend to be: 1. Physically attractive. 2. Of good character. 3. Similar to us. 4. Famous. Sleeper Effect Although high credibility sources are more apt to persuade us than are sources who lack credibility, this effect tends to diminish over time. In fact, as time passes the persuasive impact of low credibility source increases, known as the sleeper effect. Example: Hovland and Weiss had students read a variety of messages. some of the messages were attributed to sources of high credibility and some sources to low credibility. The students then indicated their agreement with the positions from the messages both immediately after reading them and four weeks later. Results were that the immediate responses thought that the high credibility source was better than the low credibility source. Four weeks later they thought that both sources were equally effective. This is because the persuasive impact of high credibility source decreased over time while the persuasive impact of the low credibility source increased over time. One-sided vs Two-sided Appeals When an audience is already leaning toward your side (preaching to the choir) a one sided argument is more effective than a two sided one. The reverse is true when the audience is initially opposed to your position, a two sided message is more effective than a one sided one.

Visual Appeals vs Printed Messages Visual messages are more effective than

printed messages than when the material is simple or easy to understand. Printed messages are more effective than visual messages when the material is complex or difficult to understand. Emotional appeals work best when the attitude is based on feelings and emotion. Cognitive appeals work best when the attitude is based on beliefs and information.

Example: Fabrigar and Petty (pg 246). Message order effects In the presidential election is your party in an advantage if they choose their candidate first (primacy effect) or last (recency effect)? Research has shown that neither party benefits from being first or last. Audience Characteristic McGuire argued that audience variables have different effects at different stages of the attitude change process, and that these effects tend to cancel one another out. High intelligence, for example, increases the likelihood that a message will be understood and remembered but decreases the likelihood that the person will yield to the position advocated in the message. As a consequence of these opposing tendencies, people of moderate intelligence are expected to be most easily led. Persuasibility and Age It is widely believed that older people are less apt to change their attitudes than adolescents or young adults are: 1. One explanation termed the impressionable years hypothesis, asserts that late adolescence and early adulthood are uniquely impressionable years in which people are particularly susceptible to attitude change. 2. Another explanation, termed the lifelong openness hypothesis maintains that people are equally open to attitude change throughout their lives, but younger people experience more instability in their lives than do older people and this explains why their attitudes are less stable. Audience Characteristics and Message

Content (High self-monitors are attuned to the social appropriateness of

their behavior and strive to cultivate desirable public identity in social settings, low self monitors in contrast regard themselves as highly principled people who strive to remain true to themselves in social situations). Snyder and Debono (1985): Participants heard one of two advertisements for shampoo. one was very image oriented ( will leave your hair looking great) and the other emphasized the shampoo's quality ( it will give you healthy hair). Image conscious high self monitors were more influenced by the image oriented advertisement and value conscious low self monitors were influenced by the advertisement that focused on the product's quality. Culture and message content Han and Shavitt (1994): In their study, American college students were more persuaded by individualistic ads and Korean students were more persuaded by collectivistic ads. This shows that what works for some cultures doesn't work for others, and what is effective in some cultures is ineffective in other cultures. Asch's Model of Attitude Change Applying principles of Gestalt psychology Asch argued that people do not passively register the messages they receive, but actively transform them, and the meaning they give to these messages determines whether attitude change occurs. 1. Transfer of affect: the liking we feel for the communicator comes to be associated with the message the communicator is advocating. If we like the communicator then we like the message and if we dislike the communicator then we dislike the message. 2. Communicators are more persuasive because (1) the meaning of any message is variable and depends on the context in which it is found (2) the liking we feel for the communicator provides the context and alters the meaning of the message (3) the meaning we give to the message guides attitude change. 3. It is not that we evaluate an unchanged message more favorably when it is linked to

a liked communicator, it is rather, that our liking for a communicator alters the meaning of the message itself. 4. Example: Lorge found that participants agreed with the a passage more when they thought Jefferson said it than when they thought Lenin said it. Invoking the principles of association to explain this communicator likability effect, Lorge argued that the liking we feel for Jefferson transfers to the statement he purportedly authored. Social Judgement Theory<sup>1</sup>. Several investigations found that peoples attitudes affect whether or not they think other attitude positions are fair. Positions that lie close to ones own view asre judged to be fair and impartial, while messages that fall far from ones own view are judged to be unfair and propagandistic.

2. This theory asserts that people's existing attitudes influence the way they perceive a persuasive communication, and the way people perceive a persuasive communication determine whether or not attitude change occurs.

3. On the one hand there is evidence that people who are highly involved in an issue consider opposing arguments to be weaker and show less attitude change than do those who are less involved. 4. There is less evidence, however, that perceptual processes of assimilation and contrast underlie these effects, or that extreme messages are more apt to persuade uninvolved people than involved ones. Contrast Effects Occur when the message is regarded as being far away from ones own position and is perceived to be unreasonable, unfair, and unconvincing. Factors that determine Latitude Width<sup>1</sup>. Compared to people with moderate views, people with extreme views have narrower latitudes of acceptance and broader latitudes of rejection. 2. Sherif and Hovland argued that the more important or personally relevant an issue is to a person, the narrower will be the person's latitude of acceptance and the broader will be the person's

latitude of rejection. they referred to this tendency as ego involvement, but most researchers use personal involvement, personal importance, or personal relevance. 3. Suppose you want to change someone's attitude, you want your message to fall just inside the person's latitude of acceptance without crossing over into the person's latitude of rejection. if you succeed, your message will be subject to an assimilation effect and will be seen as fair minded and credible, if you fail your message will be subject to contrast effect and will be viewed as unfair and unconvincing. Inoculation Theory of Persuasion<sup>1</sup>. This model uses a biological analogy to explain how two-sided arguments make people resistant to attitude change. 2. McGuire argued that people exposed to a two sided message are inoculated against future attitude change because exposure to a two sided message stimulates counterarguments that can later be used to resist attitude change attempts. Forewarning effects<sup>1</sup>. These occur because people inoculate themselves in the period between the time they learn they are going to hear a persuasive appeal and the time the appeal is delivered. Turns out that simply being warned that we're going to hear a persuasive communication can decrease the amount of attitude change we show. 2. Chen, Reardon, Rea, and Moore (1992): Participants were either forewarned or not forewarned about an upcoming persuasive appeal. additionally some were distracted and some were not. Forewarning reduced attitude change only when participants were not distracted, suggesting that forewarning effects depend on one's ability to generate counterarguments before the appeal is received. Cognitive Response Theory<sup>1</sup>. Attitude change often depends on the thoughts a person generates about the attitude issue. 2. Greenwald (1968) proposed that attitude change isn't determined by how well the person learns and



remembers a persuasive message, but by the thoughts the person has while receiving the message. 3. The theory assumes that people who receive a persuasive communication actively think about the position being advocated. Some of these thoughts support the position being advocated, others (called counterarguments) oppose it. 4. Cognitive response theory assumes that you will change your attitude in the direction advocated by the message only if your pro-argument thoughts outnumber your negative ones. Thought Listing Technique Most common is to have participants write down or verbalize their thoughts while they are receiving (or right after they received) a persuasive communication. These cognitive responses are then coded as being either favorable (proargument), unfavorable (counterargument), or neutral with respect to the attitude issue. Researchers then relate the number of positive and negative thoughts to the amount of attitude change that was produced.

#### Dual Process Model of Attitude Change

Petty and Cacioppo (1981, 1986):

1. Central route to attitude change: Sometimes people change their attitudes in a rational thoughtful manner. Attitude change depends on factors that are central to the quality of the arguments the message contains. (The central route is taken relatively infrequently because it occurs only when people are motivated and able to think carefully about the information they are receiving.) Attitudes in the central route are stronger than attitudes in the peripheral route.
2. Peripheral route to attitude change: Sometimes people are busy or don't want to devote a lot of attention to considering the merits of a persuasive message. Attitude change depends on factors that are peripheral to the quality of the arguments. Many times, people choose this route because they lack a strong argument so peripheral cues are all they have at their disposal.
3. Factors

that determine which route will be taken:-Motivational factors: if attitude change is to occur through the central route, people must be motivated to give a great deal of thought and attention to understanding the message they are receiving.-The ability to think carefully about the merits of a message. Dual Process Model Research

1. Experiment: Students read persuasive message that favored instituting senior exams, some with three arguments and some with nine arguments. One group read a strong and compelling arguments, the other group read weak and specious arguments.
2. Prediction: Argument quality will guide persuasion when involvement is high, but argument quantity will drive persuasion when involvement is low.
3. Results: Argument quality affected persuasion when involvement was high, but had no effect when involvement was low. Argument quantity affected persuasion when involvement was low, but had no effect when involvement was high.
4. This study supports the claim that attitude change occurs through the central route when involvement is high and through the peripheral route when involvement is low.

Distraction effects of Arguments Quality

Petty, Wells, Brock (1976): argued that distraction makes weak arguments more effective because even if people are motivated to think about the message they aren't able to do so when they are distracted. This is consistent with the claim that distraction blocks central route processing and induces peripheral processing.

Mood and Persuasion

People are more apt to be persuaded when they are in a good mood than when they are in a bad or neutral mood. Bless, Bohner, Schwarz, and Strack (1990) suggest that this occurs because people process information through the peripheral route when they are happy, and consequently are as easily influenced by weak arguments as strong ones. Petty, Schumann, Richman, and Strathman

(1993) found that good moods affect persuasion through the peripheral route when involvement is low, but through the central route when involvement is high. Need for Cognition Cacioppo and Petty (1982) Proposed that people vary with respect to how much they enjoy thinking about problems and issues. Some people like to think a lot and are characteristically in the central mode, other people do not enjoy thinking a lot and are characteristically in the peripheral mode. Message framing and Health-Promoting behaviors (People are risk adverse for gains but risk seeking for losses) Rothman and Salvoey (1997) two types of health behaviors: 1. Health prevention: behaviors reduce ones susceptibility to illness or injury. (e. g. buckling your seat belt or putting on sunscreen) 2. Health detection: Are riskier than health prevention behaviors, Mammograms, prostate exams, and cholesterol tests allow an illness or condition to be detected but they don't in themselves provide any protection from developing the problem. 3. Example: Rothman and colleagues found that messages framed in terms of gains ( using product provides benefits) were more effective when health prevention was emphasized, but messages framed in terms of losses (failing to use this product increases your risk) were more effective when health detection was emphasized. Fear Appeals 1. Persuasive communications that are designed to frighten people usually by portraying the seriousness of some behavior in graphic and often morbid detail. 2. Although research in this area is not entirely consistent, fear appeals are generally effective. 3. People who receive high fear messages are more persuaded than are people who receive low fear messages. 4. high fear messages should be accompanied by two assurances: (1) people need to be assured that the recommended behavior will effectively reduce the risks they are facing (2)

People need to be assured that they are capable of performing the recommended behavior. Overcoming Defensiveness<sup>1</sup>. To be effective, fear appeals must provoke fear without invoking defensiveness. People don't want to believe they are at risk for developing an awful disease and they will defend against this belief by denying their susceptibility if their anxiety and fear become too great. 2. Nelson and Steele (2000): found that coffee drinkers defensively denied the validity of a report linking caffeine consumption to fibrocystic disease when they were not given an opportunity to affirm their self worth by reminding themselves that they possessed many fine values, but accepted the report's validity when they were given an opportunity to affirm their self worth.