

April 1998

# Standardized Admission Tests and People of Color: Addressing Avoidance and Stereotype Threat

Jay Rosner

*Princeton Review Foundation*

Joseph Brown

*Stanford University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpw3>



Part of the [Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons](#)

---

Rosner, Jay and Brown, Joseph, "Standardized Admission Tests and People of Color: Addressing Avoidance and Stereotype Threat" (1998). *Third Annual National Conference (1998)*. 34.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpw3/34>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Third Annual National Conference (1998) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

# **Standardized Admission Tests and People of Color: Addressing Avoidance and Stereotype Threat**

**Jay Rosner**

Princeton Review Foundation

**Joseph Brown**

Stanford University

**“This presentation will focus on the issue that many talk about, but very few individuals, universities or academic conferences seem to want to tackle head-on: how to improve the MCAT, LSAT, GRE, GMAT, SAT and other admission test scores of students of color.”**

## **Overview**

Of all the issues facing people of color in majority institutions, one of the most written-about these days is the elimination of affirmative action in admissions.

Students of color planning to attend public professional or graduate school in Texas or California face an increased emphasis on their standardized test scores.

This may even spread to other states.

Underrepresented minority groups, and particularly African Americans, have traditionally underperformed on standardized tests. This presentation will focus on the issue that many talk about, but very few individuals, universities or academic conferences seem to want to tackle head-on: how to improve the MCAT, LSAT, GRE, GMAT, SAT and other admission test scores of students of color.

## **Presentation Topics**

Mr. Rosner and Mr. Brown will address the following topics, time permitting:

1. Avoidance and standardized tests
2. Stereotype threat and standardized tests
3. Reasons for poor scores by many students of color on admission tests
4. Characteristics of successful programs that address these issues
5. The current state of research in this area
6. What the future holds for students of color and admission tests

## **PRESENTERS**

**Jay Rosner**, an attorney, is the Executive Director of The Princeton Review Foundation. For the last 11 years he has administered and taught test preparation programs; in addition, he has litigated successfully against ETS, the country's largest testmaker. The Foundation, in collaboration with the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund, administers a series of very intensive nonprofit on-campus MCA T, LSA T and/ or GRE preparation courses at historically black universities (HBCUs) such as Florida A&M, Xavier, Morehouse and Howard.

The Foundation has recently developed an introductory program for standardized testing

targeted at minority college freshmen, entitled the Early Review Program. This Program is currently being offered to minority students both at several HBCUs and at the University of Pennsylvania, and is scheduled to begin this semester for minority students at UCLA and the Claremont Colleges. Rosner posits that the freshman year in college is not too early to start preparing minority students for the MCAT, LSAT and GRE provided that this is done in an intelligent manner.

**Joseph Brown** is a doctoral candidate in social psychology at Stanford University. His research focuses on how stereotypes and group representations affect the development of intellectual identity and affect performance on standardized tests. He has worked extensively with Professor Claude Steele on his research on stereotype threat and standardized testing. In addition, Mr. Brown and Professor Steele have been consultants to The Princeton Review Foundation's Thurgood Marshall programs.

In his dissertation research, Brown is investigating the processes by which stereotypes affect even the most motivated and accomplished minority students. His research indicates that contrary to more typical models and explanations for black underperformance, the most identified students may actually be the most vulnerable. He contends that there are two populations to be concerned about: the dis-identified (whose major problem is that they must somehow be coaxed into investing in education again) and the identified (who are still vulnerable to stereotype threat).