

Stereotype Threat & Strategies for Minimizing its Impacts

One method toward a pedagogy of antiracism

Doron Samuel-Siegel, University of Richmond School of Law

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4341913

Plan

- 1) Definition
- 2) Example effects
- 3) Sample strategies

Definition

A psychological dynamic students experience when they are aware of and afraid they might confirm negative stereotypes about their identity group.*

*Claude M. Steele, *A Threat in the Air: How Stereotypes Shape Intellectual Identity and Performance*, 52 AM. PSYCH. 613, 617-18 (1997).

Example effects

- Exam performance inhibition.¹
- Domain disidentification.²

¹Claude M. Steele, *A Threat in the Air: How Stereotypes Shape Intellectual Identity and Performance*, 52 AM. PSYCH. 613, 617-18 (1997).

²*Id.* at 614; see also Russell A. McClain, *Helping Our Students Reach Their Full Potential: The Insidious Consequences of Ignoring Stereotype Threat*, 17 RUTGERS RACE & L. REV. 1, 20 (2016).

Sample strategies for minimizing the threat and its effects.*

*For details and footnotes see Doron Samuel-Siegel, *Reckoning with Structural Racism in Legal Education: Methods Toward a Pedagogy of Antiracism*, 29 CARDOZO J. EQUAL RTS. & SOC. JUST. 1, 40-47 (2022).

Relationships & Meta-Skills

- Build trusting relationships.
- Give challenging assignments and frank, honest critical feedback against a backdrop of optimism.
- Teach a growth mindset.
- Introduce role models.

Day-to-Day Pedagogical Practices

- Employ formative assessment; provide individualized feedback where possible, or group template feedback in larger classes.
- Minimize grade implications of public performance; make informed choices about use of traditional Socratic method.