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Unit 1Stanley Milgram's Shock Experiment

## A. Responding to text

1. What was the "problem" or main topic of interest in Stanley Milgram's experiment?
2. How were the subjects deceived, regarding the purpose of the experiment?
3. If the "teacher" started to have concerns about the electric shocks he/she was giving, what was done to get him to continue?
4. What did the "learner" do when he received the highest levels of shock?
5. What percent of the participants continued to give electric shocks beyond the first indications of discomfort by the learners?
6. What percentage of participants used the highest shock setting of 450 volts?
7. What was Milgram's hypothesis when doing this experiment?
8. Which of the following statements is true regarding the conclusion for this experiment?
  - a) The evidence supported the hypothesis.
  - b) There is some evidence in support of the hypothesis.
  - c) The evidence does not support the hypothesis.
  - d) The evidence supports an alternative hypothesis.
9. What "control" (an action to prevent other factors from influencing the particular purpose of the experiment) did Milgram take concerning each participant? Why?

## B. Personal Reflections

1. Suppose you had been a participant in Milgram's experiment on obedience.
  - a) How would you have felt when you were told at the end of the experiment that the learners were actually paid associates of the experimenter who had been acting?
  
  - b) What would you have done?
  
2. What do the results of this experiment say about "peer pressure"?
  
3. Why are the results of this experiment so frightening for humanity?
  
4. In a later version of this experiment, Milgram had a second, but fake, teacher in the room who had been instructed by him to completely refuse to give shocks once the learner wanted to stop. When the volunteer teachers were told to go on, 90% sided with the second teacher and refused to obey. Why did this happen?
  
5. What does the finding described in question #4 say about your ability to apply positive peer pressure in situations where you see students being bullied?
  
6. If, as described in question #4 above, 90% of the volunteers refused to continue giving shocks after the fake teacher refused, this means that 10% of the volunteers still did continue. In your opinion, what does this tell us about humanity?
  
7. Social scientists and others have raised serious ethical concerns about Milgram's experiments. Do you think it was right for Milgram to have conducted these experiments? Explain.