

Need for Magic in the Psychology Classroom

Need for Magic is a fantasy novel that was written by a psychology instructor for other instructors and for students of psychology. Too often, textbooks merely list terms and corresponding definitions. Need for Magic paints a picture of psychological concepts and deepens student learning by using dialogue and action. Need for Magic can be used as a companion to any introductory psychology textbook. It also makes a great summer reading book for students enrolled in a high school psychology class. The fantasy elements of Need for Magic make learning psychology enjoyable as readers immerse themselves in a powerful story.

Need for Magic focuses on the unit of social psychology. Social psychology is the section of psychology that examines conformity, compliance and persuasion. It is almost always regarded as the favorite unit in introductory psychology courses. Unfortunately, it is almost always the last chapter in introductory textbooks. As a result, instructors often rush their teaching and compact the unit in order to fit it in before the end of the term. This can leave students with gaps in their understanding.

Need for Magic contains a detailed index that lists, by page number, where psychological terms and concepts are woven into the story. However, there are ample examples of social psychology concepts in the story that are not explicitly listed in the index. Such subtle instances can form the basis of several assignments where students need to demonstrate their understanding of social psychology by finding evidence in the text. Need for Magic shows abstract concepts of group behavior in a way that traditional textbooks alone cannot.

Below are examples of how the index and the story work together to help students learn.

Page 210. *'It is a little known truth that peoples' minds follow their behavior. Get them to do something and they will come up with their own reasons why they did it.'* This is a reference to COGNITIVE DISSONANCE. Once a person does a behavior, especially a bad one, cognitive dissonance manifests as guilt. To reduce the guilt or dissonance, the person will convince himself that the original behavior was valuable.

Page 240. *'In fact nearly two thirds of any group of guards that have been assigned here will kill or punish any prisoner simply because they are ordered to.'* This is a reference to the STANLEY MILGRAM OBEDIENCE EXPERIMENT where 65% of the participants were willing to kill simply because an authority figure told them to do so.

Psychology instructors are welcome to contact the author for an 'assessment kit' that contains essay prompts, rubrics and multiple choice assessments. Please click [here](#) to contact Joe Swope.

[Review Full Index](#)

[Amazon](#)

[iTunes](#)

[Buy Classroom Sets](#)
(Coming Soon)