Motivation and Learning Approaches

What motivates the Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) learner and how do they approach their learning?
Aim

• Better understanding of our student cohort from Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) countries
  – What motivates them
  – What types of learning approaches they adopt
  – Why they choose to adopt these learning approaches

• What we can do as teachers to encourage these students to invoke adaptive approaches to learning
Caveats

• Stereotyping
• Generalisation
Outline

• The Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) Learner
  – Definition
  – Characteristics

• Motivation Theory
  – Self Determination Theory

• Achievement Goal Theory
  – Mastery and Performance Goals

• Learning Strategies and Learning approaches
Definition of CHC Learner

- Characteristics
- Shared cultural background
- Ethnic Chinese
- Geographical location
- Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) Students
- CHC societies
Overview of the Research

- Qualitative Research
- Sample size 17 participants
- Case Study approach
- Semi-structured Interview
Participants

• Purposeful sample
  – “...that can best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination” (Cresswell, 2007 p. 117)

• Monash College students

• Final year of their UG studies in Business/Commerce

• 17 students from 4 different country subgroups
## Participants

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total Cases</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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Characteristics

• Cultural Values
  – Motivation for achievement
  – Valuing education
  – Attitude to educational authority
  – Effort and learning
  – Rote learning and CHC students
Motivation to Achieve

- Collectivist societies
  - Self is seen as part of a group
  - Collectivists have an “interdependent self which does not really exist except as an aspect of a group.” (Triandis, 1995)
  - Adopt **group goals** (family)
  - Family Face and Family Welfare
Socially-oriented Achievement Motivation

SOAM – Confucian model
Parental pressure

The CHC learner is under pressure to perform as they are expected to better the financial standing of their parents in return for financial sacrifices made by their parents and quite often the extended family to enable them to receive a better education that they did (Kember & Watkins, 2010).
Valuing Education

- Parents role
- Child’s role
  - Fulfilment of their duty
    - studying
- Utilitarian Value
- Confucian philosophy
  - Education is character building (hard work & endurance)
  - Means of obtaining a good job
Theory

• Classic Definition

• Preferred option - Intrinsic Motivation
  – Better quality learning & engagement

• Extrinsic Motivation
  – ‘whenever an activity is done to attain some separable outcome’ (Ryan & Deci, 2000 p. 60)
CHC Motivation

• Course choice
  – Commerce, Business, Economics, Finance, Accounting

• Reason for choice:
  – Non-autonomous
  – Parent dictated

• Outcome – utilitarian
  – 15 of 17 interviewees

• *Extrinsic, Utilitarian & Social*
Are CHC students motivated?

• Evidence?

• Demonstration of self-regulating behaviour in approaching their learning

• Attendance
  – Lectures
  – Tutorials

• Completion of work

• Setting goals
Can extrinsic motivation play a positive role in Education?

- Classic definition expanded and refined
- Edward Deci & Richard Ryan
- Self Determination Theory
- Extrinsic Motivation – different forms along a continuum

- Amotivation
- Intrinsic Motivation
Can extrinsic motivation play a positive role in Education?

- Classic definition expanded and refined
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- Amotivation  Intrinsic Motivation
Self Determination Theory

External Regulation
- Compliance
- Reward
- Punishment

Introjected Regulation
- Ego
- Pride
- Face
- Please parents

Identified Regulation
- Value the activity
- Endorsement goals

Integrated Regulation
- Congruence
- Committed to desired outcome

Task Uninteresting
- Parents
- Understand its importance

Task uninteresting but under its importance
- Value the activity
- Endorsement goals

Task uninteresting
- Value the activity
- Endorsement goals

While uninteresting
- You value its purpose
- Committed to desired outcome
To activate intrinsic motivation:

1. The characteristics of the task
2. Innate psychological needs

• Fulfilling basic psychological needs for
  – Competence
  – Autonomy
  – Relatedness
Innate Psychological Needs

• Competence
  – Interest later developed in the course of their studies
  – ‘Found a way to study ... I like it’
  – ‘It’s not my choice but after I study this unit, this course, it’s funny....I like it’

• “Exposure to an externally imposed activity has allowed the person to enjoy the intrinsically interesting properties resulting in an orientation shift” (Ryan & Deci, 2000 p.63)
Innate Psychological Needs

• Relatedness
  – The need to belong and to be connected to a family, a peer group or to a society (Ryan & Deci, 2000)

  – “It is thus because of peoples’ desires to maintain and enhance interpersonal relationships and to feel effective in doing a wide range of behaviours that they will both internalise ambient values, mores, behaviours and attitudes, and learn to do things that are not interesting but are important for succeeding in society.” (Deci & Moller 2005, p.590)
Innate Psychological Needs

• Autonomy
  – Innate need to be self-determining
  – Does not mean to be independent of others
  – Inner endorsement of one’s beliefs & behaviour

• Internalisation of an extrinsic action
  – Self-endorsed actions
SDT

• To activate intrinsic motivation:
  1. The characteristics of the task
  2. Innate psychological needs
     - Competence
     - Relatedness
     - Autonomy
Implications

• Competence
  – Optimal challenge
  – Positive feedback

• Autonomy
  – Innate need to be self-determining
  – Educational practices that are supportive of student’s autonomy
  – Developing materials that involve students in the learning process

• Relatedness
  – A sense of being related and connected to others
Learning Approaches
Learning Approaches

• Characteristics of the CHC Learner
  – Motivation for achievement
  – Valuing education
  – Attitude to educational authority
  – Effort and learning
  – Rote learning and CHC students

• Quiz - Part 2
Attitude to Educational Authority

• Observations

• Passive Learners
  – Uncritical
  – Seldom participates in class discussions or
  – Offers challenges to the teacher

• Obedience to authority figures

• Respectful learning
Beliefs about learning and teaching

• Teacher’s role
  – Transmit an existing body of knowledge

• Student’s role
  – Absorb that teaching and reproduce it in an examination
  – Right and wrong answers predetermined

• Model Answers
• Critical Thinking?
Effort and Learning

• Observation
  – Diligence and industriousness

• Learning synonymous with hard work

• Effort is indispensable to success

• Everyone can be educated
Chinese proverbs

• Diligence is the path to the mountain of knowledge, hard work is the boat through the endless sea of learning

• Effort can compensate for lack of ability, diligence compensates for stupidity
Rote Learning

• Recall of information
• Declarative knowledge
• Surface learning

• Attributable to some aspect of Confucian belief or practice
Chinese script

• Ideographic
  – Copying and memorising
  – thousands of characters
  – Replication

• Culture of examinations
  – Traditional educational systems
  – Designed to promote surface learning methods
  – “The ways in which students are assessed have a strong influence on the way they approach their learning tasks...”
How did these participants approach their learning?
Learning Approaches

- General approaches
  - Surface approaches
  - Deep approaches
- Achievement goal theory
- Performance goals - promotes more superficial learning strategies
- Mastery goals - promotes deep processing strategies
Rote learners?

- “Paradox of the Chinese Learner”
- Intermediate approaches
  - Memorisation preceded understanding
  - Memorisation after achieving understanding
- Memorising to achieve understanding
- **Summary of findings**
  - Evidence of Intentional memorisation
  - Evidence for using strategies to understand
Do CHC students study hard or study smart?
Rote Learning

• Focus: memorising content for short-term reproduction

• When and Why?
  – Coping strategy
  – Time-management strategy
  – Performance strategy

• Outcomes?
  – Different
Coping strategy

• Failure to understand
  – Not for want of trying
  – Aware of the need to understand
  – Not the preferred strategy
  – Were able to use adaptive strategies as well
Time-management strategy

- Deliberate choice
- 4 subjects
- Prioritise – 2 or 3
- Fourth subject – “leave behind”
- Memorise before the exam
- Realise that it’s short term
- Need to pass the exam
Memorising for performance

• “To get the higher mark”

• “Chinese students are very good at memorising”

• Past exam papers - model answers/ “formal answers” provided by tutors
Strategies

• Repetition and recitation

• Copying and rewriting

• Perfect reproduction

• Reading 10/20 times.... writing 10/20 times"

• Mnemonic devices – alliteration
Adaptive strategies

Mind Maps

- Clear
- Associations
- Radiant
- Hierarchical

- Structure
- Style
- Fun
- EMPHASIS
- Personal
- Beauty

- Connect
- Thicker
- Length
- Organic

- Lines
- Paper
- Landscape
- Blank

- Start
- Use
- Images
- Colour
- Words
Adaptive strategies

- Application to case studies, future work
- Building connections to previous lessons
- Linking to other topics
- Combining information form tutorial and lectures
- Paraphrasing and summarising information from memory
- Making notes, mind maps, key points
- Teaching others
- Extended reading
Are CHC students’ approaches to learning attributable to their cultural heritage?

- Determined and mediated by learning contexts and assessment requirements
  - Type of subject
  - Course design
  - Assessment style of the subject
Factors influencing Learning Approaches

- Course Design
- Assessment practices
Authentic Learning

• Subjects perceived as having ‘future validity’
• Simulations - Trading room
• Roleplays
• Case studies
• Experiential learning
• Internships
Assessment design

1. Exams

• Factual/theoretical subjects
  – Memorised definitions, concepts
  & accompanying examples

  – Source

  – Past year exams and answers
  – Tutorial questions
2. Ongoing assessments
   a. Tutorials
      – Weekly Questions designed to help understand core principles
   • Do students complete weekly tute questions?

   b. Assignments
Conclusions

• Motivation
  – How do we move students towards internalising an extrinsic motivation
    • Innate psychological needs

• Learning approaches
  – How do we ensure that our students are able to use higher level cognitive skills required for success
    • Emphasising a mastery goal approach
    • Assessment practices and design
References


