

Faculty and Administrators' Evaluation of The Workshop Activity for Gender Equity Simulation in the Academy (WAGES–Academic)

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Purpose

To test the effectiveness of WAGES-Academic with faculty and administrators who make hiring and promotion decisions on knowledge of gender inequity; the effectiveness of case-by-case, masked, and standardized evaluations; and system accountability.

What is WAGES?

WAGES is an intervention that demonstrates how subtle, unconscious bias accumulates over one's career and results in gender inequity.

The goal of the game is to advance across the board from postdoc to Distinguished Professor. In two teams, players individually draw cards that describe scenarios of academic life.

These scenarios are different, in that the White team experiences slightly more advantage with each turn. All scenarios are based on empirical research.

Game play is followed by a guided discussion about:
-how unconscious bias affects women in the academic workplace.
-what can be done to address bias on the individual, group, and institutional levels.

Examples of cards at the Associate Professor level:

Two different senior colleagues tell you about a university-funded program for essential research and encourage you to apply.

Earn 3 credit chips as your colleagues offer to help with your application.

A listserv message described a university-funded program as essential research instrumentation.

Earn 3 credit chips as you apply.

Previous findings with WAGES

In experimental studies with undergraduates, WAGES increases knowledge of gender equity more than control groups (Shields et al., 2011). Results do not differ based on team type of participant gender

Effectiveness due to reducing reactance towards the message of gender inequity and increasing empathy for disadvantaged groups (Zawadzki et al., 2012).

Method – Immediate Follow-Up

Faculty and administrators (n = 69) from three institutions:

-played WAGES and rated on a scale of 1-7 their knowledge of gender inequity and the effectiveness of evaluation procedures for hiring (see below for all items), pre and post playing WAGES.

-qualitatively indicated whether they would recommend the activity to others and described what they found to be most and least effective.

Results – Immediate Follow-Up

Qualitative results, including a sample of climate and diversity committee members (n=25) in addition to the above sample, (total n = 94) revealed:

95% of participants would recommend to others.

64% of participants were willing to be contacted about WAGES in the future.

57% indicated effective aspects, 34% mentioned ineffective aspects of WAGES.

Effective: Demonstration of subtle bias over time (21% of entire sample)

Ineffective: Unrealistic (14% of entire sample)

Method– Long-term Follow-Up

Those who indicated they were willing to be contacted in the future (n=64) were sent follow-up questions after participating in WAGES in either 2010, 2011, or 2012.

31% responded (n=20)

6% did not fit criteria (n=4)

63% did not respond (n=40)

Of those who responded (n=20):

- 95% of participants responded they remembered participating.
- When asked if they recalled the main message of WAGES, 95% recalled gender inequity for women in academia as the main message of the intervention. 35% also mentioned the cumulative effect of subtle biases.

Results – Immediate Follow-Up

Significant increase in agreement with the following items (see graph):

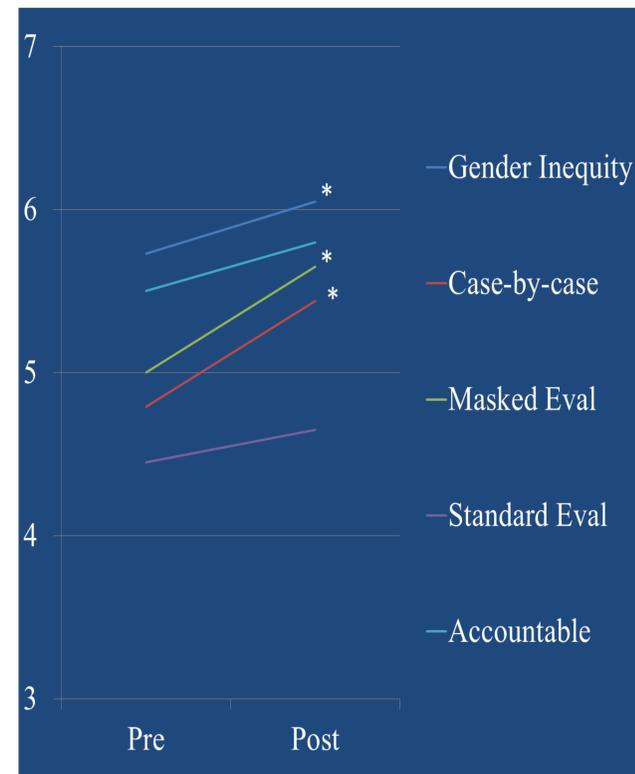
- **Gender Inequity:** Discrepancy between women and men in career success can be explained by the cumulative effect of many small incidents of gender inequity ($F(1, 63) = 5.20, p < .05, \eta^2 = .08$).
- **Case-by-case:** Case-by case comparisons of individual applicants are difficult to do objectively ($F(1, 62) = 14.99, p < .001, \eta^2 = .20$).
- **Masked Evaluation:** The effectiveness of masked evaluation ($F(1, 59) = 26.88, p < .001, \eta^2 = .31$).

No significant change in agreement with the following items:

- **Standard Evaluation:** Effectiveness of standardized evaluation forms ($F(1, 59) = 2.74, p = .10, \eta^2 = .04$).
- **Accountable:** Systems where people are held accountable for fairness of their decisions ($F(1, 58) = 1.66, p = .20, \eta^2 = .28$).

Results

Graph of Agreement Pre- and Post- WAGES Play



Results – Long-term Follow-Up

Influence on work and everyday life

Since participating, have you noticed issues raised by the activity occurring at work or in everyday life?

55% responded “yes” and described how WAGES:
-led to changes in their behavior
-led to policy change at their institutions
-described how WAGES provided them with new insights into gender biases at play in their institutions’ policies and practices
20% responded “no”
-Some responded this was due to policies already being in place
25% left blank

Influence on decision-making

30% cited WAGES’ influence on:
-their professional behavior
-their examination of their own and others’ biases
45% N/A
-35% not in a position where they make hiring decisions
-10% did not answer
25% answered “no”
-About half stated this was because they already have policies in place for equity in hiring

Summary

- WAGES–Academic has both immediate and long-lasting effects on faculty and administrators’ knowledge of: gender inequity and the effectiveness of case-by-case and masked evaluations.
- Follow-up with participants years later provides some evidence of WAGES’ long-term effectiveness, and demonstrates the activity’s impact on belief and behavior changes on the individual and departmental levels.
- Future directions will include: better measuring WAGES’ long-term impact, working to make the intervention more available to people, and fine tuning the intervention based on participant feedback.