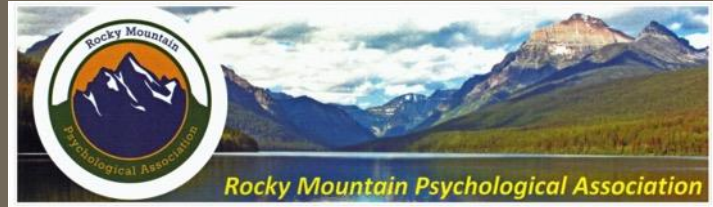


**Pushing Boundaries  
of Comfort  
to Develop and  
Assess Respect for  
Human Dignity:  
Anxiety at First, Now  
Ready for More**

RMPA  
Presidential Address  
April 2016



**Michelle A. Butler &  
Lauren F. V. Scharff  
U.S. Air Force  
Academy**



# What is the purpose of Higher Education?

Consider your own department....  
What do you want to see in your  
graduates?

# Key characteristic of good citizens: Demonstrate respect for self and others



# What does “RESPECT” mean?

Respect = “Valuing the Intrinsic  
Worth of Others”

Respect for Persons Scale  
(Lalljee et al., 2008)

# More “Sticky” Questions

- Is a person generally respectful, or might it depend upon the type of other?
- Can someone intend to be respectful, but inadvertently not show respect / offend another person?

# Key questions for teachers:

- How might we develop respect for human dignity?
- How do we know if we're successful?

# Our Stories & Motivations: from Anecdotes to SoTL

Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind





# Our Stories & Motivations from Anecdotes to SoTL

Craig Hospital





# Our Stories & Motivations from Anecdotes to SoTL

## Lab Simulations




# The Scientist-Educator Model

**Conceptualize learning process  
and set educational goals**



**Learn about teaching**



- a. Design learning activities**
  - b. Design measures to assess learning**
- 

**Deliver course and measure  
learning outcomes**



**Disseminate publicly and receive  
feedback from local & external peers**

# Learning about teaching:

## High-impact learning practices

Diversity/Global Learning:

High Impact courses often include explorations of “difficult differences” that expose students to “... cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own.” (Kuh, 2008)

## Non-Classroom: Reduction of Discrimination & Prejudice - Intergroup Contact Theory:

(Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008)

# Design Learning Activities

## Interventions:

- Interactive Field Trips: Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind and Craig Hospital
- Lab simulations: Vision, Hearing and Tactile deficits
- Case studies, written reflections and in-class discussions

# Design Measures to Assess Learning and Development

## **ALL Pre-post measures:\***

- Behavioral Tendencies Questionnaire
- Reflection paper responses (Qual.)
- 4-factor Model scenarios
- Respect for Persons (Lalljee et al., 2008)

\* Note the mix of qualitative and quantitative data



# Behavioral Tendencies Questionnaire: Impact of Boundaries of Comfort

## Party scenario

Imagine you were at a social gathering and none of your friends had arrived yet. You notice a person a few feet away who had an obvious disability.

How likely would you be to:

- **nod hello** at that person?
- **initiate a conversation** with that person?
- **introduce your friends** to that person?
- **make plans** to see that person again?

No  
Way

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Almost  
Guaranteed



# Field Trip Reflections

1. If someone close to you (family, friend or someone in your unit) acquired a sensory deficit [brain/spinal cord injury], what would be your response and how would your interactions with them change?
2. Describe what you believe to be true about individuals with sensory deficits[brain/spinal cord injuries]. How have you developed these beliefs?
3. What are your thoughts regarding the upcoming [recent] visit to the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind [Craig Hospital]? [If you were to visit again in the future] About what are you most hesitant? About what are you most excited? Explain.

# 4 Factor Model Scenarios

Imagine that you were being assigned a partner in a community volunteer event that will take several hours. For each of the following cases, indicate where you would be most likely to fall on the indicated dimensions.

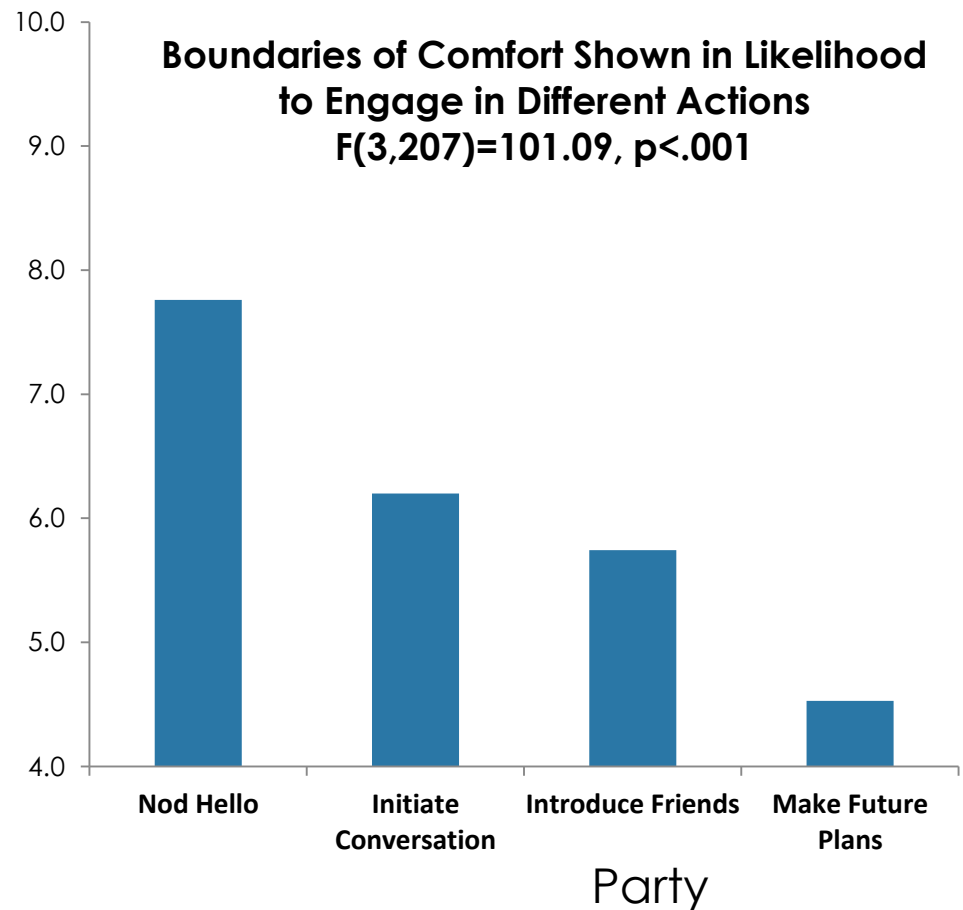
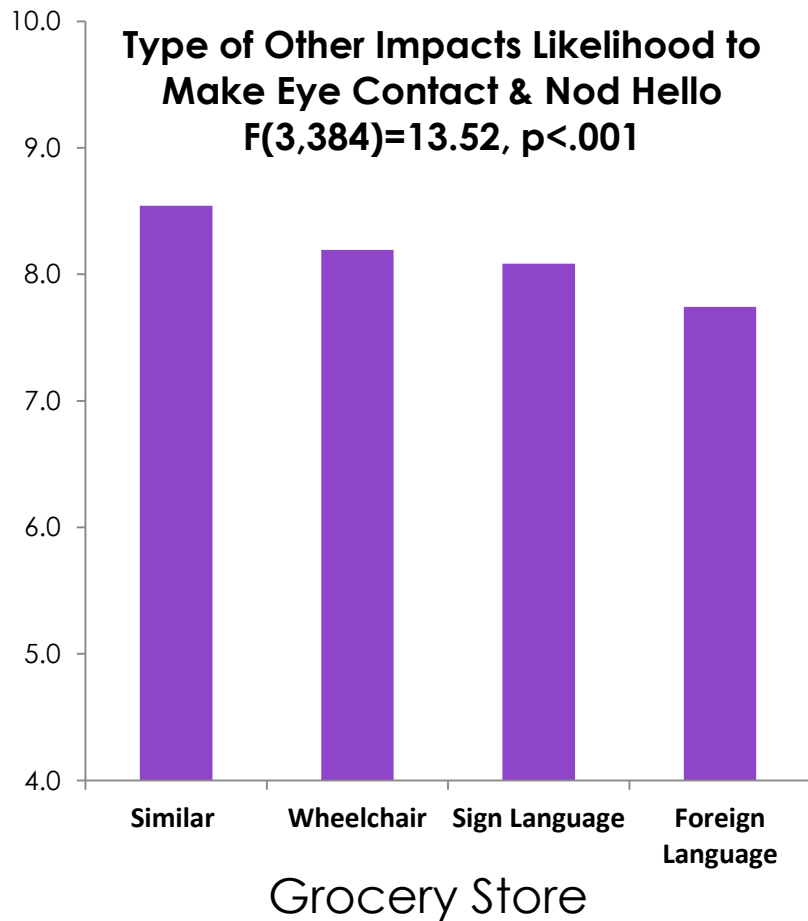
If that other person was in a wheelchair / had a sensory deficit such as blindness or deafness / was a recent immigrant from a foreign country:

<b>Sadness for the Other or Sympathy</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Hope for Other or Inspiration</b>
<b>Difficulty Relating Sense of Foreignness</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Empathy Sense of Connection</b>
<b>Ignorance of Possible Condition</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Knowledge of Possible Condition</b>
<b>Awkwardness or Fear of Offending</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Comfort or Approach</b>

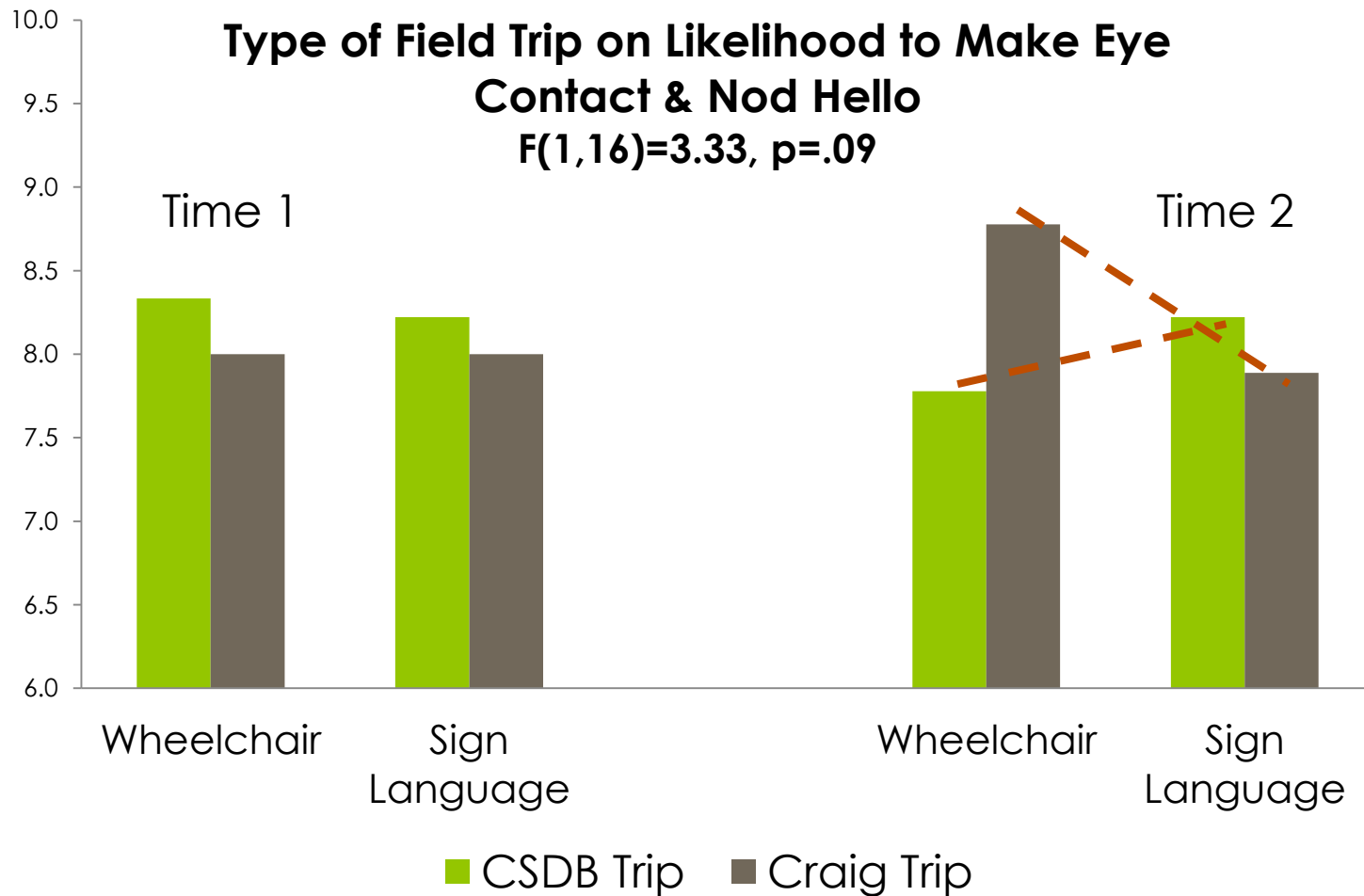
# Deliver Course & Measure Outcomes (2015)

Course	Intervention	N
Sensation & Perception	<b>Field Trip CSDB; Simulations; Discussion</b>	11
Brain & Behavior	<b>Field Trip Craig; Discussion</b>	12
Brain & Behavior / S&P	<b>Above but no Field Trip</b>	11 / 1
Honors Intro to Psych	<b>Field Trip Only</b>	27
Intro to Psych	<b>Discussion</b>	46
Fundamental Hydraulics Engineering	<b>Control</b>	45

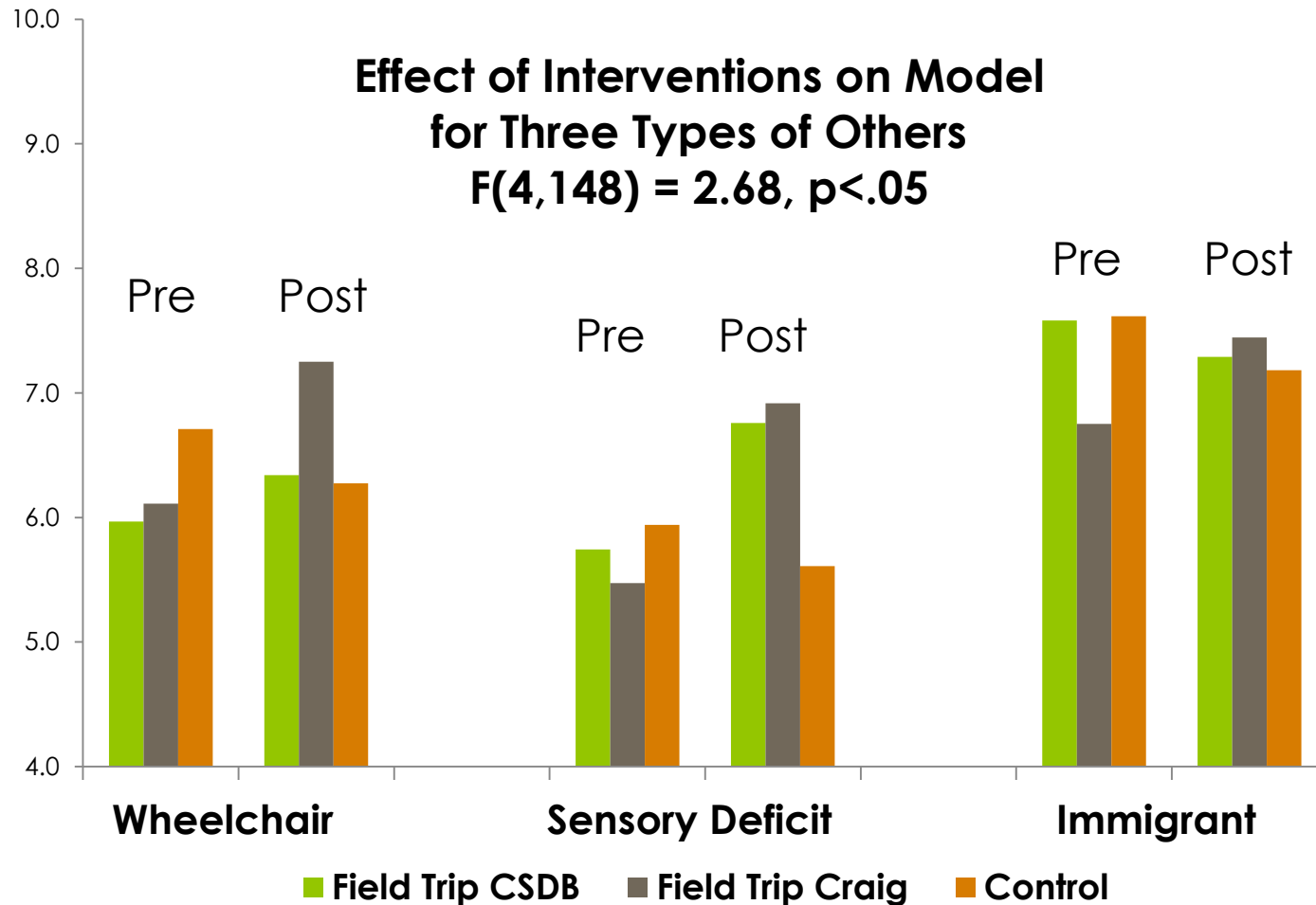
# Our Scenario Questionnaire is Sensitive to Type of Other & Boundaries of Comfort



# Specificity Effects



# Interventions vs Control



# Pre-Reflection Responses

- “When I think of someone who has a spinal cord injury I immediately picture someone who is paralyzed from the neck down in a wheelchair. I picture them needing around-the-clock attention.” (sympathy)
- “Initially, anytime I hear or know of someone who has some sort of sensory deficit, I instantly feel sorry for them.” (sympathy)
- “...my innocent curiosity may get the best of me and I perhaps may ask a question which I am not sure is necessary or is offensive in the first place.” (anxiety)
- “I didn’t want to see what neurological deficits did to a person.” (anxiety)



# Post-Reflection Responses- Hope

- "...you can still be an active member of society and participate in the activities that you love."
- "I now know that they are just as capable as me."
- "I believe people with sensory deficits are just like anyone else, but just can't see or hear quite as well as us. They are extremely impressive in the way they can adapt to their environment without these seemingly essential senses."
- "Individuals with sensory disabilities are no different than anyone else. They have the same wants, needs, and dreams as anyone else."

# Pre/Post Reflection Response Change Data: Craig Hospital

Question	RFHD Component- largest shifts	Percentage change (N = 12)
Someone close	Hope Sympathy	+67% -50%
Thoughts about trip	Hope Sympathy	+67% -41%
True brain injury	Hope Sympathy	+58% -25%
True spinal injury	Hope Sympathy	+33% -16%

# Pre/Post Reflection Response Change Data: CSDB

Question	RFHD component largest shifts	Percentage change (S/P) N = 12	Percentage change (Intro-H) N = 29
Someone close to you	Hope	+41.6%	+44.8%
	Sympathy	-41.7%	-44.8%
Thoughts about trip	Hope	+33.4%	+37.9%
	Anxiety	-25%	-17.2%
True about sensory deficits	Hope	+25%	+31%

S/P= Sensation and Perception

Intro-H= Honors Intro. to Behavioral Sciences

# Conclusions

- Respect can be developed and assessed for different types of others in your courses. (Students can shift from anxiety to comfort and approach.)
- Intentionally designed face-to-face experiences with different types of others can help develop respect along 4 dimensions (hope, empathy, knowledge, comfort).
- Different experiences may lead to different development in these 4 dimensions and may not generalize to other groups.
- We found value in incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data

# Applying this to Your Courses

- Our assessments can be adapted to your courses, resources, and your specific goals.
- You can study method's effectiveness using the scientist-educator model and support from SoTL.
- Consider your students' baseline regarding their own development when designing study. We found differences between freshmen and upperclassmen.
- Assessment is challenging, but possible. We recommend a mix of qualitative/quantitative methods for best results.

# Reflect Publically and Get Feedback

- Multiple audiences through conference presentations (APA, ISSOTL, SoTL USAFA, RMPA, Brain Injury Summit, NITOP)
- USAFA Radio show
- Partner audiences (CSDB, Craig)
- Share with USAFA students and faculty
- Paper in progress

**Any quick responses or feedback at this time?**

# Acknowledgements

- Thank you to Col Gary A. Packard, U.S. Air Force Academy, for some initial work on leadership that stimulated this project.
- Community Partners: Thank you to the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind and Craig Hospital for support and interest in this research!
- Their students/graduates have inspired us and our students for years and we are excited to introduce them to you today.
- Immediately Following: Learn more about the innovative work that these two organizations are involved in and hear some of the inspirational stories from graduates.



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