

Learning Through the Voices of Child Soldiers and Child Victims

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Introduction

So, what do you do when you realize you are a teacher who isn't learning? We write lesson plans, we ask students to learn and think as we pose important questions and provide valuable answers, we teach... but do we learn?

I had planned to use many of the resources and two of the books from our seminar to add to my favorite unit in psychology, envisioning some changes but keeping the core of what I taught and how I taught the same. Why reinvent the wheel? While devising a curriculum unit to fulfill the Institute requirements I had chosen the unit on social and positive psychology, generally one of the student's favorite units. *Innocence Lost* presented an excellent source of evidence and examples to be used for social psychology. But the first effort seemed forced, almost contrived, and didn't feel like it reflected the hard lessons of the children we had studied. Something was missing. I had thought of some good lessons to add, had been exposed to great resources to add, and even felt compelled to try to bring greater digital technology for adding graphic evidence. But what was missing?

Driving home late one afternoon, after trying to decide exactly what order I wanted to present information to the students for the maximum impact from the tragic stories of children who have been forced into situations and decisions most American students have never even heard about, much less experienced, I begin to think about how they are different. It has been a personal goal of mine for years to startle and shake students with stories and information from historical evidence to psychological studies so they would learn about themselves by looking at others. This seemed like the perfect opportunity to turn up the heat, but what was missing?

I was thinking about the photographs that might stun them the most, the stories which might rattle them the most, what activities would challenge their thinking the most, and how I would fit all those into a curriculum unit on social psychology. As I sat at the red light, I thought up a phrase which might summarize the life most of my students live, "safe, sane and soft", which seemed a clever alliteration. Suddenly I realized with great clarity how safe, sane and soft my own life has been. Was I settling for safe lesson plans to fulfill the curriculum requirements? Was I being soft not thinking of challenging new lessons? I had to admit to myself I was indeed following a narrow path already traveled and that wasn't why I had applied for the seminar. So I decided to do what was best for my students, and I vowed to start over, to rewrite the entire curriculum unit.

The images of broken victims, the graphic scenes of death, and the troubling tales of terror during the course had added to my knowledge and evidence that good people can do evil, that bystanders can make excuses, that authority can trump logic, but ... what have I learned? What do I know that I didn't know before? What can I teach them that would help them? That was the challenge of the seminar – to create something dynamic, something daring, something different for my students, and not to slide the new information into the safe confines of an existing curriculum unit. For the first time in a very long time I felt that tingle you feel when you start really thinking, I mean really thinking about what it was you could do for your students that could help them learn!

For many months we had read and viewed the heinous horrors faced by children from the trenches of WWI to the streets of LA, we had thought about and discussed the tragic terrors in the lives of child soldiers and genocide victims, and we had been second hand witnesses to the senseless evil too many children fall victim too. The “Innocence Lost” seminar lessons have troubled me deeply, but my focus was about how this added to what I already knew and how I might apply it to what I already taught.

Suddenly I was forced to reevaluate what I was planning: What was it I was trying to do - Use graphic stories so they might remember the lessons of social psychology better? Shock for shock value? Show them just how “soft” they are so they will somehow learn to be ‘harder’? Get them to agree that they shouldn't be so selfish? Teach them the horrible lessons that show just how horrible people can be if they do not think like, well, think like ...ME? These are NOT the reasons I teach, nor are they the reasons I continue to teach. So what was I going to teach now, what had I learned? What was it I really needed them to learn?

On reflection, it was obvious I needed to recognize what I had learned in order to fully implement new lessons into my curriculum unit on social psychology. I had relearned two priceless lessons: ‘never stop learning’ and ‘listen to the voices’. I had also learned that the social psychology lessons I taught are informative and revealing about the historic and contemporary tragedies the world's children have suffered, are suffering and will suffer. And I remembered we, as teachers, can only offer the lessons but the students must find their way to new knowledge and understanding in their own way, in their own time and in their own words. It was time I developed the opportunities and activities students need to empower their voices so they could learn from other children's voices, it was time to let them dig deeper into the bloody soil and troubled souls of societies where genocide happens, and it was time to find my way back to a pedagogy where critical thinking and creative learning would challenge and inspire students to teach others.

The unit uses the stories of child soldiers and child victims to explore three major themes of social psychology: First, to illustrate how we underestimate the situational influences on other people's behavior while overestimating the dispositional influences, and do the opposite for their own behavior; second, to show the power of propaganda,

specifically radio broadcasts, to incite people to insidious and unconscionable acts of violence; and finally, to look at how good people can do evil deeds, specifically looking at cognitive dissonance and bystander effects. The unit will use Socratic seminars, personal voice exercises, role play activities, interactive technology, photo essays and debates to explore how societies could devolve into the use of child soldiers, gang lands, and genocides. The unit will also tie into previous learning looking at posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the different perspectives for explaining dispositional and situational influences on behavior and beliefs. Students will learn societies and individuals alike must be ever vigilant to avoid the pitfalls of the dehumanization and discrimination of individuals, however small, lest it be the beginning of something so large as to ruin them and their society.

Background information

The unit is designed foremost for Advanced Placement Psychology students enrolled in a year long, every other day course designed as a college level introduction to Psychology. The students are part of a very diverse and wide ranging demographic with almost 2,000 students in a recently opened urban/suburban high school where students come from very affluent to poverty level families, with over half the students on free or reduced lunch. I hope to extend the unit to my regular Psychology students at some point and develop a unit for our World History teachers as well with significant changes for their freshmen level course. The courses use standard state curriculum guides.

Objectives

So my objectives reflect my plan to implement lessons which will energize students to learn by empowering them to teach; to create activities to explore the power of speech and song and sound very much like our facilitator had so successfully painted with photographs and images; and to look at the old lessons with new lens so my students will learn within a paradigm they can identify with as they see the lives of the children who have lost their innocence in so many tragic ways. So how would my revelations now become lessons for my students?

First, 'never stop learning'! Okay, so it seems so elementary but it is so easy to forget! One of the most important concepts for students to learn about in social psychology is how cognitive dissonance allows us to explain the disconnect between what we think and what we do. I had spent months reading and listening about the lives of children as soldiers and victims, I had been moved to tears by some of the pictures I saw, but I had failed to cognitively recognize what they had to teach me and say to me which was different than what I had expected. I kept putting their stories in the categories of stories and lessons I had learned before, rather than looking for fresh insight and new ideas for

teaching new lessons in my classes. How often do my students do the same thing? How often do they take the stories and lessons as just another academic exercise, filing the new information away for a test but not for learning about life? I needed to figure out what to do with this revelation. I have always prided myself in using pedagogy and methodology that doesn't always tow the company line, always claiming it was in the best interest of my students' education, but perhaps this old dog needs some new tricks.

So I am determined to learn from my students! Okay, so again, this is embarrassingly simple, but simple lessons are sometimes the hardest to see. So I have devised some activities for the students to help me learn about their lives while they comment and learn about the lives of others. Central to this will be Ishmael Beah's memoir *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* which will challenge my students to think about what they might have done? I want them to recognize possible cognitive dissonances in the lessons of child victims but also to teach me about what cognitive dissonances they may have faced, and see how those can be compared to the child subjects. Another aspect of 'never stop learning' is at the core of positive psychology which is developing self efficacy, an active coping and learning strategy for decision making. I want the students to share how they deal with their difficulties and where they see the failures in how they and others deal with life challenges. Again we will use lessons to explore how the children made their decisions, how we make our own decisions and what we all can learn.

Second, 'listen to their voices'! I did not miss the intriguing personal sages, the intense emotional stories, the historical and cultural lessons, the psychological drama, but it wasn't until I struggled with which passages to have the students read; which book would be best, which photographs would stand out that I realized I had missed something. The stories and images had overshadowed the sound. Where were their voices, where were their cries for help, where were their songs, and where were their cheers for triumph? I have often used stories and words to paint vivid illustrations for my students to grasp concepts, and I have frequently used images to portray important lessons, but now I know we need to 'listen to their voices'. And who better than teenagers to lead the way to explore the voices, so I have come up with a project for students to study the spoken words and sung lyrics of the victims and heroes. I also plan for the students to recite passages and recreate some of the scenes which ask important questions about how children deal with difficult situations, why children may become soldiers of war and gang members, and how our survivors found their inner 'voice' as they emerged from their terror. This will be accompanied with a photo essay asking the students to illustrate with images the similar ideas and concepts they have learned from the voices, showing once again their grasp of the social lessons. Their first photo essay will be their placement of selected images from African genocides, but then they will be asked to develop their own photo essay or collage to show some specific aspect of what they learned from the lessons of Rwanda and Darfur.

Finally, the seminar reinforced the importance I have attached to the question of, “why do good people do bad things”, which provides an excellent supposition to explore most of the studies and theories of social psychology. These will include the central issue of social psychology, which is the question as to how much power and influence our human dispositions versus our environmental situations have on our behavior and mental processes. This will be easily linked to Beah’s book and the war world’s created by the students to mock real life but will reveal some of the true nature. As Zimbardo explains,

Good people can be induced, seduced, and initiated into behaving in evil ways. They can also be led to act in irrational, stupid, self-destructive, anti-social, and mindless ways when they are immersed in “total situations” that impact human nature in ways that challenge our sense of stability and consistency of individual personality, of character, and of morality.(1)

I also plan to adopt from Oscar Lansen’s course his masterful use of pictures, posters and graphics as backdrops to centerpieces for his lectures to expand my students’ historical and contemporary knowledge about the evil deeds and heroic responses we can use to learn about social and positive psychology. His lessons also inspired me to install hardware and learn software to mimic the technique. Also there are valuable lessons from previous courses to be woven into these new lessons, but I hope that even those old tricks have new twists as my students learn from teaching me with their voices and their life’s lessons.

I hope to create a pedagogy that will allow students to expand their knowledge, enlighten their insight and explore their empathy for the suffering of human victims and triumphs of the human spirit. Intellectually and academically, I truly believe we must learn from the past, explain the present and improve the future using history and psychology, but there are days when it is hard to answer student questions just using historic references and psychology theory. I want my students to struggle with the paradox of how so many good people can do so many evil things until they are convinced there must be a better way. I want my students to recognize how much of what we call our ‘personality’ and our ‘attitudes’ are byproducts of social programming, cultural indoctrination and learned behavior. But I also want them to realize that they do have the internal power to develop coping skills and critical thinking which can guide them through the hazardous maze of socialization.

I want my students to explore and examine the human conditions of hating and being hated until they demand to know what can be done about hate. I want my students to accept a personal role in the world’s future, a personal role in their own intellectual growth, and a personal goal of protecting and providing for the world’s next generation of children. Students will look specifically into the history and meaning of prejudice, discrimination and hate crimes using classical case studies in psychology as well real life dramas from gang rivalries to racial genocide. The students will have to apply concepts

like fundamental attribution error and confirmation bias overconfidence to explain why people become prejudice and discriminating. They will review the processes of dehumanization and demoralization, the bystander and conformity traits, and the cults of personality and hero worship using again classical case studies to modern examples, such as the tales of Holocaust(2), the Rape of Nanking(3) and Rwandan victims of genocide(4).

Rational

Today's youth have seldom faced the trials and travails of life filled with the fear child victims feel and few can even imagine the terrible truths of children used as agents for evil and prostitutes for politics. The inhumanities suffered by the girls who are raped to enforce ethnic cleansing, and the demoralization of the boys used as child soldiers and the dehumanization of victims of genocide often seem too foreign, too surreal, too distant for many of my students to develop any empathy or understanding of their plights. Therefore it is important they see and read and hear and, in as many ways as possible, be touched by the stories of children put in harm's way through no fault of their own. Through their stories I hope students become curious and concerned and even angry about what can happen when societies fail their children and when humans lose their humanity!

The unit will begin examining Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* which will be a long term reading project, possibly a summer reading assignment. The students will be asked to simply state what troubled them in small group discussions so all the students will have a chance to voice their emotional and thoughtful responses. I plan to literally respond only as a facilitator when the groups come back to report their findings to the class providing them an open forum, asking them to simply look for the common characteristics they see in Beah and why he had become such a successful soldier regardless of age, hoping they begin to see the tragic advantages using children may afford some militias. After examining their response to the memoirs of Beah with as little preconceived expectations as I can muster, I will propose the students set about creating, again in their small groups, a scenario in which they could be convinced to join an army. It is here I imagine their worlds to emerge and distort in ways neither I nor they will expect. I hope to act like an observer, allowing the students the freedom to engage in creative and undirected thinking until they have devised their own 'war world'.

Here you could use a number of historical references and classical social lessons to show how governments and movements have used specific techniques of propaganda and education to create real worlds of war.(5) Using these imaginary 'war worlds' as backdrops, we will step back in time and briefly review the lessons of why young teens joined the Great War and young teens join gangs today, looking for any similarities. As the students begin to learn the lessons of attribution theory they will be asked to delineate

the situational and social forces as compared to the dispositional and personal choices they have identified as reasons for soldiering. Classic psychology studies will be paralleled with readings from other memoirs, such as “Monster Kody”, as the students are asked to explain cognitive dissonance by finding the consistent incongruities for justifying the gang killings so common to the members, especially the conflicts and killings in their own ‘set’.(6) Finally in the initial phases of the unit we will revisit their imaginary ‘war world’ to see if they would change anything, again while I try to hold my own views in check. As they begin to finish the academic lessons about social psychology, the students will be able to recognize and explain the social phenomenon in their own worlds, not just their imaginary worlds, such as normative and informational social influences, fundamental attribution errors, de-individuation and social facilitation.

The second major undertaking will be for the students to learn how social institutions and situational influences can have profound impacts while being mistaken for dispositional attitudes and natural preferences. An example of this is how closely most people, especially teenagers, come to believe the music and songs they love are natural preferences they were destined to love, but social psychology and anthropology teach us our music preferences are culturally learned. What can this then teach us about how we evaluate other preferences like loving or hating our neighbors? To bring this all together we will have to once again empower the student to peel back the layers of socialization that leads to the internalization of such beliefs so we can compare it to how racism and ethnocentrism can come to be so real to so many people, and eventually lead them to discriminate and even kill. Equally important is to show how small steps of ingraining what seem like harmless but prejudicial preferences can set the stage for later introducing truly horrific but now more acceptable prejudicial ideologies.

To study these possibilities we will introduce how speeches and songs, story telling and spoken propaganda can alter the behavior of individuals, groups and perhaps even societies. We will use music and speeches, like the war songs of propaganda in WWII and the radio broadcasts during the Rwandan genocide. And we will use the songs our students listen to every day to bring about a connection to sound and socialization in a personal way, especially the gangster rap and music video influence on pop culture. This will be a monumental pedagogical shift for me, and many teachers who are textually bound and media naïve when presenting most of our course content, but I have seldom been so excited about the possibilities of allowing students to relate to something they are passionate about to the unit lessons. The inspiration for this comes first from the expert use of images by Oscar Lansen during our seminar, something I will mimic and steal from often, showing me how effective the graphic medium can be in presenting lessons. Secondly, I realized while doing the first failed curriculum unit I was most moved by the stories of the children when I imagined their voices, or in one case the lack of any voice at all. What if I could use my students’ voices to make the voices of children more meaningful? What if I could encourage an empathetic skill set to listen to the voices and

words of others in meaningful ways, perhaps even in ways that expose our own prejudices?

There will be two facets to this section, one focusing on the students personal reflections on how music and songs and language and words effect the way individuals think and behave; and two, how those various tools are used by groups and governments to manipulate, control and indoctrinate people for their own agendas. We will also begin to introduce a second underlying theme of positive outcomes, not just the sinister tone of evil deeds, by looking at the accounts and examples of personal triumphs, successful recoveries, heroic actions and healing redemption.

The students will be asked to bring in 'the song' and lyrics with which they most identify or most sums up how they feel and who they are. They will also be asked to bring in the music they think represents teens different from themselves. This will be an excellent chance to apply the concepts of in-group and out-group identification, and expose how we claim preference when it is prejudice and how we claim common sense when it is stereotyping. The Nazis are an excellent example of how to use innocuous euphemisms to blunt the reality of what is happening, like the deportation to death camps is called resettlement and the gas showers referred to as treatment.

Next I would introduce songs and lyrics used by and about gangs to identify and codify the implicit and explicit messages which may effect the way gang membership is recruited. I would ask them to write lyrics for a song they might even use to promote their 'war world' agendas they developed earlier. And finally we would explore just how much our behavior can be influenced by the words, how much words are just a tool for language and how much words can shape the world around us. Here we will look again at applying concepts like confirmation bias and mere exposure effect, with an eye to how media violence might affect criminal behavior.

For the second facet students will watch *Ghosts of Rwanda* and read excerpts from Immaculee Ilibagiza's *Left to Tell*. Using some references and audio recordings, like perhaps those used in Vietnam, we will compare them to the radio broadcasts used in the Rwandan genocide. We will explore how the political agents use the concepts of group-think and scapegoating to establish an atmosphere of fear and hate to further their agendas of ethnic cleansing and personal power. Students will be asked to write lyrics, or even a song, which would further the causes of their own 'war worlds' and we will eventually have them explain the process in reverse to see how governments have done the same thing too. As a final exercise, students will be asked to volunteer to participate in a mock imprisonment similar to the one suffered by Immaculee Ilibagiza in the pastor's small bathroom. The exercise will have many possible outcomes, but when the observers and volunteers exchange what it must have been like to live so silently, the power of words will feel even more real. The ghosts of the Rwandan genocide will finally have a voice as the students also explore how Immaculee survived with words and

language, and how Beah thrived with words and music, and how words and songs have the power to do good and not just evil. (7)

The third phase of the unit will begin by asking the question “Why do good people do bad things?” The students should by now have some expertise in delineating and listing the possible explanations during an open ended brainstorming session. Students will then explore the theories of attribution, or as the case is too often, misattribution, and the powers that influence our behavior as well as the behavior of others. We will look at the classical studies which reveal the seemingly common human traits of following authority and joining groups even when they go against our values and/or self interest, which creates the cognitive dissonance response to find justification for our actions whatever they may be. We will study the equally puzzling phenomenon of ‘by-stander’ responses as they are compared to ‘heroic’ efforts, and look for the qualities that separate the active hero from the passive bystander.

Central to this will be using Phillip Zimbardo’s studies and his theories on the Lucifer Effect and Heroic Response, something he believes we are all susceptible too or capable of respectively. An example would be using excerpts from Phillip Zimbardo’s “The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil”, viewing parts of his infamous Stanford Prison Experiment, “Quiet Rage”, and most importantly viewing Zimbardo’s high energy video seminar explaining his theories using real life examples, like the Jamestown massacre and NYC subway hero. The seminar’s readings proved an invaluable source for examples on how to exemplify the core principles of the Lucifer Effect, but they also give great examples for Zimbardo’s equally compelling Heroic Response theory. (8)

After spending time discussing the theories and finding examples, students will conduct a Socratic seminar aimed at assessing how they feel about the events and stories they have read from Holocaust victims to Nazi Youth volunteers, from the Rape of Nanking atrocities to the Vietnam-American War postwar civilian casualties, from the Sierra Leone boy soldier to the Rwandan genocide survivor, and from the big city Crips and Blood gang members to the homeless refugees around the world. Students will examine the characteristics and reasons many of these children were able not only to survive but to thrive. The students will reexamine the cognitive behavioral theories as they are applied (usually without any knowledge they are doing so) by those who develop self efficacy and self competence and use active coping practices to face difficult challenges. Finally, to complete the journey for both students and teacher, the students will be asked to write an expository reflective of something everyone should know but too often do not, along with a brief presentation explaining what that one lesson would be most valuable to teach today’s teenagers. I will be thrilled to be in the audience because this time I will hear them and learn from them and be forever mindful to listen and learn at every opportunity.

Lessons and Strategies

Specific Lesson One

Students will have completed their reading assignment “A Long Way Home’ and grouped into four member teams for the first day of the unit. Each student will be given a brainstorm rubric which will require them to record in three separate sections first the groups general responses to “What were the most griping and disturbing things about Beah’s memoir?”; second the groups consensus on “What causes Beah to become a boy soldier?”; third, and individually, the students will be asked to write a free response to “When and why would you ever be willing to kill someone?”. Remember to require the students to accept personal responsibility for respecting others responses during the ensuing class brainstorm, initially generated by reports from each group, but allowed to digress or progress into other areas being mindful to allow as much student directed thinking as possible.

After the class has generated lots of responses to all three questions, the students will be sent back to their groups with another rubric, this time to be done as a single team response. They will be asked to come up with what they think could successfully convince an ordinary high school teen to join a fighting force. They can pick any type of fighting force and any kind of situation they choose, but they will have to always be able to answer the question “Why will teens fight for that group?” Hopefully the first questions elicits non-directed thinking, while the second asks them to begin to identify behavioral forces and the third gives them a chance to express their own personal views, perhaps even personal stories.

This lesson will not be completed in a day, which allows the teacher to introduce the characteristics of child soldier environments and motivations through short excerpt readings found in books like ‘Child of Hitler’ and ‘Do or Die’. (9) Also using brief graphic image displays in class to explain the historic nature of how and why teens have joined conflicts. The students will also begin learning the textual vocabulary and psychological studies that identify and explain social psychology theories. They will be asked to look for examples in both Beah and these class activities of how cognitive dissonance, misattribution and socialization occur.

The lesson will conclude with the most challenging part, which is to have the student teams create a diabolical plan to successfully recruit teen soldiers from their classmates as soldiers for their own fighting force. The students will try to design a world which they can imagine as possible (but obviously not real) to get other students to fight and die for their cause. This world would have to have the physical, psychological and social

dynamics they deem possible in our society, even if not realistic, to be plausible. While doing this it will most likely be necessary to remind them that American gang members have already experienced this in very real ways, so allow them some broad strokes as they paint this despicable scene.

When the teams complete this terrible world, they would present them to the class, and asked to give some practical ways they plan to recruit members. Students should fill out rubrics that list how the other groups are different and similar to their own. They will be asked to explain why these worlds have differences, and maybe as important to explore what the similarities say about how today's teens think. After some debate, the class will try to agree upon the best plan presented, with some changes suggested by the class review of all the plans.

From there it would be my job to point out the characteristics we expected to find and match the historical and psychological evidence to date, and to teach them how this might demonstrate the very theories of social psychological influences. They will be provided with lessons from WWI recruitment, Nazi youth leadership programs, Vietnam war drafts and gang land membership in the US. Their use of propaganda will also be compared to these historical examples, hoping for them to realize how influence is sometimes successfully planned (WWI and Nazi) and sometimes unplanned (Vietnam and gangs) when governments try guide soldiers and citizens into conflict. These lessons should lead directly into the terrible story and lesson plans for looking at the Rwandan genocide.

Specific Lesson Two

Student voices will be used to express how they use and listen to music today, with a special focus on why so many young people do not feel like their behavior is affected negatively by music but how it seems to affect others. I envision the students doing extremely well with the initial phase of comparing their own musically tastes to preferences but slowly realizing how this might reflect some stereotypes as well. The heart of the lesson will be to see how we can be manipulated and socialized in ways that make us sing and dance to "their" beat. The students will view and analyze Nazi and Allied propaganda posters from WWII. Then they will listen to some recreated radio broadcasts to find the similarities between the propaganda used by both mediums. They will eventually be asked if the music they initially choose has any hidden or influential bias that might try to sway their opinions and thinking. By extension they will be asked to look for specific tools like glittering generalities, scapegoating and euphemistic platitudes from the war era. Looking at gangster rap music or even other popular culture tracks we will look for the very same thing in how artists try to sale their point of view, especially with regards to misogyny and stereotyping.

Next students will be asked to read a summary of Immaculee Ilibagiza's *Left to Tell: Discovering God amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*. The stunning account is of a young survivor in Rwanda who had to silently wait out the genocide cramped into a small bathroom with seven other women while she heard the voices of doom and death through the paper thin walls. They will also watch the BBC's *Ghosts of Rwanda*. Using dialogue between her savior and his son who supports the killings from one of her chapters and actual radio broadcast recreations supported by the movie, students will be asked to recreate the horrors of the Rwandan genocide.

Having viewed *Ghosts of Rwanda* and discussed *Left to Tell*, volunteer students will be asked to climb into a mock bathroom the dimension of Immaculee's sanctuary while the other students are asked to remain deadly quiet we will listen to the radio broadcasts calling to the Hutus to cut the tall trees and death to the cockroaches. I imagine asking and enforcing complete silence as the eerie voices spew their deadly venom for at least several minutes. Then others will be used to shout the murderous gangs chanting form outside. Two more students will then play out the dialogue between the pastor who is hiding them and his son, who supports the Hutus and suspects his father is hiding something.

Having done many different activities in psychology I anticipate this will seem like an eternity, which I hope will have a chilling impact on my students as they try to imagine what these women's hell must have been like. At this moment I would begin to introduce another theme by making the first questions after the exercise, answered in small groups divided differently than their war world teams, "Could you have remained quiet and survived? What were the characteristics of these women to allow their survival? Were these situational or dispositional attributes?" I suspect the lesson could go in several different directions and once again my goal will not only be for the students to learn from the exercise but to also teach me what they think and how they feel as well.

Specific Lesson Three

Using Phillip Zimbardo's *Lucifer Effect*, students will complete a Socratic seminar rubric as either a participant, observer or reporter after viewing a twenty-three minute video on his theories on why good people do evil things and also on the heroic response. Students would already have reviewed his infamous Stanford Prison Experiment, "Quiet Rage", and compared it's chilling lessons to those of the Jamestown massacre. Here again the lessons of social psychology on how we follow authority, comply to regulation, accept charismatic cult of personality and become deindividuated in certain circumstances can be easily applied. The seminar's readings proved an invaluable source for examples on how to exemplify the core principles of the Lucifer Effect, but they also give great examples for Zimbardo's equally compelling Heroic Response theory. Students will be asked to list the characteristics of heroes and compare those to Beah's personal triumph

of becoming a UN good will ambassador, Immaculee's remarkable ability to forgive and even a recent hometown story in the mean subways of New York. (10)

Obviously the hope is that each group of students will be able to draw parallels between the different characteristics of each hero and look for the types of coping and decision making skill sets each person uses. Looking at the survivors of the Holocaust, as in William Helmreich's *Against All Odds(11)*, students will be asked to compare past and present social landscapes for clues as to why and how individuals becomes successful survivors and personal heroes. Another possible twist would be to have the students explain what they think a hero might look like in their 'war world' scenarios.

Specific Lesson Four

The final lesson would be my most anticipated, a presentation from the students looking back at the most important lesson they believe everyone should learn from this unit. This would be done as a paper and presentation. I would ask the students to read them to their classmates and prepare graphic illustrations of what they have learned through a chosen medium of sights, sounds, stories or touch, hopefully focusing on how they have personally reflected about the lessons. I would encourage them to include social psychology to support their argument about why this would be the most important single lesson to teach others, but I would also allow them the freedom to adopt what ever strategies they believe would be most effective. I would provide reading packets and bibliographies on various topics we had covered briefly in class so they could research on their own, and would encourage them to scourer the internet for the type of medium they think would help them present their argument. In short, I would hope they would become mini-social scientists and psychologists teaching me the many lessons I probably missed.

Some of the questions I would present to the students if they need some catalyst could include: "Should Beah be held accountable for his horrendous crimes as a child soldier, and if not him, who is responsible for these crimes against humanity?"; "How is killing an enemy different then killing a non-enemy, and what are the clearly identifiable characteristics of enemies?"; "Is it possible the very personal characteristics and personality traits Ishmael possesses which make him such a brutal and cruel and successful soldier are ALSO the very reasons he is one of the very few successful survivors and escapees of Sierra Leone's civil war?" "Does Beah owe the world, Sierra Leone and/or other child soldiers his time and energy by dedicating himself to speaking and writing for no real profit OR has he earned the right to pursue his own interests and at least enjoy his young adulthood sense he was robbed of his childhood one way or the other, and be left alone by this cruel world?" Always the question would turn to "Why" and it would be my great honor to have my students actively and seriously attempt to answer the question by teaching me what they have learned.

As the students end the unit they will obviously be assessed on what they had learned, hopefully using their presentations and chosen form of medium work to express their expertise. It would also be interesting to have them design another activity for another section of psychology or even parallel lessons for world history. Any objective test on the fundamental concepts and theories of social psychology should use examples and parts of the students projects as scenarios and applications for the assessment questions. Fundamentally their final assessment will be the reaction they have as they face the stark reality that their world of war and terror were imaginary but millions of children are homeless and mutilated, killing and raping, orphaned and diseased, scared and alone... the final assessment will be when the students stop one more time and ask not just "Why" but "What will I do?"

End Notes

1. Zimbardo, Phillip. *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* . p. 211
2. Wijze, Louis De. *Only My Life: A Survivor's Story*.
3. Chang, Iris. *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*.; "Rape of Nanking Photos." Dragon City Journal.
4. Ilibagiza, Immaculee. *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*.; *Ghosts of Rwanda*. DVD. Directed by Greg Barker.
5. Heck, Alfons. *Child of Hitler: Germany in the Days When God Wore a Swastika*.
6. Shakur, Sanyika. *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*
7. Ilibagiza, Immaculee. *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*.
8. Philip Zimbardo shows how people become monsters ... or heroes | Video on TED.com."
9. Bing, Leon. *Do or Die: America's Most Notorious Gangs Speak for Themselves*
10. Lee, Trymaine, and Cassi Feldman. "Construction Worker One Day, Subway Hero the Next."
11. Helmreich, William . *Against All Odds: Holocaust Survivors and the Successful Lives they Made in America*

Bibliography for Teachers

- Akallo, Grace, and Faith J. H. McDonnell. *Girl Soldier: A Story of Hope for Northern Ugandas Children*. New York: Chosen, 2007. Gives an excellent view of how girls are used as soldiers and slaves.
- Beah, Ishmael. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007. Beah's chilling tale will be central to the students experience, with griping and graphic horrors told from the child soldier's point of view.
- Bing, Leon. *Do or Die: America's Most Notorious Gangs Speak for Themselves*. Topeka:

- Topeka Bindery, 1999. Gritty and real, students will be able to identify with these stories.
- Chang, Iris. *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. Boston: Penguin (Non-Classics), 1998. Shocking atrocities revealed, some of which make us rethink if the long held notion the Holocaust was as bad as it ever gets.
- Chalk, Frank. "Radio Propaganda and Genocide." *Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies* 19 (1999): n. page. *MIGS: Radio Propaganda and Genocide*. Nov. 1999 Good review of how radio is used for propaganda.
- Forges, Alison Des, and Alison Liebhafsky Des Forges. *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999. Print. From a personal point of view of a survivor of the genocide on how radio played a major role.
- Heck, Alfons. *Child of Hitler: Germany in the Days When God Wore a Swastika*. Phoenix, AZ: Renaissance House Publishers (Az), 1985. Print. To be used to show how education and school can be used to misguide a generation.
- Helmreich, William . *Against All Odds: Holocaust Survivors and the Successful Lives they Made in America (Judaica and Hebraica)*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1995. Excellent source to look at successful survivors.
- Ilibagiza, Immaculee. *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*. Carlsbad: Hay House, 2007. Core to the attempt to make real the horror of living and surviving through one of modern history's greatest avoidable tragedies.
- Johnson, David. *Voices of Sudan*. Chicago: Ingram Pub Services, 2007. Good photo essay on the genocide and refugees of Darfur.
- Lee, Trymaine, and Cassi Feldman. "Construction Worker One Day, Subway Hero the Next." *New York Times* 4 Jan. 2007: 2. Print. Students will be able to identify other stories just like this one about ordinary people becoming heroes.
- Montgomery, Lane H.. *Never Again, Again, Again...: Genocide: Armenia, The Holocaust, Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur*. United States of America: Ruder Finn Press, Inc., 2008. Excellent photo journal of the last Hundred years war on generations of children and people.
- Pearlman, Ann, and Colton Simpson. *Inside the Crips: Life Inside L.A.'s Most Notorious Gang*. New York, New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2006. Print. Real look at how most true gangsters spend most of the childhood in jail and prison, not the hood.
- Shakur, Sanyika. *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*. Reprint, New York: Grove Press, 2007. Chilling tales of cold blooded gang life; might add a good debate about conspiracy by police to let gangs kill each other too.
- Waller, James E.. *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2007. Good compliment to Zimbardo's theories.
- Wessells, Michael. *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009. Public policy ideas for how to prevent or reduce the use of child soldiers in the Twenty-First century.
- Wijze, Louis De. *Only My Life: A Survivor's Story*. Tampa: Catawba Publishing, 2007.

Good source for excerpts about how a teen survives the Holocaust.

Zimbardo, Phillip . *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* .
New York: Random House, XX, 2007. Zimbardo's cumulative effort to put
psychological theory to practical use and an excellent source for teaching social
psychology.

Eye of the Storm. DVD. Directed by Yuri Zeltser. Hollywood: Image Entertainment,
1992. Jane Elliot's blue eyed/brown eyed experiment can remind students how
easy it is to create prejudice and discrimination.

Ghosts of Rwanda. DVD. Directed by Greg Barker. London: Pbs (Direct), 2002. Graphic
and haunting tales of the genocide; should be shown with caution.

God Grew Tired of Us. DVD. Directed by Christopher Quinn. Culver City, CA: Sony
Pictures, 2002. An very different slant on the genocide in Darfur.

POV: Lost Boys of Sudan. DVD. Directed by Jon Shenk. New York: New Video Group,
2003. How do refugees survive the terrors of Darfur only to be threatened by life
in America?

"Children of the Great War: kid soldiers, boy soldiers never too young to die" The
Heritage of the Great War / First World War 1914-1918. Graphic color photos,
pictures and music. <http://www.greatwar.nl/children/children.html> (accessed
November 17, 2009). Good for photos and pics of WWI.

"Philip Zimbardo shows how people become monsters ... or heroes | Video on
TED.com." TED: Ideas worth spreading.
http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/philip_zimbardo_on_the_psychology_of_evil.html#
(accessed November 17, 2009). I absolutely recommend everyone watch
this fast paced, almost crazed explanation of the Lucifer Effect and Hero
Response. The students will have to watch it twice to get all the good stuff.

"PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder) | Disasters and Mental Health : Trauma;
Treatment; Symptoms; Coping Strategies; Terrorism and Bioterrorism."
Consumer information about Clinical Psychology : Psychotherapy, Therapy,
Counseling, Mental Health | Clinical Psychology | A Guide to Psychology and
its Practice. <http://www.guidetopsychology.com/ptsd.htm> (accessed November
17, 2009). What should we do to help the survivors? Good place to start.

"Rape of Nanking Photos." Dragon City Journal.
homepage.mac.com/yingloon/RapeofNankingPhotos.htm (accessed November
17, 2009). Supports again the idea that the Holocaust is not an isolated event.

"Voices of young soldiers [Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers]." Home [Coalition
to stop the use of Child Soldiers]. [http://www.child-
soldiers.org/childsoldiers/voices-of-young-soldiers](http://www.child-soldiers.org/childsoldiers/voices-of-young-soldiers) (accessed November 17,
2009). Great way to let students use pop culture to look at helping child soldiers.

"vietnam war photos." captivating memorable photos.
www.dismalworld.com/im/must_see/unforgettable-photos (accessed October 9,
2001).

Reading List and resources for Students

- Beah, Ishmael. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007. Students will be required to read the book, and almost no one will complain!
- Bing, Leon. *Do or Die: America's Most Notorious Gangs Speak for Themselves*. Topeka: Topeka Bindery, 1999. Gang class scene, pp. 120-127.
- Ghosts of Rwanda*. DVD. Directed by Greg Barker. London: Pbs (Direct), 2002. Graphic and haunting tales of the genocide; should be shown with caution.
- Ilibagiza, Immaculee. *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*. Carlsbad: Hay House, 2007. Introduction, Chapters 9,10 and 18
- Pearlman, Ann, and Colton Simpson. *Inside the Crips: Life Inside L.A.'s Most Notorious Gang*. New York, New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2006. Foreword by Ice T; good summary of the heart breaking and breaking bad gang scene.
- Trymaine Lee & Cassi Feldman "Construction Worker One Day, Subway Hero the Next" 2007 Ordinary hero.
- Zimbardo, Phillip . *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* . New York: Random House, XX, 2007. pp. 210-212 'Why Situations Matter' section.

"Philip Zimbardo shows how people become monsters ... or heroes | Video on TED.com." TED: Ideas worth spreading.
http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/philip_zimbardo_on_the_psychology_of_evil.html#
(accessed November 17, 2009).

Appendix

North Carolina Competency Goals met by Curriculum Unit

Competency Goal 14: The learner will evaluate the social dimension of behavior.

Objectives:

- 14.1 Illustrate how the structure and function of a given group affects the behavior of the group and the individual.
- 14.2 Summarize attribution processes where individuals form judgments about self and others.
- 14.3 Verify the influence of stereotypes on attributions of behavior.
- 14.4 Assess classic studies dealing with the concepts of conformity, compliance and obedience.
- 14.5 Define attitude and attitude changes.
- 14.6 Evaluate diverse offerings in organizational psychology.
- 14.7 Discuss aggression and antisocial behavior.

Other objectives met:

- 6.2 Identify processes in cognitive learning.
- 6.3 Explain social learning
- 8.04 Explore psychological and physiological reactions to stress.
- 9.03 Differentiate between nature and nurture issues.