

requiring students to submit the definitions of their categories for approval in advance.

4. *Lack of findings*—Students become very upset and think that their projects have failed when they don't find what they were looking for. "I'm trying to prove that rock music has lots of drug references but I'm not finding any." Students need to be told, many times it seems, that their job is to find what is there rather than to prove a point. This is actually one of the more frustrating, yet joyous, parts of the project. When students finally realize that getting a negative answer to a question is just as informative as getting a positive answer their facial expressions are a joy to behold.

5. *Examples used as proof*—A student once turned in a 13-page paper. Ten pages of it were descriptions of two scenes from a single episode of one soap opera. She, and others, had missed the point of trying to quantify their observations. What matters are the messages that adolescents get over and over and not just one example that "proves" a point. A related problem is that students may try to use their own record collections as a representative sample of rock music. I try to encourage them to get a broader sampling, such as the top 100 songs.

6. *How many categories?*—Students will want to know exactly how many categories to use and how much observation to do. There are no hard-and-fast rules, and the best number of categories will be different for each project. As a general guideline, there should be enough categories so that the person can capture most of the instances observed but not so

many that the general picture is lost amid the details. If 50% of the person's observations cannot be classified or are in the category "other," then more or better categories should be developed. The amount of observation will also vary from one project to the next, but there must be enough instances so that a general pattern emerges. I generally tell students that they should try for a minimum of 20 observations per category on the average.

The media project need not be limited to courses in adolescence. Various aspects of the media could readily be studied in relation to topics in child development, adulthood, social psychology, and psychology of women courses. The exact issues examined will change, but the principles of operationally defining categories, counting instances, and maintaining relevance to course content apply universally. In addition to increasing students' interest in the course, such projects can facilitate their understanding of the specific topic area addressed, give them experience conducting a particular type of research (content analysis), and give them experience in answering questions for themselves in an objective manner. Students who complete such projects should, in the future, be less swayed by other people's subjective statements about the media and the world in general. Perhaps when they hear someone say that rock music is all about sex they will challenge by asking "What do you mean by rock music and how are you defining sex?"

NOTE

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Robbers in the Classroom: A Deindividuation Exercise

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A deindividuation demonstration, which I have developed and evaluated over the past 5 years, has yielded excellent results. The objective of the exercise is to illustrate deindividuation by asking students to imagine and anonymously report those behaviors in which they might engage if they were actually in such a deindividuated state. The idea for this demonstration is taken directly from Zimbardo (1979a), and is based more generally on Zimbardo's (1970) theory of deindividuation. Zimbardo defined deindividuation as "a complex process in which a series of social conditions lead to changes in perception of self and of other

people," consequently "behavior that is normally restrained and inhibited is 'released' in violation of established norms of appropriateness" (1979b, p. 702). A major contributing factor to deindividuation, according to Zimbardo (1979b), is perceived anonymity, which psychologically protects individuals from being held responsible for their actions.

The primary purpose of this classroom demonstration is to illustrate the concept of deindividuation, and to reveal that even "normal, well-adjusted" college students are capable of highly inappropriate, antisocial behavior, given certain social and situational conditions. In the present study, 312 re-

sponses were generated from 229 undergraduate psychology students. Because 26 of the respondents were students in prison college programs, a secondary objective was to compare the responses of prisoners to nonprisoners in terms of the proportion and kinds of antisocial responses.

METHOD AND RESULTS

The deindividuation demonstration was used with 13 undergraduate psychology classes, including 11 general and 2 social psychology classes. Three classes (hereafter "prison") were conducted in maximum security prison settings: one of these classes was exclusively female and consisted of five respondents; the other two were exclusively male and consisted of 10 and 11 respondents. These students, all convicted of felonies, generally fell in the age range of 24–32, came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and were evenly divided between Caucasians and non-Caucasians. The remaining 203 respondents (hereafter "campus") were enrolled in on-campus programs and were predominantly female, Caucasian, middle-class, and traditional college age (17–24).

The stimulus question for the demonstration was "If you could be totally invisible for 24 hours and were completely assured that you would not be detected, what would you do?" Because this instruction tended to yield many responses that were not humanly possible, such as "walk on the ocean" and "fly around at a party pinching people," the instruction was modified to, "If you could do anything humanly possible with complete assurance that you would not be detected or held responsible, what would you do?"

Students quickly recorded their responses and were asked to turn them in to the instructor, with no identifying information included. After receiving all the responses, the instructor outlined the basic premises of deindividuation theory and read the responses aloud to the class. The entire demonstration was usually completed in about 15 minutes.

In order to examine the deindividuation hypothesis, it was necessary to categorize and rate each response according to content and social desirability. After examining the data, the author established 11 content categories of responses: aggression, charity, academic dishonesty, crime, escapism, political activities, sexual behavior, social disruption, interpersonal spying and eavesdropping, travel, and a catch-all "other" category. To rate the social desirability of responses, the following terms and definitions were employed. *Prosocial* behavior was defined as intending to benefit others; *antisocial* behavior as injuring others or depriving them of their rights; *nonnormative* behavior as clearly violating social norms and practices, but without specifically helping or hurting others; and *neutral* behavior as meeting none of the above three definitions.

Three raters, blind to the specific deindividuation hypothesis and to the backgrounds of the individual respondents, independently categorized each response according to its content and rated its social desirability. A criterion of at least two-thirds agreement among the trio of raters was established, and this criterion was met for 97% of the responses for content and 98% for social desirability. Responses for which the criterion was not met were excluded from the relevant analyses.

Results revealed that 36% of the responses were antisocial, 19% nonnormative, 36% neutral, and only 9% prosocial. There was no significant difference between the social desirability of the responses of prison versus campus students, $\chi^2(3) = 3.67$, ns. Regarding response content, the most frequent responses were criminal acts (26%), sexual acts (11%), and spying behaviors (11%); here again, the prison and campus students did not differ significantly, $\chi^2(5) = 6.22$, ns. The most common single response was "rob a bank," which accounted for 15% of all responses, and jewel theft and counterfeiting were also popular responses under the "crime" category. Responses categorized as "sexual" were evenly divided among: sex with a famous person, stranger or casual acquaintance; sex with a lover; exhibitionism and public nudity; and voyeurism. Infrequent but notable responses from campus students included murder, rape, and political assassination.

DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION

This is a highly educational and entertaining demonstration. When the instructions for this demonstration are given, there is invariably an immediate reaction of excitement and anticipation of the results. Indeed, the results provoke much laughter and surprise at such "murderous thoughts," as one student put it.

Evaluation data were collected from 53 subjects representing three different campus classes. On a 7-point scale (7 = high value, 1 = little or no value), the demonstrations received mean ratings of 5.5 and 5.8 for educational and entertainment value, respectively. These high ratings are corroborated by written and spontaneous comments from students, who frequently describe the demonstration as "fascinating," "funny," and "hard to believe!"

In addition to illustrating the concept of deindividuation, this exercise can also be used to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of statistical prediction. After collecting the responses from a class, but before examining them, I can boldly predict the kinds of responses that have just been turned in based on analyses of previous data. For example, it is safe to predict that responses involving bank robbery, spying, and sexual behavior will be quite frequent. Academic cheating and vandalism, although infrequent, will usually draw at least one or two responses from even a small class. Likewise, charitable responses, also infrequent, appear to be reliable in content, and usually include freeing hostages or solving international conflicts, alleviating social inequities such as poverty and hunger, and being kind to one's enemies.

Of course, I point out to my classes that my statistical predictions are based entirely on data obtained from previous demonstrations, and the issue of generalizing from one sample to another naturally arises. Furthermore, I emphasize that the data do not permit me (nor is it my intention) to predict the responses of individual students, and it is explained that this inability to predict the behavior of individuals is true of most social psychological research at this time.

Students are also impressed by the fact that no significant differences were found between my prison and campus students, regarding either the kinds of responses or the extent

of their antisocial content. In this respect, the deindividuation demonstration emphasizes the important role of situational conditions, such as perceived anonymity, rather than personal traits or characteristics, in antisocial behavior. Therefore, the demonstration can be effectively used in conjunction with lecture or discussion of such social psychological studies as Milgram's (1974) obedience studies or Zimbardo's Stanford prison study (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973), both of which also emphasize the crucial role of situational determinants of antisocial behavior. Finally, whether or not my students fully appreciate the "moral of the story," that is, the educational value of the exercise, they quite obviously delight in observing the antisocial and nonnormative responses that are elicited from their own classmates!

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Writing as a Tool for Teaching Social Psychology

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The process of writing is a highly productive tool for learning the concepts and methods of social psychology. Writing, however, is most often used as an evaluative tool rather than as a teaching tool. This paper describes practical ways in which writing can be used in an introductory social psychology course to enhance the students' learning. Keeping a course log (a type of journal), writing analyses of published articles, doing an observational study, and writing a formal research report are among the ideas presented. The techniques described here can be applied to any course in psychology and are not uniquely applicable to social psychology.

In the typical psychology course, students write examinations and term papers in which writing is used almost exclusively as a tool for the evaluation of their learning. In recent years, the process of writing has been suggested as a useful tool, not just for evaluation, but also for learning (e.g., Emig, 1977; Flower, 1981; Imscher, 1979). The process of writing can be used as a problem-solving tool and as a tool for producing creative and analytical thinking. In addition, Calhoun and Selby (1979) and Costin (1982) have expressed concern over the lack of basic communication and writing skills often found in college undergraduates. Boice (1982), Klugh (1983), Spiegel, Cameron, Evans, and Nodine (1980), among others, have addressed this issue by

suggesting that the teaching of writing skills be incorporated into the regular psychology curriculum.

I have integrated writing into my introductory course in social psychology in several ways, primarily for the purpose of giving the students a tool for learning the material, secondarily for the purpose of helping them with their writing skills, and finally for the purpose of evaluation. Writing as a process is integrated into the Introductory Social Psychology course in several ways: (a) the students are required to keep a course log in which they write their reactions to the readings, class films, and demonstrations, ideas for papers and projects, and other "free" writing; (b) the students write two short analyses of journal articles, through which they learn how to find psychological literature in the library and learn ways to approach reading and analyzing journal articles; (c) each student plans and implements an observational study of some social psychological phenomenon. This project incorporates writing throughout the project's process.

COURSE LOG

The course log serves several different functions. First, it stimulates class discussions. Students are frequently asked to write in their logs for 5-10 minutes in class following a