SPSSI teaching resources award submission

By Darren Bernal

Name: Classy Labels
Purpose and audience: Raise awareness of personal socioeconomic position. Enhance critical thinking of socioeconomic status. Understand class bias. This activity satisfies goals 3.2 and 3.3 of the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major: Version 2.0 but is also appropriate for graduate students and other training settings.

Group size: 5 - 30
Duration: 40-55 mins
Materials required: Blank index cards, headbands (or strips of paper/ribbon 24 inches long each), tape, and scissors.
Preparation: Print off or hand create attached sheet.

Step 1 - the setup: (5 mins) Divide students into groups of 5-7 people. Provide students strips of paper and instruct them to wrap the strips around their heads and tape the ends together to make a paper headband that rests comfortably on their foreheads. Hand out labels in a seemingly random manner but consider keeping a few positive labels at the bottom of the pile to be handed out to students who may struggle with being treated negatively. Instruct students not to read the label but to attach it to the headband with the words visible to the other participants. Students are to interact with each other based on the information provided on the labels. Students are not to reveal or discuss the information displayed on the label to the person wearing the label.

Step 2 - the decisions: (15 mins) Introduce the game by stating the groups are to create a profitable local business. The type of business does not matter but it must be successful. Every individual must quickly present an idea for the business. The group must then choose a business idea and assign roles of leader, manager/specialist, worker, and part time worker. Note that not all students need roles and it may be informative to see who is excluded.

Step 3 - the slow reveal: (5 mins) Students may share information to help individuals guess their label but may not use the specific information on the label. After attempting a guess students can look at their own labels.

Step 4 - the analysis: (20 mins) Process experience. Inform the students that the negative labels were generated from common myths about different social class.

Suggested Questions:

1) What was it like to play this game? (Facilitator allows students to express frustration, hunches, and other reactions).
2) In what ways did you treat people differently based on these labels?
3) Why where roles assign or not assigned?
4) What was it like to be treated according to the label? (information about signaling social class may be provided here by facilitator)
5) What similarities does this game have to current social conditions? Was this game rigged? (information about social mobility may be provided here by facilitator)
6) What would be a more accurate label based on your current social status? If students could write a label and replay the game what would it be? (information about subjective social status may be provided here by facilitator)
7) What thoughts/feelings arose while making decisions about individuals with negative labels? (information about social status and empathy may be provided here by facilitator)
8)

References:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labels:</th>
<th>Unmotivated</th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Intelligent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Not dependable</td>
<td>Lazy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuses Alcohol or Drugs</td>
<td>Cheats or is unethical</td>
<td>Agree with this person</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unintelligent</td>
<td>Poor money management</td>
<td>Uneducated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Capable</td>
<td>Hardworking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Smile at them)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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