judgments about a target word after first being exposed to a preceding word, called the prime. The typical finding is that judgments are made more easily when the prime is semantically related to the target word than when the prime is unrelated. For example, decisions concerning the word *nurse* are made more rapidly and efficiently when this word is preceded by the word *doctor* than when it is preceded by the word *butter*.

Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, and Williams (1995) adapted this semantic priming technique to study racial attitudes. The African American and European American participants in this study saw a number of trait adjectives (e.g., attractive, dislikable) and were asked to decide as quickly as possible whether each item had a positive connotation or a negative connotation. The time taken to make these judgments was then recorded. Prior to making each judgment, the participants viewed faces of either an African American or a European American student. The priming pictures appeared quickly and were immediately followed by the trait adjective.

Fazio and colleagues argued that if prejudiced attitudes are activated automatically, viewing members of another race ought to speed up the recognition of negative traits but slow down the recognition of positive traits. As you can see in Figure 10.3, the data supported the researchers’ predictions. For both European Americans and African Americans, seeing a member of another race facilitated the classification of negative traits but impeded the classification of positive traits. These data suggest that both groups have implicit negative attitudes toward members of the other race (see also Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998; Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman, & Tyler, 1990; Perdue & Gurtman, 1990; Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park, 1997, 2001).

2. Behavioral Measure of Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice can also be assessed using behavioral measures. In some experiments, participants are given an opportunity to help another person (usually a confederate of the experimenter) who is either African American or European American. The usual finding is that people are more apt to help members of their own race than members of another race (Crosby, Bromley, & Saxe, 1980).