

Education on Stereotypes: Are Children More Receptive than Adults?

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A number of studies have shown that diversity programs are effective in reducing stereotypes. The purpose of this study was to determine the best age to implement these programs to educate people on stereotypes. To determine this, I tested to see if children or adults are more receptive to being educated on stereotypes after a brief educational intervention. I hypothesized that children would be more receptive to education than adults, for stereotyping is a learned response, so it would be easier to teach children not to stereotype than to correct the learned response of stereotyping adults already have. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the 4 surveys. In each survey, participants read either a control or experimental prompt and watched a video showing a picture of a Caucasian or an Asian girl. In all surveys, participants were asked to rate the accent of the speaker after they watched a video that was voiced over by the same native English speaker. If the educational prompt was successful in reducing stereotyping then the difference in the mean of the accent scores between the children and adult survey participants would be significant. My results showed that treatment did not reduce stereotyping of accents and that children were not more receptive than adults. One reason for it could be due to a response bias, which is when the participants assume the purpose of the test and alter their response. Another reason could be that the experimental prompt was not effective.

Awards Won:

American Psychological Association: First Award of \$1,500