

## Why WAGES

Women have made tremendous strides in the public sphere since the 1970s. Despite these advances, however, gender-related inequities in opportunity, advancement, and salary persist in nearly every industry and profession studied.

- For example, the proportion of women tenured faculty remains well below the proportion of women PhDs available (AAUP, 2006).

In large part, this bias exists as a result of the impact of minor biases that accumulate over time (e.g., Valian, 1998).

- Good intentions are not enough to correct problems as much of the bias is unintentional or unconscious.
- People must be made aware of these biases so as to address them when they occur.

WAGES is an interactive activity that uses experiential learning to raise awareness of the bias that women face in the workplace. Experiential learning is effective because:

- Participants learn a great deal without experiencing reactance to the information (e.g., they are less likely to deny that sexism exists).
- Participants develop broader conceptualizations from concrete examples (e.g., they see how specific acts may be subtly sexist).

WAGES is designed to teach four core learning objectives (Shields, Zawadzki, & Johnson, *in press*):

- (1) Minor biases accumulate to negatively affect women's career advancement.
- (2) Gender-relevant factors may be more significant at one stage in work life than in others.
- (3) Stereotypes and other cognitive shortcuts impair the ability to notice and address bias.
- (4) Patterns, not single incidents, are the most visible indicators of gender inequity in the workplace.

## WAGES-Academic Overview

Players advance through the ranks of academic life trying to be the first participant to become a Distinguished Professor.

- The activity uses a game board divided into three levels: Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor.
- A set of activity cards corresponds to each level and describes situations likely to come up in an academic work context, such as requesting supplemental lab space or being asked to chair a university committee.
- Activity cards determine a player's progress.
- All items are based on published empirical data.
- Items also specifically pertain to multiple-marginalization, as through racial ethnicity or ability status.

Before playing, four to eight individuals are randomly divided into the Green and White team.

- Players take turns drawing and reading the activity cards corresponding to their current level and team.
- Both the Green and White team face identical issues, but in Green-team and White-team specific ways.
- As the game progresses, players learn that the Green Team represents women's work life experience, while the White Team represents men's.

A senior faculty member congratulates you on your skill in completing a big grant proposal on time.

Earn 3 credit chips as you await your reviews.  
Move 1 space forward.

A senior faculty member congratulates you on your good luck in completing a big grant proposal on time.

Earn 2 credit chips as you await your reviews.  
Move 1 space forward.

Sample items for White (left) and Green (right) Team at the Assistant Professor Level.

The activity ends with a discussion of the subtle biases that women face in the workplace, the four learning objectives of WAGES, and what individuals can do to promote change.

- An instruction manual includes directions for the facilitator and topics for discussion.
- The manual also includes documentation for all WAGES items.



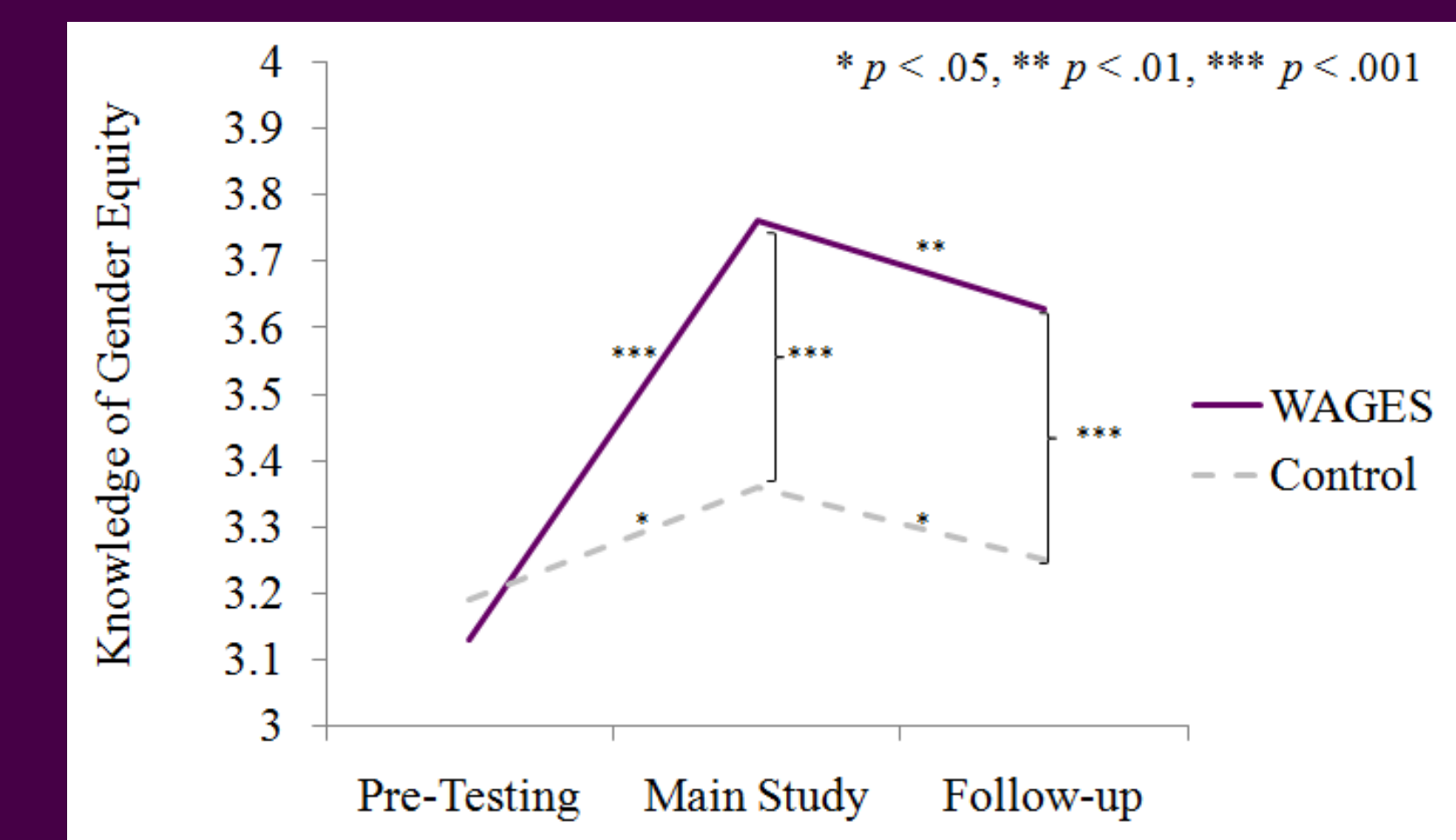
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## WAGES' Effectiveness

WAGES is effective in influencing knowledge, attitudes, and behavior about sexism and bias in the workplace.

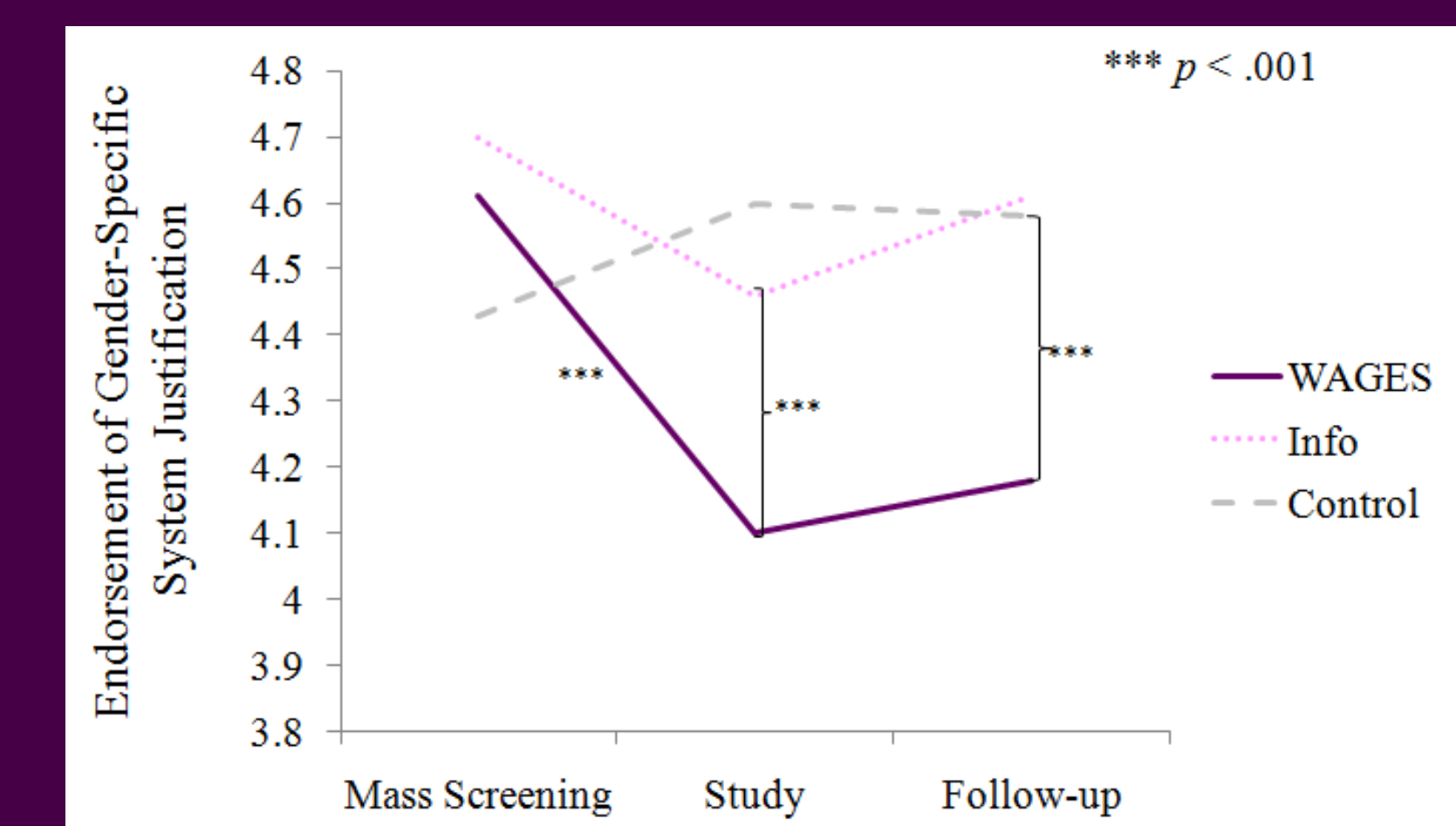
### Knowledge (Shields, Zawadzki, & Johnson, *in press*):

Using a 21-item scale that measures knowledge of gender equity issues in the workplace (e.g., "Gender can influence the salary of men and women."), participants who played WAGES reported more knowledge immediately after playing, and 1 week later, compared to a control group.



### Attitudes (Zawadzki, Shields, Danube, & Swim, *in prep*):

Using an 8-item scale that measures the perceived fairness of gender relations and sex role division (e.g., "The division of labor in families generally operates as it should." reverse coded), WAGES participants endorsed sexism less compared to a control group and a group that read about gender inequities (info group).



### Behavior (Zawadzki, Shields, Danube, & Swim, *in prep*):

Compared to a group that read about gender inequities in the workplace (info group), participants who played WAGES were more likely to take a pamphlet on ways to impact sexism in their own lives.

