

Inciting sociological thought by studying the Deadhead community: Engaging publics in dialogue.

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# Inciting Sociological Thought by Studying the Deadhead Community: Engaging Publics in Dialogue

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## Abstract

We need to pay more attention to the process of being sociologists and less attention to rates of productivity. To support this statement, I present a case study of the processes in which I have been involved while studying Deadheads, fans of the former rock band, the Grateful Dead. To avoid negative sanctioning, I proceeded slowly with this research and therefore had time to engage students, the media, and Deadheads in sociological dialogue. As a result, my teaching, ability to communicate sociological ideas, opportunities to incite sociological thought, and data were enhanced. To fulfill the promise of sociology “to revolutionize how people think” (Johnson 1997), we need to engage publics in dialogue and to establish routine rewards for doing so.

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