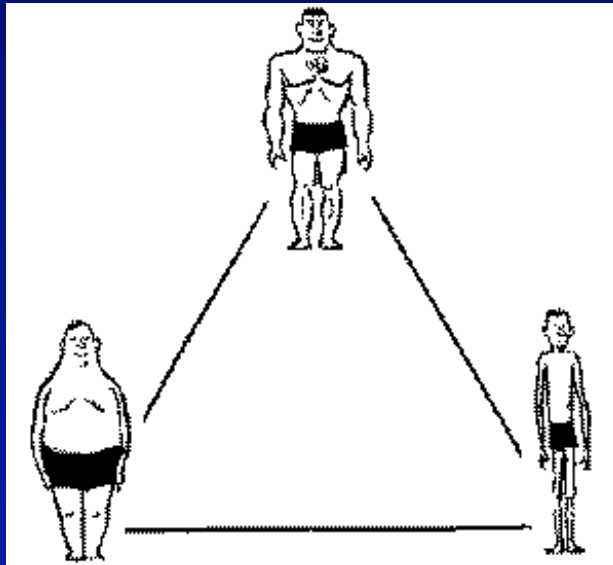# Personality: Dispositional Approach

- 3 assumptions
  - personality is stable over time
  - people act predictably in different settings
  - each person is unique

- TYPES vs. TRAITS
  - Types are categories of personality
  - Traits are building blocks of personality
  - Allport (1937) "A man can be said to *have* a trait, but he cannot be said to *have* a type. Rather he *fits* a type."

Dispositional Approach: Types

- Hippocrates and Galen's four temperaments
- physiognomy – character read from facial features
- Sheldon's Somatotypes (1940's) - discredited
  - Endomorph – fleshy; relaxed, sociable
  - Mesomorph – muscular; vigorous, dominant
  - Ectomorph – thin; thoughtful, seclusive, anxious
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: not a valid typology
  - 16 combinations of Extraversion / Introversion; Sensing / iNtuition; Thinking / Feeling; Judging / Perception
  - poor validity and reliability (type can change after 5 weeks though individual scales do better); dichotomies not real; aside from intr / extr, doesn't predict intrapersonal or job performance; self-report is manipulable; big business

Origin of Myers-Briggs Typology: Carl Jung (1921)
- four types classified into two functions, with two attitudes
  - two perceiving functions, sensation and intuition; two judging functions, thinking and feeling
  - attitudes: extraversion means "outward-turning" and introversion means "inward-turning".
- extravert: directed outward, esp. toward people; often prefer more frequent interaction; energized by spending time with people
- introvert: directed inward, esp. toward ideas; often prefer deeper interaction; energized by spending time alone
- Note: introversion is not shyness: introversion more of a preference or tendency, vs. shyness due to distress; introverts prefer solitary activity, but don't fear social encounters
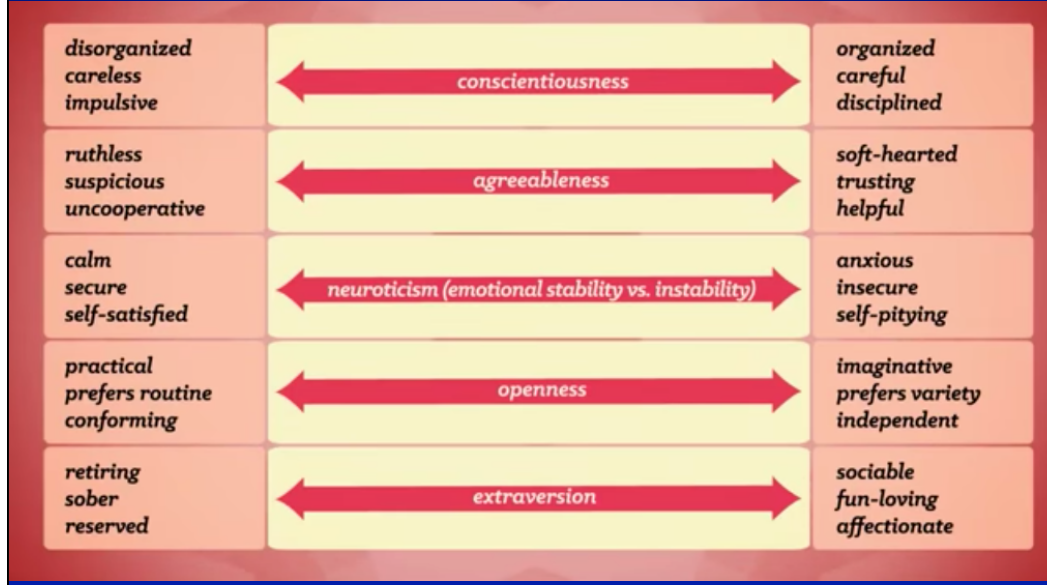
Dispositional Approach: Traits

- TRAITS: qualities people possess in differing amounts; make behavior same in different situations
- Allport – identify, consolidate traits from descriptors
  - cardinal traits: dominant ruling passions (not in everyone)
  - central traits: general, consistent across situations
  - secondary traits: more individual and circumstantial
  - approach is both <u>nomothetic</u> and <u>idiographic</u>
- Eysenck's factors (biologically determined)
  - psychoticism: aggressiveness, hostility
    - low agreeableness and conscientiousness in Big Five
  - extraversion: outward directed, vs. introversion
  - neuroticism: emotionality, stability, moodiness

Dispositional Approach: Traits

- Big 5 Traits – "OCEAN" (as of 1980's)
  - Openness to experience – try new things
  - Conscientiousness – disciplined, dutiful
  - Extraversion – social engagement
  - Agreeableness – getting along with others
  - Neuroticism – emotional instability, experiencing negative emotions
    - not Freud's "neurosis" – mental or physical distress or illness from unconscious conflict
- not inherently good or bad; not related to each other
- add Honesty / Humility: sincerity vs. deceitfulness

Big 5 – "OCEAN"

disorganized careless impulsive	← conscientiousness →	organized careful disciplined
ruthless suspicious uncooperative	← agreeableness →	soft-hearted trusting helpful
calm secure self-satisfied	← neuroticism (emotional stability vs. instability) →	anxious insecure self-pitying
practical prefers routine conforming	← openness →	imaginative prefers variety independent
retiring sober reserved	← extraversion →	sociable fun-loving affectionate

Personality: Humanistic Approach

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954)
  - physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, then…
  - self-actualization (realizing full potential) is ultimate goal but others must be met first
    - spontaneous, creative, childlike awe; tolerance, gentle humor, pursue greater good; "peak experiences"
  - growth orientation toward self-actualization, vs. deficiency orientations till then
- progress up hierarchy: more individuality, humanness and psychological health
- more generally: basic two first, then variety of emphases / orders can yield well-being

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Personality: Humanistic Approach

Carl Rogers's Self Theory (1961)

- need for positive regard not met unconditionally; unconditional positive regard means being accepted, valued, treated positively regardless of behavior
- we're usually valued for meeting others' standards: "conditions of worth" to receive positive regard; thus people condition us away from our genuine feelings
- self-concept - idea of who we are and want to be, BUT…
- conditions of worth intrude: strive to actualize self that's not us - person can seem successful, still feel unfulfilled
- reconnect with self through relationship including unconditional positive regard, empathy, genuineness

Humanistic Approach may be too optimistic about human nature

Social Cognitive Approach

- originally called "social learning" till 1980s
- Mischel (1968): assertion that personality could not predict behavior (pre-Big Five)
  - attitudes and behavior were not stable, but varied with the situation; intrinsic personality not a thing!
    - Rotter (1954): "If a person is at the 50th percentile for the trait of aggression, does this mean he will always act halfway aggressive, or act aggressive half of the time (and if so, which half of the time?), or what?"
  - predicting behavior from personality measures seen as impossible – instead look at person AND particular behaviors IN situation

Social Cognitive Approach

- Rotter (1954): behavior is learned in social environment just as in maze: reinforcement
  - responses not just caused by environmental stimuli but individual's tendencies: personality as stable potentials for responding to situations
  - behavior changed by changing thought or env't
- Rotter's Expectancy Theory
  - Behavior = Expectancy * Value (of outcome)
  - expectancies can be learned from observation and may be distorted (clinical problems from maladaptive behavior)
  - value of reinforcer varies with individual – parental punishment could be version of attention
  - Internal vs. External Locus of Control – where lies the responsibility for reinforcement, and success vs. failure?

Social Cognitive Approach

- Bandura: what about responses not "learned" yet?
- reinforcement still works when observed rather than experienced: note others' behaviors and consequences (vicarious experience)
  - observation, imitation, reinforcement (or punishment)
  - Bobo dolls experiment: is aggression a trait, or learned?
- self-efficacy: person's belief that they can achieve goals, succeed, affect environment
  - influenced by mastery experience, modeling of success, physical / emotional state, encouragement ("you-can-do-it")
- Reciprocal Determinism
  - person, behavior & environment influence each other

Reciprocal Determinism

Person/Cognition

Behavior

Environment
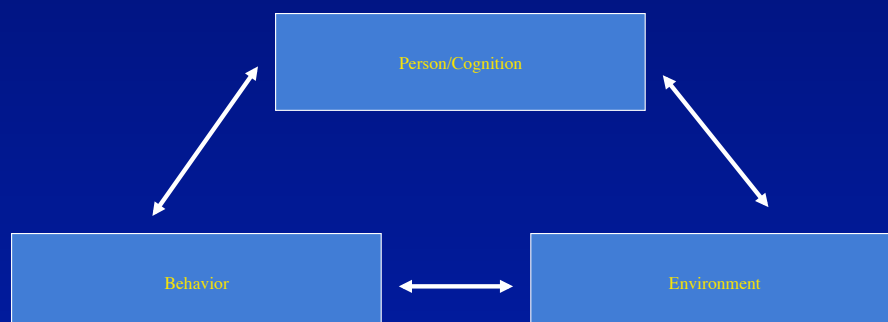
imagine a hypothetical course instructor…

in class (consistency):   **at parties (variability):**

SITUATION
classes usually full of pretty similar people (some laugh more than others), have goals, socially neutral esp. toward instructor

SITUATION
parties vary by size and familiarity of crowd, unstructured, friend percentage and responsiveness in interactions both vary

PERSON
history of good experiences, confidence, past popularity, competence / self-efficacy, enthusiasm

PERSON
history of awkwardness from earlier experience, perceived dullness or uninterestingness;

vs. sociability, gregariousness from later experience

BEHAVIOR
outgoing, make jokes, improvise, stunts, comfortable with self-revelation

BEHAVIOR
might be: funny, chatty, entertaining to strangers;

vs. quiet, wallflower, bored

Personality Assessment

- Self-Report Tests
  - Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as example of both theory and test
  - Neuroticism Extraversion Openness Personality Inventory-Revised (NEO PI-R): valid and reliable measuring instrument for identifying people on Big Five dimensions
  - Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI): empirically keyed test, useful for diagnosis of disorders when responses are examined in special populations
- Projective Tests
  - Rorschach ink blots: describe random images; lacks reliability and validity
  - Thematic Apperception Test (TAT): tell story about photos; okay for reliability and validity, for its purposes

Personality Assessment

- certain tests more appropriate for certain uses
  - MBTI: overall inadequate validity and reliability; bad for employment decisions, good for parties and memes (and self-description)
  - NEO PI-R: good for researching personality, though lacks nuance of individual character
  - MMPI: good for diagnosis of psychological disorders and studying personality; many subscales out of 500+ items
  - Rorschach: in clinical practice, used for eliciting open-ended responses to get at issues – esp. unconscious ones, from psychodynamic perspective
  - TAT: in clinical practice, used for eliciting open-ended responses and examining specific aspects like motivation

Personality Assessment

- some tests ask directly about what they measure
  - MBTI. NEO PI-R: agree /disagree w statements about self
- some tests don't make it obvious
  - MMPI – even researchers don't know why questions work
- problems and solutions
  - social desirability – people will misrepresent themselves to look good; so include items that are negative but true of everyone (e.g., "I sometimes lie") to see if they deny it
  - built-in validity scales (in empirically keyed MMPI for example): faking good, faking bad, evasiveness, Inconsistent responses