**Lab 1 – Introductions and Zero Acquaintance**

General structure:

1. Introduce yourself. Say something exciting. Be personable. Don’t creep people out.

2. Collect User IDs

3. Zero-acquaintance exercise

Note: The user ID worksheets and the zero-acquaintance worksheets will be printed and available in my mailbox on the third floor before labs. Simply swing by my mailbox and grab as many as you need (and return what is not used so we don’t run short).

**USER IDs Aliases**

The first thing we need to do is obtain artificial student IDs or “aliases” that we will use for the semester. Please have everyone login to the computers and go to the following web site:

**http://www.yourpersonality.net/qs350/createuser.pl**

We will be asking students to use an alias throughout the semester for all their data collection assignments.

Why? Some of the data-collection assignments students will be completing will require that they log into our class website. We do not want to compromise the security of their university or other personal accounts by having them share a common user name across web sites.

It is critical that these IDs NOT be personally identifying. They should NOT simply use their NETID (e.g., rcfraley) for this purpose. They also need to keep a record of their ID and their password. Make sure they write it down or record it somewhere. If they lose it at any time, they will need to get in touch with me.

**Zero-acquaintance ratings**

One of the interesting findings in personality research is that people are relatively accurate in assessing another person’s personality even when they do not know the person in question (i.e., at “zero” acquaintance) or when they have only minimal amounts of information about the target.

The goal of our first exercise is to conduct a zero-acquaintance study in which students break into groups of 4 and rate each person in their group with respect to approximately 30 attributes (e.g., extraverted, conventional, intelligent). The rating sheets are in my mailbox; please grab as many as you need for your sections.

1. Break the students into groups of 4. If the total number cannot be divided by 4 evenly, it is better to have a few groups with more than 4 than to have a group with less than 4. If you have more than 5 per group, you could have trouble; avoid that.

Try your best to make sure that people who already know each other are NOT assigned to the same groups.

You will need to assign each person a label: Person 1, Person 2, Person 3, and Person

4. Have each person write their label (e.g., Person 2) on a piece of paper and place it in front of them where other group members can see it. **Make sure you have spare paper available for this purpose.**

2. In your own notes, assign each group a identifying number (e.g., Group 2) and make a note of the ID/alias of each person in the group. This is for your records only so that we can unambiguously know that “Person 2” in Group 3 was “oldschoolcatfart101”.

3. Distribute the rating sheets. Make sure students write their group number and their personal ID/alias at the top.

4. Students should first rate themselves with respect to the attributes on the worksheet. They can do this in the appropriate column in their worksheet. For example, if Jeff has been labeled “Person 2” in his group, then he should provide his self-ratings in the Person 2 column of the worksheet.

For all ratings, a 1 to 4 rating scale should be used. The scale is printed on the worksheet.

5. Give everyone up to 5 minutes to rate themselves.

6. When they are done, they should rate their other group members. Make it clear to them that, in fact, they might not know the people in their groups and that in some cases they will need to make inferences about that person’s personality.

Encourage them to take no more than 5 minutes per person to do so.

If there are more than 4 people in some groups, have students create a new column on their worksheet to accommodate the extra people.

After class:

7. When students are done, they can turn in their sheets to you. We will analyze these data in the labs at a future date.

8. When it is convenient, please enter the data into an Excel file and e-mail it to me. I’ve attached a template that you should use that has some data from a previous semester. (You can delete those data if you wish.)

The entry method should be self-explanatory, but I’ll highlight a few points. Each student is represented by a row in the file. The student’s alias should be in the first column. The next, group, is the group number for the student. The third, person, is the person’s number within the group. The next set of variables are the individual ratings of each item for each person, starting with person 1 (p1) and moving through person 5 (p5) for groups that had 5 people.

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Later in the semester we will be using these data as part of an assignment in which the students examine the discrepancies between the way they view themselves and the way others see them. We will also be seeking to determine whether accuracy (defined as self-other agreement) increases as the students get to know one another better from week to week. Feel free to share (foreshadow) this information after the exercise. You might also enjoy having a class discussion concerning their intuitions about whether people will be able to accurately judge them, which traits might be easiest to judge and which might be more challenging, etc.