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Keywords

Bogardus social distance scale, Discrimination, Attitude change, Class activity

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Evaluation of a Classroom Exercise on Social Distance and Discrimination

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Abstract

This project evaluated a class activity on social distance and discrimination using the Bogardus Social Distance Scale. Students [N=266] in six sections of a family development course received either lecture or lecture plus the activity and completed two pretest and posttest measures. Results revealed greater positive shifts on the Scale for students who received the activity, but equivalent changes in attitudes toward the target group as students in the lecture only group. Students in the activity group rated the activity plus lecture as highly as students in the lecture only group rated the lecture. Discussion focused on future directions for development, expansion, and adaptation of this activity to other classes and contexts.

Keywords: Bogardus Social Distance Scale, discrimination, attitude change, class activity

Introduction

In 1998, the American Psychological Association Task Force on Diversity Issues at the Precollege and Undergraduate Levels of Education in Psychology recommended that teachers explicitly talk about prejudice in the classroom to “showcase the power of psychological research” on the subject (APA Task Force, 1998, p. 32). The authors noted that, “Although students are sometimes wary of talking about the role of prejudice in their own lives, the topic provides many opportunities to show psychology’s relevance to personal, social, and political issues” (p. 32). The authors also provided suggestions for specific classroom exercises to teach about prejudice.

Specifically, the Task Force recommended an activity using a sociological measure, the Bogardus Social Distance Scale [BSDS] (Bogardus, 1925, 1933), as a way to teach about social developments to perceive and interpret differences between groups, particularly as they can lead to prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. The BSDS asks people to rate members of a group or groups in terms of their preferred social distance and level of interaction. It is essentially a proxy measure for an individual’s level of comfort or discomfort with a group of people and as such is ideal for a classroom exercise on prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination.

The BSDS is scored 1-7, with 1 representing the closest level. Response options are: (1) As close kin by marriage; (2) As my friends; (3) As my neighbors; (4) As my coworkers; (5) As speaking acquaintances only; (6) As visitors to my country; (7) I’d exclude them from my country. Only the highest level marked is counted on the BSDS, so if a participant marks 1-5, it would be scored “1.” Participants are instructed:

Social distance means the degree that individuals desire to associate with others. This scale relates to a special form of social distance known as person to group distance. Place an “x” in each of the blanks that indicate the degree

of association you would desire to have with [target group]. Give your first reaction. "I would be willing to have [target group]:"

Three further characteristics of the BSDS enhance its appropriateness for this exercise: (1) It has a consistent history of use as a measure of interpersonal/intergroup perception for over 85 years; (2) Numerous investigations have established its reliability and validity (Hartley & Hartley, 1952; Shaw & Wright, 1967; Sherif & Sherif, 1956); (3) It is a sociological measure, recommended by a psychological task force, that will be used in a family science classroom in this investigation, meeting Lowney's (2012) call for greater interdisciplinarity in work on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning [SoTL]. To date, no empirical evaluation of its use in this capacity or its effectiveness as a teaching tool has been published. This investigation seeks to be the first to do so.

To use the BSDS, one must first select the group or groups to which individuals will compare themselves. For this investigation, I selected "homosexuals" as the target outgroup. This selection was guided by three factors: (1) The course in which I would be using the BSDS already discussed homosexuality as part of a broader topic on lifestyle diversity; (2) Legal discrimination against homosexuals in the United States is still widespread. Only six states and the District of Columbia allow same-sex marital unions (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011a), and those marriages are barred from federal recognition by the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act. Further, only 21 states and the District of Columbia ban discrimination based on sexual orientation (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011b); (3) Prejudice, stereotyping, and harassment against homosexuals in the United States is still widespread, with nearly one in four Americans reporting that homosexuals as a group do not at all agree with "my vision of American society" (Edgell, Gerteis, & Hartmann 2006) and nearly 90% of LGBT youth reporting school harassment (GLSEN, 2010).

It is important to note that in selecting any target group for the BSDS, one does not assume that no members of the target group will be in the sample. Typically, research with the BSDS uses multiple target groups (and collects data on to which groups each participant belongs). However, the nature of the activity used in this investigation precluded either using multiple target groups or collecting data on group membership. Thus, although homosexuals were designated as the target group for this investigation, it is not only possible, but given the sample size, probable, that several participants were themselves members of the target group.

Although research with college students has found them to be somewhat less prejudiced towards homosexuals than the general population, this difference is largely influenced by levels of positive contact with lesbian, gay, and bisexual [LGB] people (Hinrich & Rosenberg, 2002; Liang & Alimo, 2005), which may not be the typical experience for all students. Additionally, college students demonstrate considerable pluralistic ignorance with their attitudes towards LGB individuals, rating themselves as less biased than either their friends or the typical student (Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001). This suggests that there is still significant room for improvement in the development and utilization of programs and activities to reduce anti-homosexual prejudice among college students.

Although prior research has evaluated class activities about prejudice, those activities typically focus on the subjective experience of being stigmatized or discriminated against (Chesler & Zuniga, 1991), attitude shifts towards minority racial groups (Byrnes & Kiger, 1990), or students' levels of engagement with the material and discussions (Goldstein,

1997). Additionally, courses that only contain some material on the social psychology of prejudice, unlike courses that focus primarily on prejudice, do not see significant reductions in students' negative attitudes towards homosexuals over the course of the term (Pettijohn & Walzer, 2008). These last results suggest that a stronger focus on prejudice may be required to influence attitudes. As devoting substantially more class time to the topic of prejudice would not likely be appropriate in many introductory courses which already have a plethora of topics to cover, this opens the door for the possibility of a meaningful class activity on anti-homosexual prejudice that could accomplish that goal in significantly less time.

The APA Task Force (1998) suggested the BSDS class exercise be carried out as follows: The instructor administers the BSDS, collects the papers, then hands them back randomly to the students to ensure anonymity. Next, the instructor divides the room into seven areas representing the seven levels on the BSDS and asks students to stand in the area of the room that matches the completed BSDS they are holding. Finally, the instructor leads a class discussion about how the students feel about their placement and the related issues in diversity, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Because of class size and room constraints I faced, it would not be possible to divide the room into seven areas. Instead, I modified the protocol to have students stand as we went through the seven levels one at a time. All students would be seated before we began the discussion.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the activity, I will compare students from three semesters of the course who received the relevant lecture material but not the activity with students from three semesters of the course who received both the lecture material and the activity. All students will receive both pretest and posttest measures of the BSDS, attitudes toward/perceptions of homosexual people, and a posttest only evaluation of the lectures/activity adapted from Sturges, Maurer, and Cole (2009).

I hypothesize that compared to the control group that receives only lectures, the experimental group that receives the lectures and the activity:

H1: will show a significantly greater reduction in social distance on the BSDS from pretest to posttest;

H2: will show significantly greater changes in attitudes toward/perceptions of homosexual people;

H3: will evaluate the activity more favorably than the control group evaluates the lectures.

Method

Sample and Participant Selection

Participants were undergraduate students recruited from six sections of a large introductory Family Development course at a rural southeastern U.S. public university with an enrollment of approximately 20,000. The course had no prerequisites and was a required prerequisite course for upper division courses in the major and the minor in Child and Family Development. Additionally, the course was required for several other degree programs in Family and Consumer Science fields. Approximately half of the students enrolled were taking the course to satisfy one of these requirements and half were taking it as an elective. The course goals were to give students a practical understanding of the process of

relationship and family development and a firm grounding in the concepts, facts, theories, and issues in research on relationships and families.

The project spanned two years, with three sections of the course offered each year (spring, summer, and fall), all taught by the same instructor. The three sections in calendar year 2010 were the control group (lecture only) and the three sections in calendar year 2011 were the experimental group (lecture plus activity). Students in the sections were invited to participate in a research study about different methods of classroom teaching. This study was Institutional Review Board-approved and participation would include anonymously completing a pre/post survey and one other pre/post measure over two consecutive class periods.

To protect anonymity but ensure the ability to link pre/post responses, participants selected their own four character unique identification code. Although no students declined participation, attendance in the course was typically 75%, so a number of students missed either the pretest day, the posttest day, or both. A total of 266 students completed all project measures, 133 in the control group (of 204 enrolled) and 133 in the experimental group (of 193 enrolled). This represents participation rates of 65.20% and 68.91%, respectively, similar to the daily attendance rates.

Demographic characteristics of the two groups were nearly identical. In the control section, 14.3% were male (N=19), with 58.6% White (78), 32.3% African-American (43), 4.5% Hispanic (6), 1.5% Asian (2), and 3.0% "Other" (4). In the experimental section, 9.8% were male (13), with 61.7% White (82), 32.3% African-American (43), 3.8% Hispanic (5), and 2.3% "Other" (3). Information on participants' sexual orientation was not collected.

Measures

All participants received two pretest and two posttest measures. The first pretest measure was a 13-item survey. Two questions collected demographic data (gender and ethnicity), three questions assessed their attitudes toward/perceptions of homosexual people, and an additional eight questions collected data not used in this investigation. The three five-point Likert-type scale attitude/perception questions were: (1) "Compared to your attitudes towards homosexual people, most [university] students:" with options from "Have exactly the same attitudes" to "Have completely different attitudes"; (2) "I think it would be _____ for a homosexual student to be open about their sexual orientation at [university]." with options from "Very easy" to "Very difficult"; (3) "If I were a homosexual student at [university], I would feel _____." with options from "Completely safe and completely free from discrimination and harassment" to "Completely unsafe and completely likely to experience discrimination and harassment."

The second pretest measure was the BSDS, adapted from Kleg and Yamamoto (1998) by replacing the target groups with "homosexual people." It should be noted that nowhere in the instructions or other materials was the target group explicitly referred to as a "target group" or an "outgroup." Although the BSDS conceptualizes the measure in that way, it does not present the measure in that way, which allows full participation by members of the target group itself. Participants were instructed:

Social distance means the degree that individuals desire to associate with others. This scale relates to a special form of social distance known as person to group distance. Place an "x" in each of the blanks that indicate the degree

of association you would desire to have with homosexual people. Give your first reaction. "I would be willing to have homosexual people:"

The first posttest measure had 22 items. The first five items were the three attitude/perception questions and two unused questions from the first pretest again. The remaining 17 items were adapted from Sturges et al. (2009) and asked participants to evaluate different aspects of the activity (experimental group) or lectures (control group) on a 1-5 Likert-type scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The text of the items was changed to read "activity" or "lectures" as was appropriate for their group. The second posttest measure was the BSDS again.

Procedure

At the start of a two-day unit on the topic of diversity, the instructor announced that all students in the class would have the opportunity to anonymously participate in a research project to evaluate the effectiveness of a classroom teaching method over the next two class periods. Students were informed that they were not required to fill out the forms if they didn't want to, that they would receive no credit or incentive for filling out the forms, and that there was no penalty for not participating. The instructor also explained the procedure for creating the anonymous unique identifier code and its function in ensuring that the instructor would not be able to tell who had filled out which form.

The instructor then passed out the first pretest measure and gave students 10 minutes to complete it. At the end of that time, the instructor collected the first pretest measure, placed the responses in a sealed envelope, and passed out the second pretest measure. Participants had five minutes to complete this measure, after which the instructor collected them and set them aside. The instructor then began the lecture for the day, which included information on the BSDS, prejudice, and discrimination. In both the control and experimental sections, all lecture content was identical (e.g., identical PowerPoint slides, identical verbal examples, etc.) to ensure reliable comparisons across the two groups.

In the control section, the instructor lectured for the remainder of the class period. In the experimental section, after approximately 30 minutes of lecture (again, identical to the control section's lecture), the instructor announced that they would be doing a class activity, shuffled the completed BSDS measure thoroughly, then passed them back to the students. The instructor explained that shuffling would preserve anonymity, as no one would receive their own measure back.

The instructor asked all students who had the highest level checked on the BSDS form they had received, "As close kin by marriage," to stand. The instructor told the class to look around and see how many people were standing up and how many were still seated and understand that the people standing up represented the only people in the room who would be willing to let them marry into their family if they were a member of the target group. Although the instructor did not say so, the instructor was aware that it was probable that one or more students in the room were indeed members of the target group. The instructor next had the standing students take their seats and repeated the process for the remaining six levels of the BSDS. At the end, the instructor led a class discussion about how the students felt about their placement, the assumptions they took for granted, and what it would feel like to be a member of the target group in the classroom. The next class period was identical for both groups: the instructor finished the remaining lecture material on the topic of diversity and administered the first and second posttests.

Results

H1: Reduction in Social Distance on BSDS

A repeated-measures Multivariate Analysis of Variance [MANOVA] was computed with group membership (lecture only or lecture plus activity) as the independent variable and highest level on the BSDS as the dependent variable. A significant main effect emerged for within-subject time, Pillai's Trace = .07, $F(1, 264) = 20.74$, $p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. A within-subject time X group interaction also emerged, Pillai's Trace = .03, $F(1, 264) = 9.22$, $p = .003$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. Inspection of group means revealed that both groups reported significant reduction in highest level on the BSDS from pretest to posttest, but the lecture plus activity group reported a significantly larger reduction, to 1.17 (.54) from 1.44 (.78), than the lecture only group, to 1.38 (.81) from 1.44 (.87). Follow-up visual inspection of the distribution of responses on the BSDS at both pretest and posttest for both groups revealed the driving force behind the group difference in change scores was a substantially larger percentage of participants in the experimental group who moved to the highest level of the scale at posttest, supporting Hypothesis 1. See Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2.

Table 1. Highest BSDS Level by Group and Time (N = 266)

Group	Highest BSDS Level						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Activity ($n = 133$)							
Pretest	91	32	6	2	2	0	0
Posttest	117	11	4	0	1	0	0
Lecture Only ($n = 133$)							
Pretest	93	32	3	1	3	1	0
Posttest	98	28	1	3	3	0	0

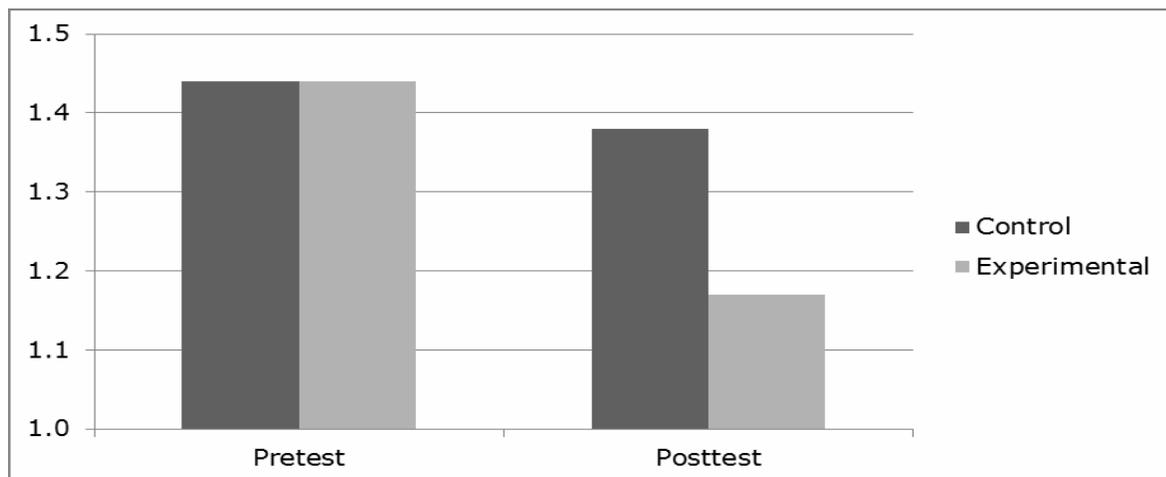


Figure 1. Average BSDS scores at pretest/posttest by group.

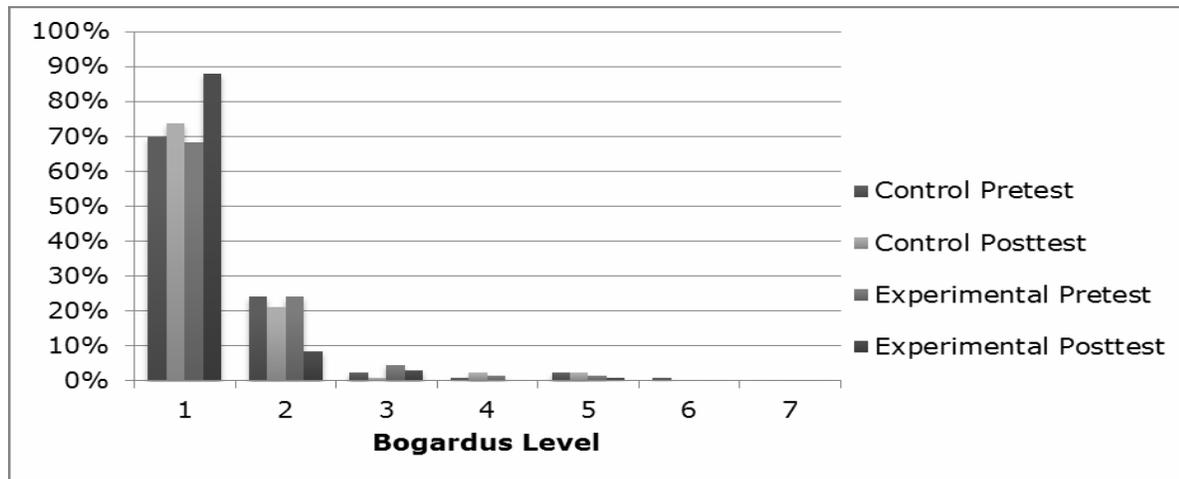


Figure 2. Distribution of responses on the BSDS by pretest/posttest and group.

H2: Change in Attitudes and Perceptions

A repeated-measures MANOVA was computed with group membership as the independent variable and responses to the three attitude/perception questions as the dependent variables. A significant main effect emerged for within-subject time, Pillai's Trace = .31, $F(3, 262) = 39.37$, $p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .31$, but not for group or the within-subject time X group interaction. Follow-up univariate ANOVAs revealed significant effects for within-subject time on two of the three dependent variables: (1) how difficult it would be to be openly homosexual on campus, $F(1, 264) = 109.35$, $p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .29$, and (2) how safe one would feel as a homosexual on campus, $F(1, 264) = 49.52$, $p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$. Inspection of combined means revealed that for both variables, students' scores increased, reflecting greater awareness of the difficulty of being openly homosexual on campus, from 2.73 (1.01) to 3.38 (.88), and greater likelihood of experiencing safety threats or discrimination, from 2.78 (.83) to 3.13 (.78), failing to support Hypothesis 2. See Figure 3.

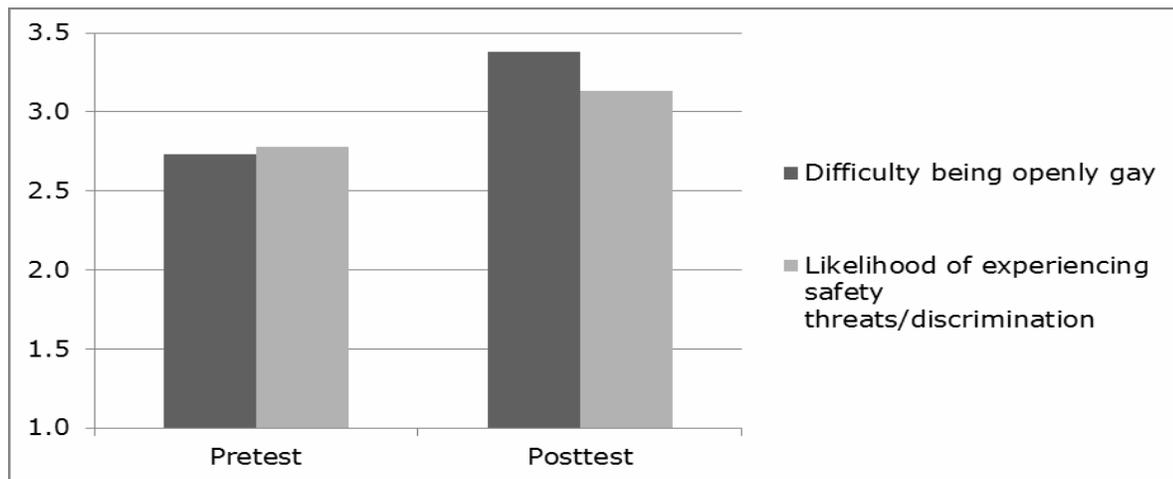


Figure 3. Average scores at pretest/posttest on perception variables.

H3: Subjective Evaluation of Class

Scores from the 17 item measure adapted from Sturges et al. (2009) were calculated by creating a mean score for each participant on the measure. Chronbach's alpha for the full measure in this investigation was .86. An independent groups t-test revealed no significant difference between the groups in their evaluation, $t(264) = 0.12, ns$. Both the lecture only group, 3.93 (.45), and the lecture plus activity group, 3.93 (.40), rated the lecture/activity highly, with mean scores close to "Agree" on the scale, failing to support Hypothesis 3.

Discussion

This investigation sought to be the first experimental evaluation of the Bogardus Social Distance Scale classroom activity recommended by the 1998 APA Task Force. The results were mixed and suggest that the activity's utility in the classroom may depend largely on the goals that instructors intend it to achieve. The activity was successful in moving students more towards the closest level (i.e., marrying into their family) on the BSDS than lecture alone. In both the control and experimental groups, slightly less than 70% of participants selected the closest level at pretest, but at posttest, 88% of those in the experimental group (compared to less than 74% in the control group) selected the closest level. This is a significant shift in attitude, from "friends" to "family," and is arguably the biggest jump between two levels on the BSDS. That the control group demonstrated very little shift on the BSDS from pretest to posttest suggests that it was the activity that led to this change in attitude. If this specific shift in attitude is part of the goals for the course, then this activity may be a more valuable instructional tool than lecture alone. Any course that includes such attitudinal changes as part of the course goals, whether introductory (Introductory Sociology, Introductory Psychology, Introductory Family Science, etc.) or upper division (courses on race and ethnicity, social class, prejudice, inequality, etc.), large or small, could potentially benefit from this activity.

As one reviewer noted, although the shift from pretest to posttest on the BSDS for those in the experimental group is supported by the data, the magnitude of that shift (18%) is quite dramatic and begs the question of what specifically about the activity drove this change. As this is the first empirical evaluation of this classroom activity, I can only speculate, but I

suspect it was the nature of the activity itself, rather than anything specific I might have said or asked during the discussion. This activity was inherently personal: students were asked to look around the room and see how many of their classmates would bar them from their families (or workplaces, or neighborhoods, etc.) without even knowing them. Prejudice and discrimination were not abstract concepts or things that happened to “other people.” Here, students could literally see the prejudice and discrimination they would face if they were members of the target group. Interestingly, another reviewer wondered if these same differences could be because the experimental group actually participated in the activity and thus had greater exposure to the BSDS and opportunity to discuss it than the control group. As the lecture content that both groups received about the BSDS was identical (and explained what it was and how it was used, but without specific reference to that class’s responses), this could also be a strong possibility.

Hypothesis 2, that the experimental group would show significantly greater changes in attitudes toward/perceptions of homosexual people than the control group, was not supported. This suggests that the activity is no more effective in changing those attitudes than lecture alone, as a significant within-group effect for time (i.e., pretest to posttest) did emerge. It appears that there is no difference in the effectiveness of the two methods in raising students’ awareness of these issues. It is possible that subtle differences between the measures inadvertently tapped into meaningful differences between different aspects of student attitudes. The BSDS focused on students’ own direct social distance and potential interpersonal relationships. In contrast, the other measures asked students to engage in perspective-taking and imagine what it would be like to be homosexual specifically in the university context. Raising students’ awareness to the difficulty of being openly homosexual (which was part of the lecture content in both groups) may not necessarily lead to a change in the level of interpersonal acceptance students’ have for homosexual people. It may be possible that the personalizing aspect of the activity noted in the last paragraph uniquely contributed to changes in levels of interpersonal acceptance as demonstrated on the BSDS.

Curiously, students in both groups appeared to demonstrate a lack of awareness of their own changed attitudes, as there was no significant change from pretest to posttest on students’ responses to the first question that asked them to compare their attitudes to the typical [university] student. That is, students’ own attitudes changed from pretest to posttest, but at posttest, after their attitudes had changed, students’ perception of their attitudes compared to the typical [university] student were the same as at pretest. Evidently, the typical [university] student’s attitudes changed in exactly the same way and to exactly the same degree over exactly the same time as students’ own attitudes. Although the data in this project cannot explain this observation, this certainly suggests a fruitful area for future research on students’ attitude change, self-awareness, and comparisons to peers.

Finally, there was no difference between how students in the lecture only group evaluated the lecture and how students in the lecture plus activity group evaluated the activity, contrary to Hypothesis 3. Although students who participated in the activity did not evaluate it more favorably than the lecture only participants evaluated lecture, they also did not evaluate it more unfavorably either, suggesting that instructors may be able to safely add this activity without negative consequences to course evaluations.

Limitations and Future Directions

It is important to note four limitations of this evaluation. First, this evaluation was conducted with a single course at a single university. This activity is easily adaptable to other courses (and other target groups) and should be tried in other courses (and other

disciplines) at other institutions and in other countries to explore the generalizability of these results. In this study, the primary use of the BSDS was to explore changes in student attitudes, but other uses are also possible. Originally, the BSDS was designed merely to document desired social distance. As a "consciousness-raising" exercise, simply administering the BSDS once and displaying the results could jumpstart a class discussion about how a particular group is perceived and variations in those perceptions among people. Similarly, given the long history of the BSDS, there is much extant data about how perceptions of specific groups have changed over time, at least in the United States. Collecting student attitudes with the BSDS and then comparing it to the historical data from previous generations could be useful in disciplines ranging from history to political science to law. Additionally, for instructors outside the U.S., the BSDS could be used to facilitate cross-cultural comparisons in disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and international studies. For example, a number of countries both culturally similar to the U.S. (e.g., Canada) and culturally distinct from the U.S. (e.g., Norway) offer full marriage equality. Attitudes towards allowing a homosexual to marry into one's family (i.e., the highest level on the BSDS for the target outgroup in this study) in these countries could vary significantly from the patterns observed in this investigation and could be used to explore cross-cultural differences.

Second, because of logistical limitations, I had to deviate from the administration procedure recommended by the APA Task Force and have students stand up rather than move to different areas of the room. This adaptation may have affected the effectiveness of the activity in unknown ways. However, this adaptation may also have made it easier for some students to participate, particularly those who are shy or who may feel uncomfortable having to move around the room while others watch (e.g., obese students or those with mobility challenges). Given the controversial nature of the topic, it is also possible that simply having students stand up could have made the activity less threatening for students who are afraid of participatory learning. Future replications at other institutions that could more closely follow the recommended procedure and that might be able to tease apart these possibilities would be prudent.

Third, the sample was disproportionately female, which is typical for enrollment patterns in the course. Prior research with the BSDS has shown that women generally report less social distance than men across all social groups (Carter, 1990; Johnson & Marini, 1998; Mills et al., 1995). Further, on attitudinal measures other than the BSDS, women show greater tolerance toward homosexuals (Gormley & Lopez, 2010; Sakalli, 2002) and greater support for same-sex marriage (Brumbaugh et al., 2008; Herek, 2002). Because of the potentially confounding influence of these factors, future replications with larger numbers of male students would be desirable.

Fourth, the comparison of the lecture content and the activity was conducted between groups, not within groups. Despite the fact that the experimental group received both the lecture and the activity, they were only asked to evaluate the activity, which meant that a within-group comparison of the lecture and the activity was not possible. This was an intentional design decision to: (1) prevent respondent fatigue (from having to complete an additional 17-item measure), (2) prevent confusion and contamination across the measures (from having to complete two nearly identical measures with only a few words changed), and (3) keep the measures as similar as possible across the two groups. However, this decision also meant that the only participants who received both the lecture and the activity were not asked to evaluate or compare them both. Future investigations may want to reconsider this design decision.

Future investigations could also include a qualitative component, which could delve deeper into the reasons behind students' shifts in scores on the BSDS. That this activity reduces prejudice is a positive finding, but future research that uncovers why and how it does so would have implications far beyond the classroom. Related to this point, as one reviewer noted, it is possible that some or all of the apparent shift in student attitudes on the BSDS could be explained by simple conformity to the majority (Asch, 1951) and/or group polarization (Sunstein, 2009). Although this is possible, the design of the activity and evaluation process actually sought to minimize this possibility and the potential impact of these factors in three ways. First, students completed the BSDS anonymously, both at pretest and posttest, and did not ever have to publically claim their responses. Although this may not have eliminated pressure to conform to a perceived group norm at posttest, it did minimize it as much as possible within the constraints of the activity. Second, during the activity, students did not receive back their own BSDS form, but rather a form completed by another student, so even when they had to publically represent a position by standing up, the entire class knew that it may not be the student's own position they were representing. Again, this part of the activity was designed so as to not put undue pressure on students to conform. Third, students completed the posttest BSDS in a subsequent class period, not on the same day as the activity, so it is possible that some or all pressure to conform may have dissipated by the time of the posttest. These elements of the design may not have eliminated all pressure to conform, but they minimized them as much as was possible given the limitations of adhering to administering the activity as designed.

Still, in the current investigation it is unknown whether it was the activity itself, or merely finding out what their classmates thought, that motivated the shift in attitudes on the BSDS from pretest to posttest. A future investigation that incorporated multiple experimental conditions, one where students merely received the information on the distribution of responses and one where they completed the activity, and followed-up with qualitative questions about why they responded the way they did at pretest and again at posttest, might reveal the underlying reasons for the shift in attitudes. Such follow-up questions could also explore if students were even aware of their own shift in attitudes. One method for future researchers to consider would be the use of classroom "clicker" technology to quickly and anonymously collect and display student responses on the BSDS without conducting the activity. Additionally, because any group can be selected as the target outgroup for the BSDS, future research could explore the impact of this activity on attitudes towards a group where there is not already a majority of students at the highest level and greater potential shifts on the scale are possible. In this project, the outgroup chosen was both guided and constrained by course content, but other courses may be freer to select a wide range of possible outgroups (e.g., persons with disabilities, members of specific religious groups, undocumented workers, recovering alcoholics and addicts, paroled prisoners, etc.).

Finally, as with all class activities that cover difficult or controversial topics, instructors who use this BSDS activity should be prepared for how to respond in instances where a student or multiple students take positions of overt discrimination or prejudice. On the BSDS, the lowest level is "I'd exclude them from my country." How should an instructor respond if one or multiple students in the class openly advocate that position? What if there are members of the target group present in the classroom, as was likely in this case? There are no simple answers to those questions, as the responses must be guided by multiple factors, including: (1) institutional policies on classroom speech, non-discrimination, and harassment; (2) classroom population and climate; (3) course goals and objectives; and myriad other

factors. However, instructors who plan to use this activity should give prior thought to how to most appropriately respond should such situations arise.

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