

University of Michigan Provost's Teaching Innovation Prize

2021 WINNER



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Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT)
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UMTurk and Inclusive Teaching in U-M Methods Courses

Innovation Description

Psychology faculty face many challenges as they teach large numbers of undergraduate majors how to conduct research on human behavior. UMTurk is a tool developed by programmers from LSA's Technology Services that lets faculty quickly create and conduct online surveys, monitor survey responses **in real time** from a diverse pool of subjects (via Amazon's Mechanical Turk platform), and visualize the resulting data. An instructor can thus demonstrate actual research steps during the course of a lecture or lab and engage students' attention with live results.

UMTurk also gives all students an equal opportunity to pursue a far greater range of research questions in their projects than they could when members of their social networks were their only participants. Social science researchers focus on the WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic), but with UMTurk, students can examine diverse populations, inequities, and racial biases. Assessment data reveal a higher level of student engagement with anti-racist topics and high satisfaction with conducting authentic and inclusive science.

Since winter 2019, three different instructors have used the tool across four consecutive terms. Documentation of procedures, software access, and instructional materials is available. UMTurk is ready for adoption in other human research courses across campus, offering a more inclusive learning experience for students, greater equity in data resources, and greater diversity in research questions and populations explored. Please contact Professor Boland for additional information.

Student Comments

It was super easy to collect data, and you could make your study about a population outside of just U of M college students.

I didn't have to worry about figuring out the logistics of finding participants. I could focus more time and energy on reading published research papers on my topic and how it's applicable to the results of my study.

33% of the participants recruited through UMTurk were self-identified as non-white, and that sample would have been very challenging to collect through [my group's] own social networks.

I was surprised by how many of our research studies in class found racial biases today.

It is important to understand how research in psychology addresses or fails to address topics like racism, and how we as future researchers can do a better job of this.

I appreciate the chance to conduct real research in this class, and I think UMTurk added a lot to my understanding of the research and to my writing about what the research means.

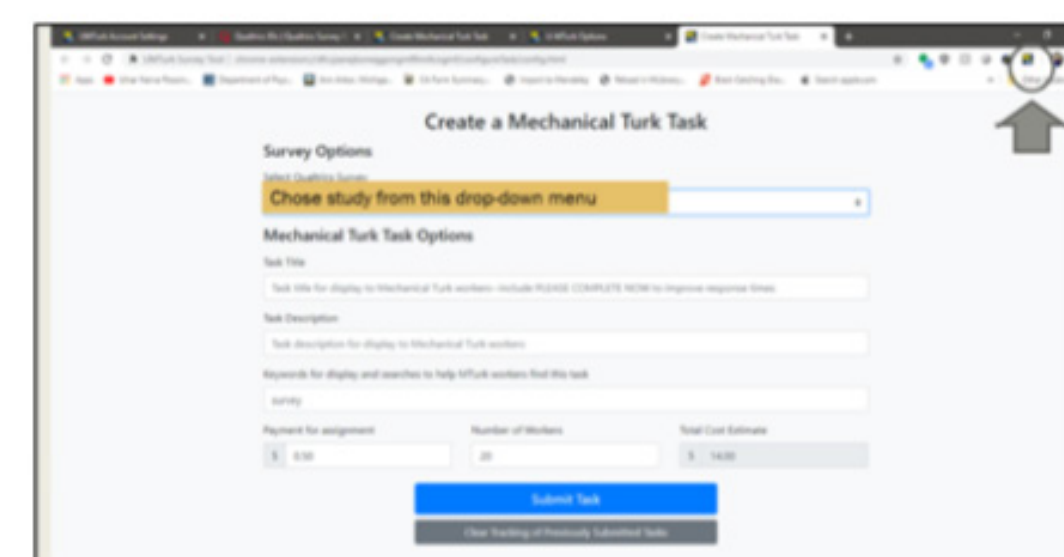
Without access to this database of participants, I wouldn't have been able to do a complete analysis of generational differences in my study.

The UMTurk project increased my understanding of the challenges of research on important social questions.

Examples of Teaching Innovation

Today's UMTurk Live Lab:

• SETUP and LAUNCH



This is the interface that the instructor sees while setting up and launching a study in class.

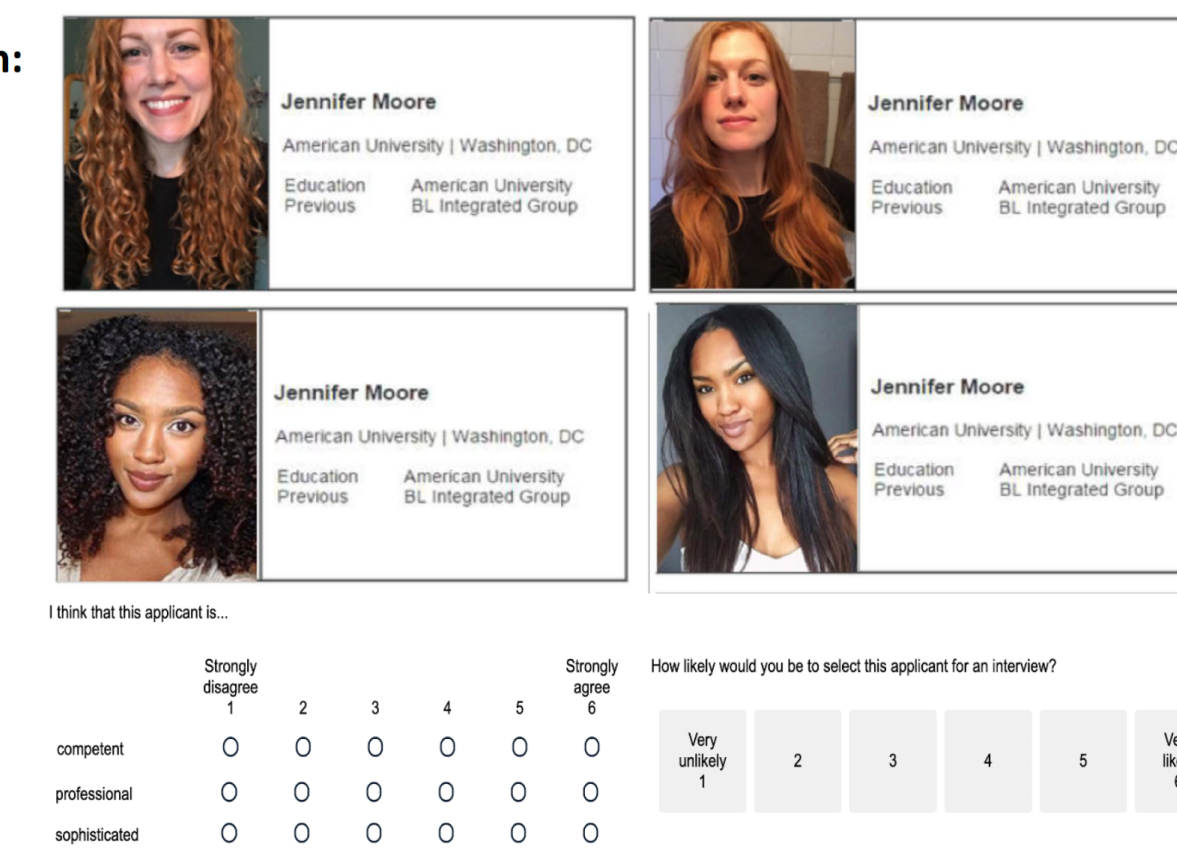
Factorial Design:

Independent variables:

- 1: Race
- 2: Hairstyle

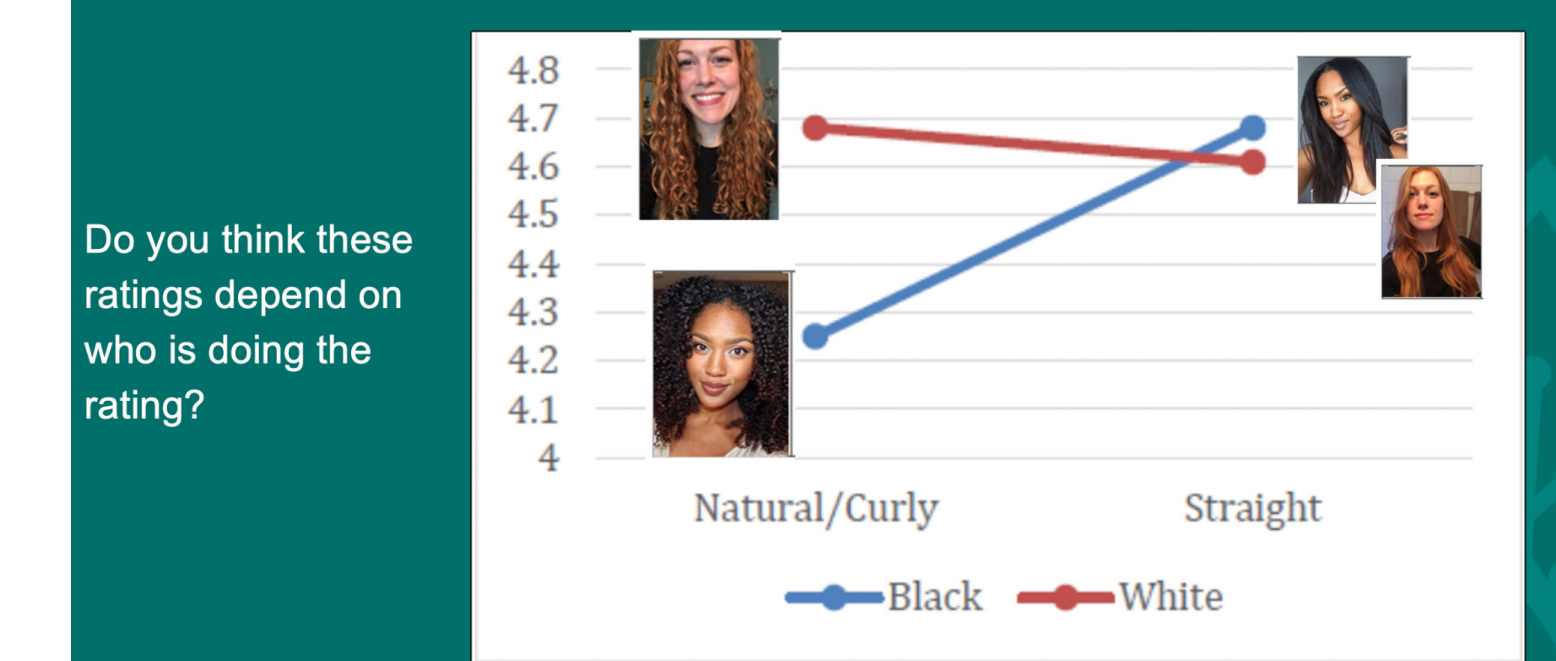
Dependent variables:

- 1. Professional?
- 2. Interview?



Students see in lecture and lab how experiments are structured before designing their own studies.

Lab Activity: Professionalism Ratings (Race by Hairstyle)



Research questions can be posed and answered in about 30 minutes during lectures, using UMTurk.