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Lecture Date: Thursday, February 2, 2006

Announcements: None

- I. Attraction is a very mysterious thing. We often have a hard time explaining why we are attracted to another person. While some people like the fact that attraction is mysterious, psychologists would rather figure how the process works. We will talk about some of this research today.
 - A. Proximity is one of the most powerful influences on liking.
 1. Leon Festinger, one of the most respected early social psychologists, moved to MIT with some of his colleagues. He examined the effects of proximity on liking in a housing complex on campus.
 - a. Each complex had ten apartments, 5 on each of two floors, with a staircase at each end.
 - i. Students were randomly assigned to rooms. After they had lived there for a while, they were asked to name 2 or 3 of their closest friends in the building.
 - ii. These friends were predicted by how close they lived near each other. People were more likely to be friends with the people who lived next door than those who lived two or three doors down.
 - b. Functional distance (how the apartments were arranged, as opposed to physical distance) also predicted friendships.
 - i. Functional distance is important because attraction is created when people make contacts with others.
 - ii. For example, people who lived next to the stairway on the first floor should be more popular with people on the second floor than those who live far from the stairway on the first floor. This is because everyone going to the second floor must go past those apartments on the way to and from their own apartments. And in fact, first-floor residents who lived next to the stairway were twice as likely to be friends with second-floor residents as those who lived far from the stairway.
 - iii. Also, just within the second floor, people who lived next to the stairway were more popular with those that always took that stairway than with people who lived in the middle of the hall and could take either stairway.
 - iv. Academic buildings are often designed in a way that makes functional distance more difficult to overcome, despite the fact that they are supposed to foster inter-collaboration.
 2. A second study examined the friendships of police recruits who were trained at a Maryland police camp for six weeks.