A 60-item questionnaire measuring believed effects of sensitivity training, evaluations of these effects, and logical inconsistencies of respondents is presented. The questionnaire was developed from phrases describing sensitivity training found in newspaper articles written during a week of intense publicity following an incident at a local high school. (Author)
A Questionnaire Evaluating Perceived Effects of Sensitivity Training

Daniel L. Kegan

May 1970

Abstract

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IF YOU USE THIS, PLEASE LET ME KNOW ABOUT IT. --Dan Kegan
A Questionnaire Evaluating Perceived Effects of Sensitivity Training
by
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During a study (Kegan, 1970) of a high school system reacting to severe adverse publicity concerning a sensitivity training incident, the author became aware that sensitivity training was no longer of interest solely to social scientists. It is increasingly becoming a legal and political issue. It is suggested that objective data from a rigorously designed poll would be desirable to further detail what segments of the population have which conceptions of sensitivity training.

As part of the high school study, the author developed a questionnaire to survey attitudes toward sensitivity training. Although use of the questionnaire at the school was not permitted, it is presented here as a possible contribution toward a study of public attitudes and sensitivity training.

Phrases describing effects or results of sensitivity training were identified from newspaper articles on sensitivity training written during the crisis week. Many more negative or harmful phrases than positive or beneficial phrases were found in this analysis. To obtain a balanced questionnaire, the author had to write several positive effect items to be paired with specific negative effect items. Three "control" items were included: makes better drivers (29), encourages dieting (36), and promotes capitalism (53, part of a triad with items 10 and 32). In addition to this questionnaire, standard demographic questions and questions concerning sensitivity training and the schools were prepared.

The items were paired to form bipolar choices (Morrison, Campbell, & Wolins, 1967). Since it was hypothesized as likely that some people would hold logically inconsistent beliefs (especially since sensitivity training was an emotionally involved controversy), the pairs were separated yielding Likert-type items. Each item was randomly ordered; however if the second item of a pair received a random number within ten of the first item, another number was chosen to make all items from pairs at least ten items apart.
This form of the questionnaire provides a considerable amount of data: believed effects of sensitivity training, evaluation of each item, and logical inconsistencies can be determined. If a briefer form is necessary, the number of items may be reduced or the instructions can be changed to ask only for evaluations of those items which are believed to be the results of sensitivity training.

To obtain summary indices, the sixty items may be partitioned into three sets: positive, negative, and control.¹ The first score, Effects, would consist of the total number of positive effects checked / the total number of negative effects checked / and the total number of control effects checked. For example, 25/6/1. The second score, Evaluation, would consist of the sum (counting A as 5, a as 4, ? as 3, b as 2, and B as 1) of positive item evaluations / the sum of the negative item evaluations / and the sum of the control item evaluations. For example, 107/45/5.

References


Footnotes

¹This partitioning will, of course, be influenced by the researcher's own value system. This author would put items 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 30, 31, 32, 37, 39, 40, 41, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 54, and 58 into the positive set; items 29, 36, and 53 into the control set; and the remaining twenty-eight items into the negative set.
Figure 1

Instructions:

In the following list, please first check (in the left hand column) those items which you believe are the results of sensitivity training or are related to sensitivity training. Then after completing the list, for every item, circle (in the right hand column) whether you

A - strongly approve
a - approve
? - are indifferent
d - disapprove
D - strongly disapprove

of that result or related thing. Although several of the items are related, each is different and should be answered independently, without concern for the answers to other items. Work quickly down the list.

Sensitivity training:

1. lets an individual solve his personal problems
2. requires leaders with emotional and personal maturity
3. makes worse students
4. strengthens people so that they can better face the world
5. is an experience in living
6. widens the generation
7. helps a teacher function more effectively
8. is dangerous
9. is a religious experience
10. promotes communism
11. breaks down all inhibitions
12. makes people more lonely than before
13. fosters disrespect for others
14. encourages caution
15. creates neurotics
16. results in learning new ways of manipulating others
17. results in greater self-confusion
18. improves communication skills
19. permits better understanding of others
20. reduces loneliness
21. is an educational experience
22. destroys individuality
23. results in more open, honest communication
24. encourages risk-taking
25. makes students less receptive to classroom learning
26. encourages trust
27. is a brainwashing technique
28. turns people into manipulated zombies
29. makes better drivers
30. narrows the generation gap
31. requires leaders with professional, academic qualifications
32. promotes democracy
33. fosters isolation, separateness
34. promotes Black-White antagonism
35. preparation for living
36. encourages dieting
37. creates honesty
38. impairs communication skills
39. builds community
40. strengthens self-discipline
41. lets the individual become more innovative
42. encourages sexual promiscuity
43. is safe
44. creates dishonesty
45. makes people feel more comfortable with others
46. makes students more receptive to classroom learning
47. lets a person become more of an individual
48. promotes Black-White understanding
49. fosters respect for others
50. impairs a teacher's functioning

51. softens people so they are less able to face the world
52. encourages appropriate sexual behavior
53. promotes capitalism
54. makes better students
55. encourages suspicion

56. requires no one special for a leader
57. makes people feel less comfortable with others
58. results in greater self-awareness
59. is anti-religious
60. permits more misunderstanding of others