

Tuesday May 24, 2011 Schedule for the Day

Am: Critical Reasoning

- Discussion of Today's Assignment
- Discussion of new material:

Pm: Ethical Reasoning

- Ethical Reasoning and You
- Ethical Reasoning Take-Home Exam Distributed
- Critical Reasoning Group Meetings—complete the first draft of questions and sketch of arguments

Revised Schedule – changes in Red

WK 7 May 10 May 13	Am SR: Arguments from Controlled Experiments (Read: C&P Ch 9 to p 260.) Video: Prisoners of Silence Pm ER: Virtue Ethics II : (Read handout on Virtue Ethics	Am: CR :Explanation and Theories (Ch. 10) Pm More Explanation and Theories Idea Fair for Critical Exchange Topics
WK 8 May 17 May 20	Am Review of Theories Assessing Intelligent Design Read: Handouts Pm ER: A satisfactory moral theory? (Read: R&R Ch 13, handout on Deontology and Consequentialism)	Am: CR: Non-deductive arguments and Six Step procedure (Read: C&P Ch. 9 from p. 260 to end & Ch. 11) Pm ER: Assessing Moral Arguments Read Handout
WK 9 May 24 May 27	Am CR: Experts and You (Read: C&P Ch 12) Pm ER: Ethical Reasoning and You	Am Make up Exam 1, option 1 beginning 8 am 10:30 Review for Exam II, Take Home portion of Ethics exam Due Pm Critical Exchange Preparation
WK 10 May 31 June 3	Am Exam II plus Makeup Exam I option 2 Pm Critical Exchange preparation	Am Critical Exchange: Portfolio Due

Critical Reasoning Make-up Exam: (100 points). The Make-up Exam contains three (3) parts. The parts correspond to sections in the original Exam I Part I (Q1-Q10), Part II (Q11-Q17), Part III (Q18-Q24) You can work on any one, two or all three as a make-up for your first exam. Your work on the various sections will count as a replacement for your performance on the relevant sections of the initial exam if your performance is an improvement (but if it is not an improvement it will not count against you.) If you pick a part, you must complete all items in that part to have it serve as a make up. **Please turn in your first exam.** Ask David if you have any questions.

**Time: 8:00-10:30 Friday, May 27 or Tuesday May 29
after Exam II**

Critical Exchange Topics and Group Members

Concealed Weapons on Campus—Tim Henry, Maimat Gilal, Kathleen McCarthy, Rob Brunner

Indoctrination of Children--Taisha McFall, Ben Mandel Dominik Collins, Sarah Holland

GMOs-- Darianne Brown, Rosalinda Turk-Brown, Sarah Hines, Nathan Land

Designer Babies —Paul Yasny, Emily Horton, Matt McLellan, Patrick Stewart

Death Penalty and Punishment – Hayden Ayers, Danielle Swain, Dalton Short, Jesse Sieden

Abortion —Chelsea Raines, Monica Bass, Satya Zomer, Shane Whitaker

Legalization of Marijuana—Taylor Kayser, Max Hust-Barber, Casey Wagner

Discussion of Exercise 9.3 #4, #6, #8 #10, #12

Ways to Criticize Arguments from Analogy

1. Point out dissimilarities that lead to a counterargument
2. Challenge the premises
 - a. Question whether the similarities hold by pointing to relevant difference
 - b. Extend the premise in a different way
4. In life as in basketball you cheat if you can get away with it—that way you have a better chance of winning.

Cheating in basketball does not always, or even generally, increase the odds of winning. Sometimes it spurs the other team to greater accomplishments. So, by extension, cheating in life might do likewise.

6. Spending a great deal of money to provide medical care for the aged is like wasting money on a car. When a car is all worn out, needs a new engine, transmission, and body work, it's just better to junk it. The same goes for people.

There is this relevant difference: Cars are easily replaced by equal or improved models; people are not so interchangeable. We might extend the metaphor and note that some people are nostalgic about their cars and are unwilling to replace them. This is especially true of classic cars

Ways to Criticize Arguments from Analogy

1. Point out dissimilarities that lead to a counterargument
2. Challenge the premises
 - a. Question whether the similarities hold by pointing to relevant difference
 - b. Extend the premise in a different way
8. Just as it is rational for a single individual to maximize his or her happiness, so it is rational for the entire body of society to maximize the happiness of the whole.

A relevant difference is that the happiness of an individual can't be unjustly distributed, but an act that maximizes the happiness of a group might produce great happiness to some but undeserved harm to others.

10. The universe is like a clock. Both are systems of moving parts, set in a precise order, balanced, and having repeated, uniform motion. Since clocks have makers, it is likely that the universe had a maker. **Discussed in class Tuesday**

As mentioned in class, the universe does not run smoothly. It contains rough spots (i.e., supernovas and other catastrophes). It is not like the perfectly manufactured watch.

Ways to Criticize Arguments from Analogy

- 1. Point out dissimilarities that lead to a counterargument**
 - 2. Challenge the premises**
 - a. Question whether the similarities hold by pointing to relevant difference**
 - b. Extend the premise in a different way**
12. So, you say, government should be run like a business. Does this mean that many of the programs should fail the way small businesses do?

The analogy could be extended by pointing out that although a large proportion of small businesses ultimately fail (and many large companies over a long period of time as well) this is less true of “well-run” businesses. But the proponent of the analogy might respond by noting that just as effective capitalism must allow for (many) business failures because we can’t accurately predict business success, so must effective government allow for programs that try to solve problems but risk failure. What is needed is a mechanism for weeding out failed government programs akin to bankruptcy in business.

Discussion of Exercise 9.4 #2, #4 ,

2. Should the public schools maintain zero-tolerance policies for infractions like fighting and bringing a weapon to school? There are two good reasons against such policies. First, a mild, borderline infraction such as bringing a table knife in a lunch sack or punching a classmate on the shoulder could result in suspension—a much more severe penalty than is deserved. Second, zero tolerance is unrealistic given the lack of maturity of school-age children. It must be granted that a zero-tolerance policy would be a better deterrent, but that's not enough to outweigh these two potential injustices

Convergent Argument

A mild,
borderline
infraction can
result in
an undeserved
suspension



Zero tolerance
is unrealistic,
given the
maturity level
of schoolagers



Counter-Consideration

Zero
tolerance is a
better
deterrent to
misbehavior



Conclusion: Public schools
should not maintain zero-
tolerance policies

Criticism of Convergent Arguments
Add Further Considerations
Eliminate Doubtful Considerations
Blunt or Promote Considerations

Pro 1: A mild, borderline infraction can result in an undeserved suspension.

Pro 2: Zero tolerance is unrealistic, given the maturity level of school-agers

Con 1: Zero tolerance is a better deterrent to misbehavior.

(On balance) Public schools should not maintain zero-tolerance policies.

Assessment:

Blunting a Consideration: If a zero-tolerance policy is well-publicized and carefully explained to children and parents, then infractions such as the table-knife case might be minimized.

Promoting a counter-consideration: If harmful misbehavior is a major problem that interferes with learning and with the safety of children in a school, then the deterrent effect of zero tolerance should be given greater weight.

#4 Plea Bargaining Argument from Chapter 1

Convergent Argument

Plea bargaining may cause innocent defendants to plead guilty.

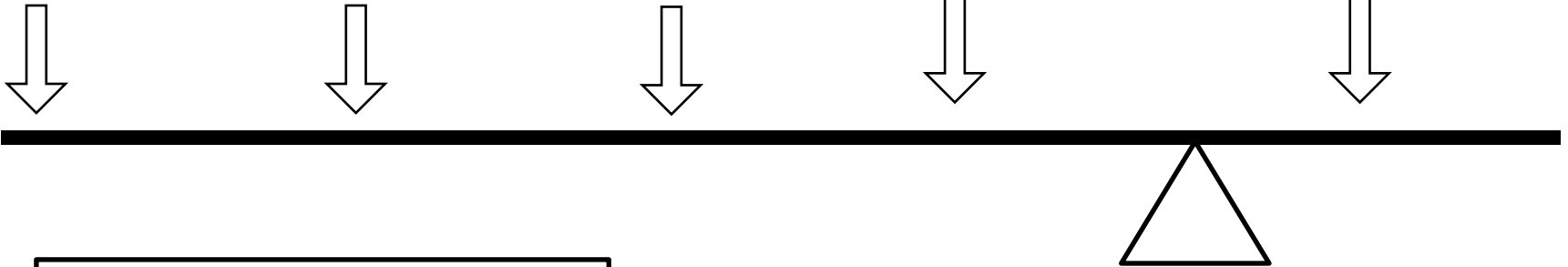
... makes no pre-sumption of innocence.

... results in guilt being negotiated.

... sometimes results in dangerous offenders receiving insufficient jail time.

Counter-Consideration

Eliminating plea bargaining would place a great burden on the courts.



Conclusion: Plea bargaining should be eliminated.

Criticism of Convergent Arguments
Add Further Considerations
Eliminate Doubtful Considerations
Blunt or Promote Considerations

Pro 1: Plea bargaining may cause innocent defendants to plead guilty.

Pro 2: Plea bargaining makes no presumption of innocence.

Pro 3: Plea bargaining results in guilt being negotiated.

Pro 4: Plea bargaining some-times results in dangerous offenders receiving insufficient jail time.

Con 1: Eliminating plea bargaining would place a great burden on the courts.

(On balance) Plea-Bargaining should be eliminated.

Assessment:

Blunting a counter-consideration: As the passage indicates, Alaska's experience suggests that eliminating plea bargaining might not place an unbearable burden on the courts.

Promoting the counter-consideration: Given the difficulty that courts already have in handling their caseloads, it might be fool-hardy to take the plunge of eliminating plea bargaining based on the Alaska experiment alone. Other steps might first be taken to reduce caseloads, and courts might experiment with eliminating plea bargaining for only some particular categories of offenses rather than eliminating it completely.

Discussion of Exercise 11.1 C3, C5,

C3 (“The price of Beauty is Too High”)

The passage can be interpreted as hybrid of a linked argument with implicit elements and convergent argument for an explicit premise argument suggesting The linked argument concludes that we shouldn’t allow the Web site auctioning of eggs of fashion models. Although this is an extension of the text that uses both an implicit linking premise and a conclusion only suggested by the editorial title, it is useful to take account of the policy context in which editorials are typically lodged.

(1) Web site auctioning of eggs of fashion models is unhealthy.

(2) If so, we shouldn’t allow it. [IMPLICIT] _____

∴ We shouldn’t allow the Web site auctioning of the eggs of fashion models. [IMPLICIT]

The main thrust of the argument can be captured by a convergent argument with premise (1) above as its conclusion.

Convergent Argument for Premise 1

Convergent Argument

Counter-Considerations

The child could be weighed down by a horrible burden if they don't meet the parents' standard of beauty (which is possible)

The Web site promotes the mistaken idea that people with less-than-perfect features are inferior

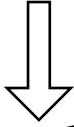
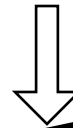
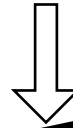
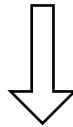
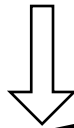
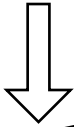
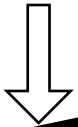
Parents love even imperfect children

The Project urges parents to look on their children as physical objects not as individuals

A more beautiful child would have an advantage in society as it currently exists.

We don't treat commercial sperm banks as unhealthy

Egg donors deserve some compensation



Conclusion: Web site auctioning of the eggs of fashion models is an unhealthy idea.

Pro 1: The child could be weighed down by a horrible burden if they don't meet the parents' standard of beauty (which is possible).

Pro 2: The Web site promotes the mistaken idea that people with less-than-perfect features are inferior.

Pro 3: Parents love even imperfect children.

Pro 4: The Project urges parents to look on their children as physical objects not as individuals

Con 1: A more beautiful child would have an advantage in society as it currently exists.

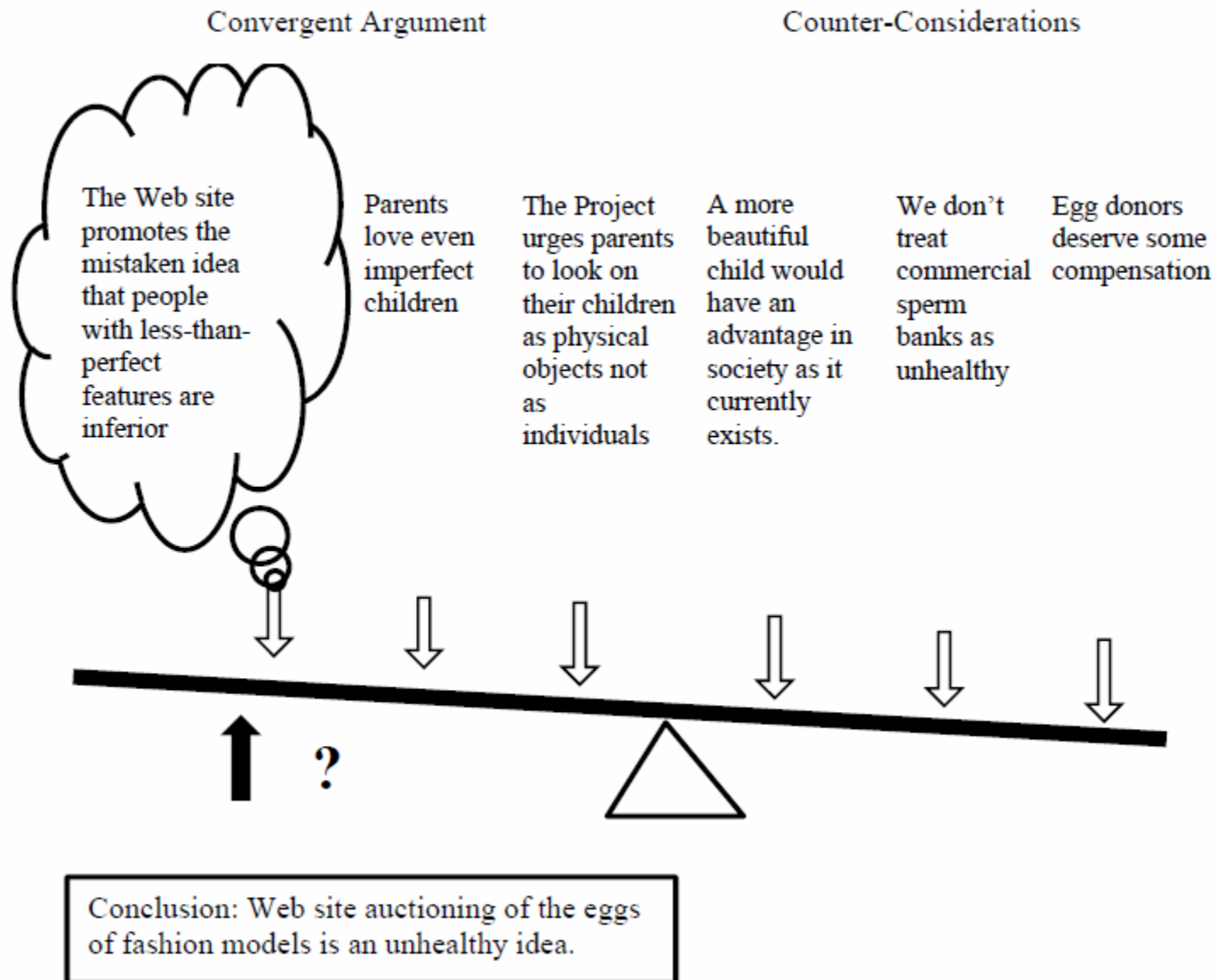
Con 2: We don't treat commercial sperm banks as unhealthy

Con 3: Egg donors deserve some compensation.

On balance) Web site auctioning of the eggs of fashion models is an unhealthy idea.

We can insert an additional counter-consideration by noting that beauty is not different from considerations of health, intelligence, musical talent, athletic ability or physical resemblance to parents in artificial insemination which we routinely permit and don't consider unhealthy. We can eliminate consideration 1 which is at odds with consideration 3. If a parent who produces a child in the standard way can love a child that turns out not to be perfect, why can't the parent that artificially inseminates do so as well? Finally, we can raise doubts about consideration 2. Such a Web site is unlikely to have any appreciable influence in general on people's beliefs concerning say intelligence and beauty—we won't be likely to reconsider our assessment of a Nobel prize winner because of their less than perfect features. The argument might be defended by pointing out that a person who had beauty as the only desirable characteristic of the child (rather than one of many) would likely not be a good parent. The author of the argument does not indicate this direction very explicitly. We might also object to the commercialization of both eggs and sperm, but this would not call into doubt the fashion model Web site specifically.

This evaluation can be summed up in the following diagram:



C5 (“Legal Drugs Unlikely to Foster Nation of Zombies”)

Reconstruction as a deductive argument :

- (1) Prohibition of drugs has wasted money, prison space, and police time and has spawned violent crime.*
 - (2) Legalization of drugs would not result in a significant increase in use.*
 - (3) Legalization of drugs would not result in a significant increase in addiction.*
 - (4) If prohibiting a drug produces substantial harm (of the sort cited in premise (1) and legalizing does not produce substantial harm (as indicated in premises (2) and (3), then the substance should be legalized. (IMPLICIT)*
- ∴ Drugs should be legalized.*

Criticism: The argument as reconstructed is valid. Perhaps the most questionable premise is 2. Chapman cites a poll in support, but people may not have answered it honestly or may fail to know how they would act if tempted by legal drugs. The statistics from the Netherlands have to do with marijuana, but cocaine or meth is probably more tempting. Premise (4) is certainly in need of support.

The passage could be treated as a convergent argument

Pro 1: Prohibition of drugs has wasted money, prison space and police time and has spawned violent crime.

Con 1: Legalization of drugs would not result in a significant increase in use.

Con 2: Legalization of drugs would not result in a significant increase in addiction.

(on balance) Drugs should be legalized

Chapter 12 describes two ways of not facing the dilemma of being an Amateur in a World of Specialists.

(1) Relativism

(2) The Dogmatism of the “True Believer”

In small group

A. Discuss the distinction as presented on p. 343-345

B. Discuss the Proposed Strategy of dealing with the dilemma of being an amateur in a world of specialists. What is it? What are its strengths and limitations?

Let's get Real

The Dunning Kruger effect—Ignorance and over-confidence

1999 paper “Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties in Recognizing One’s Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-Assessment”

Abstract: People tend to hold overly favorable views of their abilities in many social and intellectual domains. The authors suggest that this overestimation occurs, in part, because people who are unskilled in these domains suffer a dual burden: Not only do these people reach erroneous conclusions and make unfortunate choices, but their incompetence robs them of the metacognitive ability to realize it.

Abstract: People tend to hold overly favorable views of their abilities in many social and intellectual domains. The authors suggest that this overestimation occurs, in part, because people who are unskilled in these domains suffer a dual burden: Not only do these people reach erroneous conclusions and make unfortunate choices, but their incompetence robs them of the metacognitive ability to realize it.

What is explained? What does the explaining?

Observed pattern or regularity: (Unskilled) people tend to hold overly favorable view of their abilities in many social and intellectual domains.,

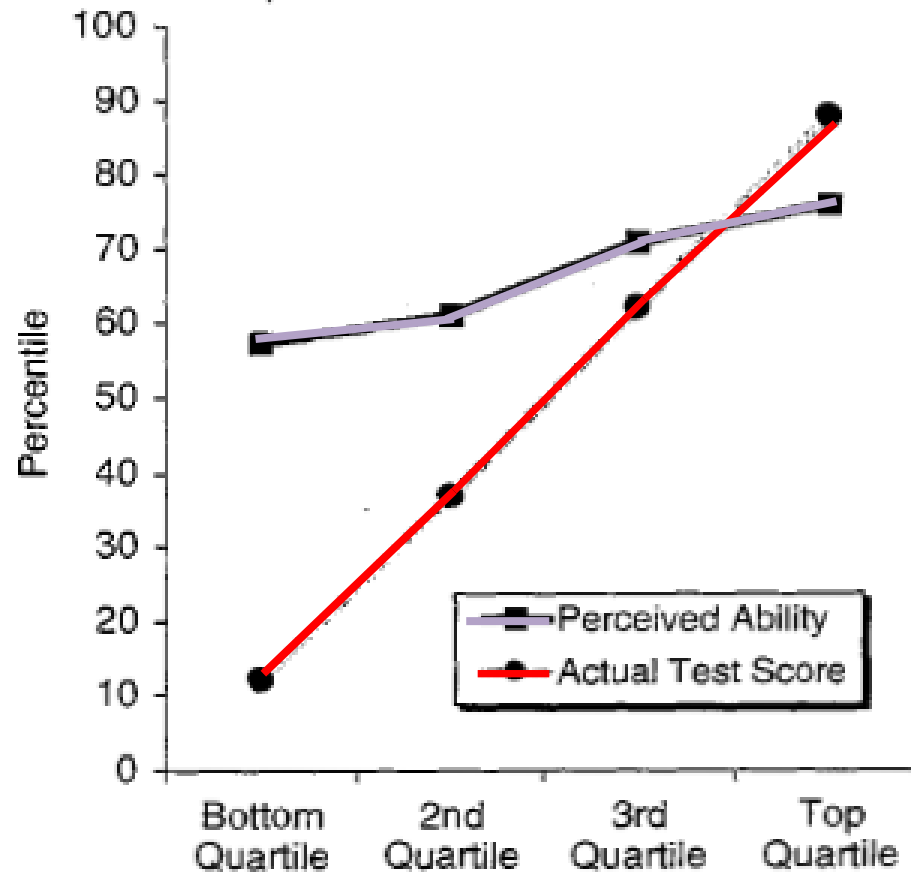
Theory: Unskilled suffer a dual burden

- (1) reach erroneous conclusion and make unfortunate choices**
- (2) incompetence robs them of the metacognitive ability to realize it**

Abstract: People tend to hold overly favorable views of their abilities in many social and intellectual domains. The authors suggest that this overestimation occurs, in part, because people who are unskilled in these domains suffer a dual burden: Not only do these people reach erroneous conclusions and make unfortunate choices, but their incompetence robs them of the metacognitive ability to realize it. **Across 4 studies the authors found that participants scoring in the bottom quartile on tests of humor, grammar and logic grossly over estimated their test performance and ability. Although their test scores put them in the 12 percentile, they estimated themselves to be in the 62nd. Several analyses linked this miscalibration to deficits in metacognitive skills, or the capacity to distinguish accuracy from error. Paradoxically improving the skills of participants, and thus increasing their metacognitive competence, helped them recognize the limitation of their abilities**

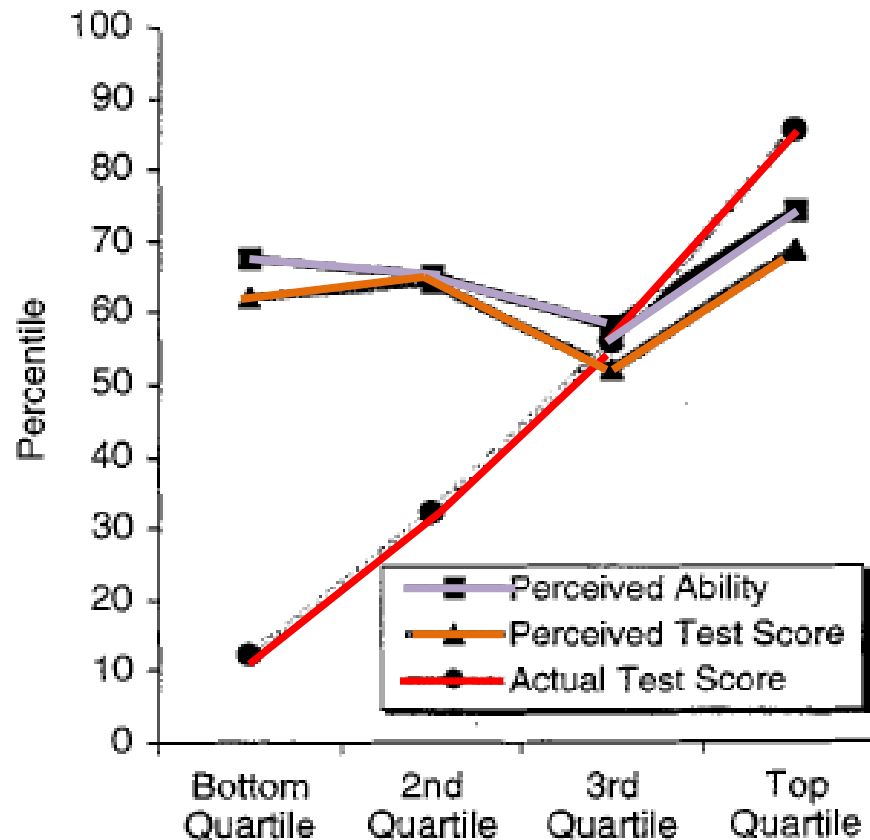
Participants: College undergraduate psychology students

Ability to Recognizing Humor



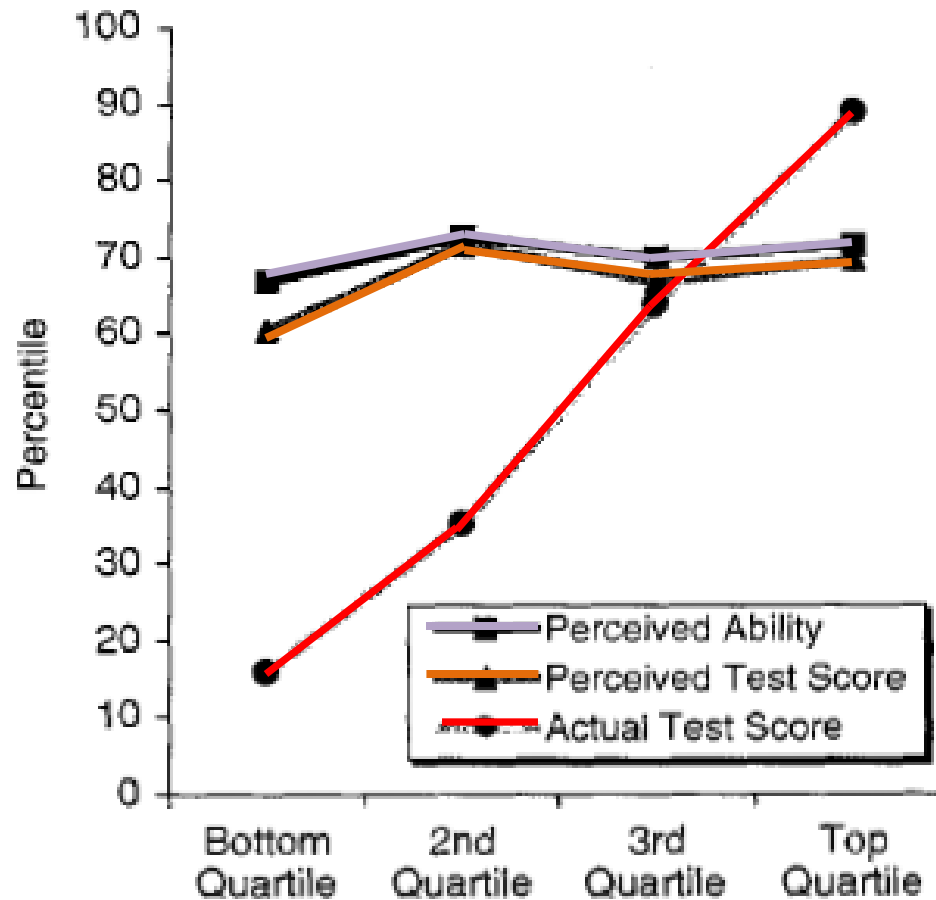
Perceived ability to recognize humor **as a function of actual test performance** (study 1)

Perceived Logical Reasoning Ability and Test Performance



Perceived logical reasoning ability and test performance **as a function of actual test performance** (study 2)

Perceived Grammar Ability and Test Performance



Perceived grammar ability and test performance **as a function of actual test performance** (study 3)

Self-Ratings of Ability and performance on Test Before and After grading Task

Rating	Bottom		
	Percentile ability	Percentile test score	Raw test score
Before	66.8	60.5	12.9
After	63.2	65.4	13.7
Difference	-3.5	4.9	0.8
Actual	10.1	10.1	9.2

Bottom Quartile failed to get insight from reviewing test of more competent

Rating	Top		
	Percentile ability	Percentile test score	Raw test score
Before	71.6	69.5	16.9
After	77.2	79.7	16.6
Difference	5.6*	10.2**	-0.3
Actual	88.7	88.7	16.4

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Top Quartile do learn from reviewing (poorer) test of less Competent

A fourth study again on logical reasoning showed that training in logical reasoning improved the “calibration” of bottom quartile students – They still overestimated their perceived and test performance ability but we correct about their actual performance.

Table 2
Self-Ratings in Percentile Terms of Ability and Performance for Trained and Untrained Participants (Study 4)

Rating	Untrained				Trained			
	Bottom (n = 18)	Second (n = 15)	Third (n = 22)	Top (n = 15)	Bottom (n = 19)	Second (n = 20)	Third (n = 18)	Top (n = 13)
Self-ratings of percentile ability								
Before	55.0	58.5	67.2	78.3	54.7	59.3	68.6	73.4
After	55.8	56.3	68.1	81.9	44.3	52.3	68.6	81.4
Difference	0.8	-2.1	0.9	3.6	-10.4*	-7.0*	0.1	8.0
Actual	11.9	32.2	62.9	90.0	14.5	41.0	69.1	90.0
Self-ratings of percentile test performance								
Before	55.2	57.9	57.5	83.1	50.5	53.4	61.9	74.8
After	54.3	58.8	59.8	84.3	31.9	46.8	69.7	86.8
Difference	-0.8	0.9	2.3	1.3	-18.6***	-6.6*	7.8	12.1*
Actual	11.9	32.2	62.9	90.0	14.5	41.0	69.1	90.0
Self-ratings of raw test performance								
Before	5.8	5.4	6.9	9.3	5.3	5.4	7.0	8.5
After	6.3	6.1	7.5	9.6	1.0	4.1	8.2	9.9
Difference	0.6*	0.7	0.6*	0.3	-4.3***	-1.4**	1.2**	1.5*
Actual	0.2	2.7	6.7	10.0	0.4	3.3	7.9	10.0

Note. “Bottom,” “Second,” “Third,” and “Top” refer to quartiles on the grading task.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Experimental Hypothesis training would make bottom more competent and improve both judgments of raw test and self impressions.

A 2008 study replicated the results and countered some of the criticism of the original research: *Why the unskilled are Unaware: Further Exploration of (Absent) self-insight among the incompetent*, Ehrlinger, Johnson, Banner, Dunning and Kruger.

Abstract

People are typically overly optimistic when evaluating the quality of their performance on social and intellectual tasks. In particular, poor performers grossly overestimate their performances because their incompetence deprives them of the skills needed to recognize their deficits. Five studies demonstrated that poor performers lack insight into their shortcomings even in real world settings and when given incentives to be accurate. An additional meta-analysis showed that it was lack of insight into their own errors (and not mistaken assessments of their peers) that led to overly optimistic estimates among poor performers. Along the way, these studies ruled out recent alternative accounts that have been proposed to explain why poor performers hold such positive impressions of their performance

2008 Studies more ecologically valid

- Used an actual exam setting for a normal class rather than a “lab” setting
- Preliminary rounds of a debate tournament
- Used monetary incentives at a Trap and Skeet competition and a test of their knowledge of gun safety and usage.

Poor performers are overconfident in estimates of how well they performed relative to others because they have little insight into the quality of their own performance. Their estimates are flawed because of misconceptions about their own performance, rather than misconceptions about the performance of others.

Top performers offer particularly overoptimistic estimates of their peers' objective performance on the test and that this overoptimism produces undue modesty in their relative estimate

We need to be cautious about over extending these results.

- by suggesting, for example, it should be renamed the “Palin” effect
- or more seriously, by assuming that people are equally competent or incompetent in all domains

Two consequences for those interested in their own beliefs—a main emphasis of the our *Critical Reasoning* text

**avoid being overconfident in areas in which you lack skill (and background)
and**

avoid being overly modest in areas in which you have skill (and background)

That's All Folks