



# Goal orientations and the development of exceptionality

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## Actiotope Model of Giftedness (AMG)

- Dynamic process to develop towards excellence
- Goals: select, energize, direct and regulate actions
- Goals need to be continually updated and becoming increasingly focused to facilitate the expansion of action repertoire
- Goals, together with the environment, action repertoire and subjective action space, are part of a system



# Flow of Presentation

- Introduce goal orientation theory
- Different types of goal orientation and their motivation / achievement outcomes
- Management of multiple goals
- Is goal orientation a trait or a state? Stability and flexibility of goal orientation
- Classroom goal structure



# Goal Orientation Theory

- Goal: **why** students would like to succeed academically, but not **what** they would like to achieve
- Different types of goal orientation predict different affective, behavioral and cognitive outcomes (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1999)
- 3 major types of goal orientation:
  - mastery / learning
  - performance
  - social



## Mastery Goal

- Purpose of learning is to acquire knowledge, develop skills and increase understanding of learning materials
- Focus on personal improvement and development
- Associate with adaptive outcomes, including high persistence in the face of challenge, use of more elaborate study strategies, positive learning attitudes and high self-efficacy (Ames, 1992; Kaplan, Middleton, Urdan, & Midgley, 2002)



## Performance Goal

- Purpose of learning is to demonstrate or prove intellectual ability to others
- Focus on gaining favorable judgment or avoiding negative judgment of competence
- The academic outcomes of performance goal are inconsistent across studies
- Some studies found negative outcomes, including negative affect, withdrawal in the face of challenge and the use of surface rather than deep learning strategies (Ames, 1992; Grant & Dweck, 2003)
- Yet, some studies found positive outcomes, including high self-efficacy, the use of effective learning strategies and positive affect (Elliot, 1999; Urdan, 1997)



Goal Orientation	Confidence	Behavior Pattern
<b>Performance goal</b>	<b>If high</b>	<b>Mastery-oriented</b> Seek challenge High persistence
	<b>but</b>	
	<b>If low</b>	<b>Helpless</b> Avoid challenge Low persistence
<b>Mastery goal</b>	<b>If high</b>	<b>Mastery-oriented</b> Seek challenge High persistence
	<b>or</b>	
	<b>If low</b>	

Dweck (1986)



# Approach-Avoidance Distinction

Elliot (1999)

- Performance-approach goal: focus on achieving success and demonstrating high ability
- Performance-avoidance goal: focus on avoiding failure or looking dumb in front of others
- In general, performance-approach goal predicts more positive outcomes than performance-avoidance goal



## Performance-Avoidance Goal

- Associate with negative outcomes, including low efficacy, anxiety, avoidance of help seeking, self-handicapping strategies and low grades (Elliot, 1999; Urdan, Ryan, Anderman, & Gheen, 2002)



## Performance-Approach Goal

- Prediction on academic outcome is inconsistent
- Most of the studies support positive outcomes, including high persistence, positive affect and high grades (Harackiewicz, Barron, Tauer, & Elliot, 2002)
- Some studies found negative outcomes, including anxiety, disruptive behavior and low retention of knowledge (Midgley, Kaplan, & Middleton, 2001)
- Midgley, Kaplan, and Middleton (2001) further cautioned for students' potential transformation from performance-approach to performance-avoidance goals when they experience failure or perceive themselves unfavorably



# Approach-Avoidance Distinction

Elliot (1999)

- Further incorporated approach-avoidance distinction to mastery goal
- Mastery-approach goal: seek to increase understanding of learning materials
- Mastery-avoidance goal: seek to avoid misunderstanding or failure in learning



## 2 X 2 Framework (Elliot, 1999)

	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal
Approaching success	Mastery-approach goal	Performance-approach goal
Avoiding failure	Mastery-avoidance goal	Performance-avoidance goal



## Sample Items

- Mastery-approach goal  
“I desire to completely master the material presented in this class.”
- Mastery-avoidance goal  
“I worry that I may not learn all that I possibly could in this class.”
- Performance-approach goal  
“It is important for me to do better than other students.”
- Performance-avoidance goal  
“My goal in this class is to avoid performing poorly.”



## Mastery-Avoidance Goal

- Relate to disorganized studying and negative emotion like test anxiety and worry (Elliot & McGregor, 2001)
- Its pattern of consequence is more negative than mastery-approach goal but more positive than performance-avoidance goal



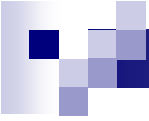
# Mastery and Performance Goals

- Early literature in the West: the two goals are negatively correlated → dichotomous in nature
- Asian countries (e.g. HK and Singapore): the two goals are positively correlated
- Tao and Hong (2000) explain this positive correlation from a cultural perspective.
- Chinese students are not only expected to learn new skills, but are also expected to demonstrate their learning through high performance to gain **social approval** from significant others.



## Social Goals

- Social reasons to achieve academically, e.g., to get social approval from parents, to maintain social relationship with peers
- Dowson and McInerney (2001, 2003) identified five social goals, namely social affiliation goal, social approval goal, social responsibility goal, social status goal and social concern goal


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- Research on social goal is limited
  - Social responsibility goal was associated with adaptive outcomes, including higher grades, higher academic efficacy and positive affect (Wentzel, 1993; Patrick, Hicks, & Ryan, 1997; Anderman, 1999)
  - Social concern was highly correlated with mastery and predicted achievement outcomes (McInerney, Roche, McInerney & Marsh, 1997)
  - Social concern and affiliation were associated with deep learning strategies (Watkins, McInerney, & Lee, 2002)
  - The prediction of social goal on motivation outcome is more complicated than mastery and performance goals because social goal involves different types and their prediction depends very much on context.



# Goal Orientation of HK Gifted Students

Chan (2008)

- HK gifted students endorsed mastery and social goals over performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals
- Mastery goal predicted positively on academic, non-academic and social/leadership achievement
- Social goal predicted positively on social/leadership achievement



## Chan (2009)

- HK gifted students preferred mastery and social goals over performance goal
- Mastery and social goals were significant predictors for positive perfectionism
- Performance goal was significant predictor for negative perfectionism




## Goal Orientation and AMG

- 3 goal orientations: mastery, performance, social
- Goal orientations concern the reasons for setting the goal rather than the goal itself, thereby complementing AMG

Ziegler and Stoeger (2008)

- A **learning-oriented subjective action space** enables learning goals to be achieved (p.225)
- Individuals with a subjective action space that is oriented toward learning achieve better learning outcomes

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- In addition to a learning-oriented subjective action space, we propose that a **performance-oriented subjective action space** and a **socially-oriented subjective action space** can also account for the academic achievement of gifted students
  - All 3 types of subjective action space allow for the accessibility of the action repertoire in the development of exceptionality



# Management of Multiple Goals

- Different goals can interact in **conflicting** or **converging** ways to affect students' motivation and performance (Dowson & McInerney, 2003)

Student A says:

- *“I really like to do well at school, but when I do my friends sometimes call me a ‘brain’ (derogative term), even though we all work together. So I don’t know whether to work hard or not sometimes”* (p.104).
- → mastery goal is in conflict with social affiliation goal
- → impair motivation




Student B says:

- *“I work best when I try to come near the top (of the class) in maths and understand the teacher”* (p.106)
- → performance and mastery goals work together
- → enhance motivation

Student C says:

- *“I want to go well in all my subjects and have lots of fun trying to learn things with my friends”* (p.106)
- → performance goal, mastery goal and social affiliation goal work in harmony
- → enhance motivation

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- Students usually endorse **multiple goals**
  - We should try to bring the goals in harmony so that students' motivation can be optimized
  - One possible way for students to pursue both mastery and performance goals with success is to strategically shift their focus between the two goals to suit the academic environment (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001)



## Multiple Goals and AMG

- Interpret multiple subjective action spaces as subserving the same goal
- E.g. the goal of being admitted to MEd programme can be supported by learning-, performance- and socially-oriented subjective action spaces




## Is Goal Orientation a Trait or a State?

- Trait: personality disposition relatively stable across time and academic situations
- State: situational characteristic affected by environment

Different procedures to operationalize goal orientation

- Trait: through interviews or inventories using Likert scales
- State: experimental manipulation of goals

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- Research demonstrates that both disposition and environment influence goal orientation
  - Students have a disposition to a certain goal orientation, they have in their repertoire different schemas related to different goal orientations which may be activated based on situations (Kaplan & Maehr, 2007)



## Trait/State Issues and AMG

- Goal is both a trait and a state
- Trait: a particular orientation in the subjective action space may be detectable at an early age and stable over time
- State: subjective action spaces can be affected by immediate environment
- Gifts are not personal attributes but the learning path that leads to excellence



# Stability and Flexibility of Goal Orientation

- Longitudinal studies demonstrate that students' goal orientation is moderately stable across years (e.g., Kaplan & Midgley, 1999)
- The stability is stronger within an academic year than across years
- Experimental studies (e.g., Elliot & Dweck, 1988) suggest that students can be manipulated to adopt a particular goal orientation, at least temporarily, supporting the flexibility of goal orientation




# Stability and Flexibility of Actiotope in AMG

- Actiotopes must be both modifiable and stable (Ziegler, Fidelman, Reutlinger, Vialle, & Stoeger, 2010)
- Modifiable: they are open to the possibility of change in response to new goals
- Stable: once committed to a further development, an actiotope resists immediate threats to the viability of the new learning process
- Different types of subjective action spaces may behave differently in terms of modifiability and stability




# Classroom Goal Structure

- The classroom represents a source of goal orientation and subjective action space
- Instructional strategies → classroom goal structure → students' personal goal orientation → motivation and achievement (Kaplan et al., 2002)



Climate dimensions	Mastery goal	Performance goal
Success defined as...	Improvement, progress	High grades, high normative performance
Value placed on...	Effort / learning	Normatively high ability
Reasons for satisfaction...	Working hard, challenge	Doing better than others
Teacher oriented toward...	How students are learning	How students are performing
View of errors / mistakes...	Part of learning	Anxiety eliciting
Focus of attention...	Process of learning	Own performance relative to others'
Reasons for effort...	Learning something new	High grades, performing better than others
Evaluation criteria...	Absolute, progress	normative

Ames and Archer (1988, p.261)

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- Students' personal goal orientations correspond with their perceptions of the classroom goal structure (Urduan, 2004)
  - Mastery goal structure provides a more favorable context for student motivation (Ames & Archer, 1988)
  - May be more adaptive to do **multiple-goal intervention** as different goals can work in converging ways to predict positive outcomes (Dowson & McInerney, 2003)

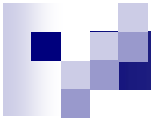


## Conclusion

- Goal orientation theory focuses on the relationship between goal orientation and student motivation / achievement
- AMG focuses on the interactions among goals, the environment, the action repertoire and the subjective actions space
- Goal orientation theory and AMG can be aligned by proposing that there are at least three types of subjective action space, including learning (or mastery)-oriented subjective action space, performance-oriented subjective action space, and socially-oriented subjective action space.



- Goal orientation framework is align with the general principles of AMG
- Both point to the dynamic process of human growth facilitated by environment
- Optimistic view of human nature



Thank you.