

**American Evaluation Association
2011 Conference:
An Investigation of Stereotype Threat in
California's Child Welfare Common Core**

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Background

- In 2002, CalSWEC and RTAs/IUC began development of Common Core training
- Part of an overall strategic plan for child welfare training evaluation
- Purpose: to develop rigorous methods to assess and report effectiveness of training so that the findings can be used to improve training & training-related services.

Test Development Process

- Subject matter experts developed and refined curricula, scenarios, and test items
- All test materials mapped to Title IV-E and Common Core learning objectives
- Initial drafts of test materials underwent editorial review prior to pilot/use
- Test materials analyzed using Rasch analysis
- Problematic items reviewed and refined (or eliminated) by content experts

Problem

- Caucasian trainees have often scored higher on posttests and occasionally have increased their scores more from pre to posttests than trainees in one or more racial/ethnic group
- Previous analyses in which items showing differential functioning by race were identified and excluded did not always show reduction or elimination of racial/ethnic differences

Stereotype Threat (Steele 1999)

- The situational pressure that a person can feel when s/he is at risk of confirming or being seen to confirm a negative stereotype about his or her group
- Studies have shown that the effects of stereotype threat disappear when demographic information is collected after testing or not at all

Design of Intervention/Methodology

- **Sample:** Brand new child welfare workers are assigned to either Group A (demographics before) or Group B (demographics after)
- **Methodology:** All trainees will take the knowledge tests but will vary when they complete the demographics survey form
- **Study Length:** May 2010 to June 2011
- **Total Participants:** 127
 - Group A (demographics before) = 66
 - Group B (demographics after) = 61

Data Analysis

- Analysis of variance
- Dependent variable are pretest and posttest score
- Independent variables are:
 - Race (coded dichotomously as Caucasian, all others)
 - Education (coded dichotomously as MSW, all other degrees)
 - Group
 - Interaction variable of which the race by group interaction is of primary interest

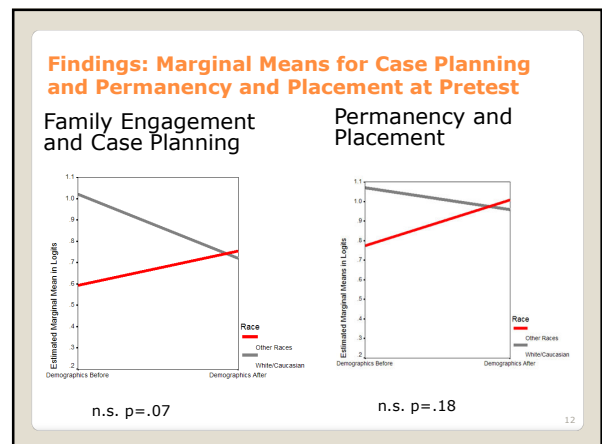
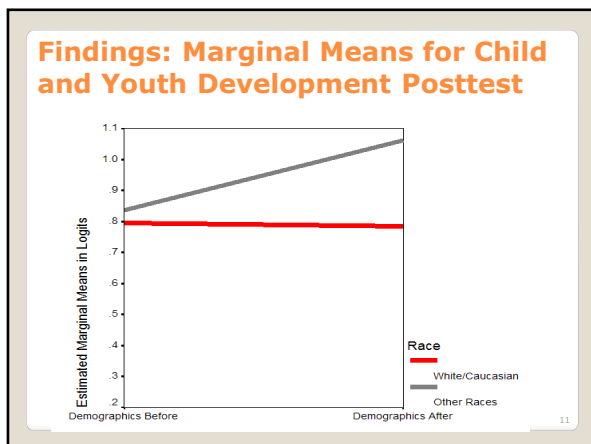
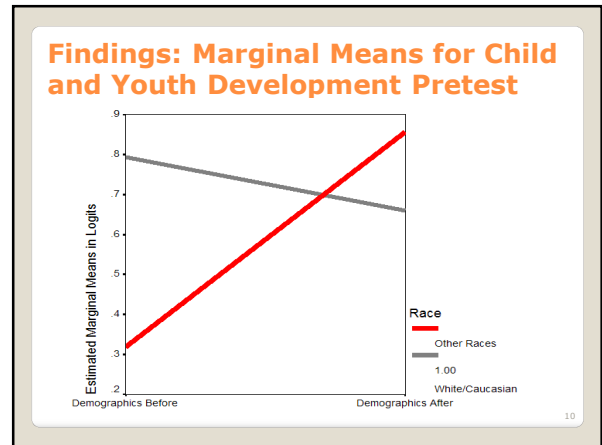
Race/Ethnicity and Education by Group

		Group A: Demographics Before	Group B: Demographics After
Participants by Group		66 (52.0%)	61 (48.0%)
Race/Ethnicity	White/Caucasian	27 (41.5%)	25 (44.6%)
	Other race/ethnicity	38 (58.5%)	31 (55.4%)
Education	MSW	28 (46.7%)	24(41.4%)
	Other degree	32 (53.3%)	34 (58.6%)

Findings: Child and Youth Development Pretest

Source	Type 3 Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corr. Model	5.205 ^a	3	1.735	3.689	.014
Intercept	45.849	1	45.849	97.485	.000
WHITE	.513	1	.513	1.091	.299
GROUP	1.077	1	1.077	2.290	.133
WHITE * GROUP	2.984	1	2.984	6.344	.013
Error	48.913	104	.470		
Total	97.464	108			
Corr. Total	54.118	107			

R Squared = .096 (Adjusted R Squared = .07)



Conclusions

- Stereotype threat appears to be operating with testing conducted shortly after completing a demographic survey
- Stereotype threat effects appeared to be weaker when testing was conducted further in time from collection of demographic data
- Stereotype threat effects appeared to be weaker for posttests than pretests

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Next Steps

- Discuss results and options with the Macro Evaluation (Advisory) Team
- Consider administering demographic survey forms after all modules that have test components are completed
- Continue to examine the effects of race on test scores as part of on-going semi-annual analysis of test data to monitor results of change

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