

Intelligence is an Illusion: First Impressions of Intelligence are Probably Wrong

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➤ **People judge the intelligence of others all the time.**

- Choosing a study partner in class
- Picking group members for a final project
- Interacting with someone and classifying the information as general knowledge of that person

A



B



If you had to have a chemistry lab partner, would you choose Person A or Person B?

How accurate are these judgments?

BACKGROUND

➤ Zebrowitz, Hall, Murphy, and Rhodes (2002) and Borkenau and Liebler (1993) have found that first impressions of intelligence can be accurate, but these studies have used photographs (headshots) or video recordings of targets (e.g., delivering a weather report), and **have not investigated the accuracy of intelligence judgments within face-to-face interactions.**

➤ This study hypothesized that perceptions of intelligence could be accurately assessed after a 5 minute face-to-face interaction.

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METHOD

➤ Participants were 161 Oregon State University undergraduates who were randomly assigned into groups of seven students. All were unacquainted with each other. They first sat in a circle and introduced themselves to one another before engaging in a 5-minute one-on-one conversation with each group member in a round-robin fashion.



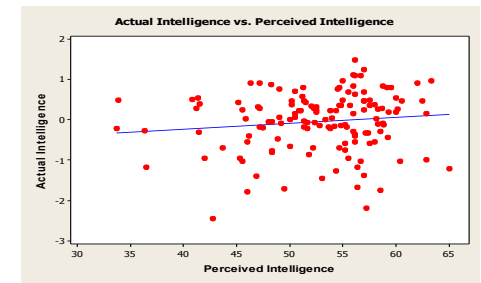
Figure 1 Participants engaging in the 5 minute round-robin interaction with another member of their group.

➤ After each conversation, participants rated their partners on a number of characteristics, including intelligence.

Rate how intelligent each member of the group is. A rating of 72 indicates that this person is high in intelligence. A rating of 1 indicates that this person is low in intelligence. 36 is average.

H _____ I _____ J _____ K _____ L _____ M _____ N _____

RESULTS & DISCUSSION



Graph 1 Plot of the group mean judgment of each person's intelligence against that person's actual intelligence as measured by three intelligence tests (n=156).

➤ First impressions of intelligence made after a five minute face-to-face interaction were not very accurate ($r = .12, p > .10$).

➤ **Speculations:**

- Perhaps interactions longer than 5 minutes are required to be accurate.
- Perhaps the intended goal of an intelligence assessment is needed to be accurate.
- The accuracy of intelligence judgments in this study may be lower due to more realistic and complex variables that are associated with face-to-face interactions.

Three Different Intelligence Tests Assessed Participants' Actual Intelligence

Examples of Easy Questions

Using the information given, select the correct answer:

1. OTIS (IQ) Test

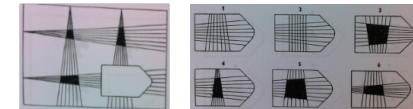
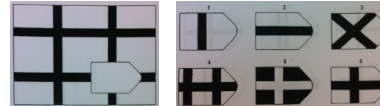


Examples of Difficult Questions

All the girls in this room belong to our club. Helen is in this room. Helen does not belong to our club. If the first two statements above are true, the third is - (a) True (b) False (c) Uncertain

2. Raven's Matrices (logic based) Test

Given the picture on the left, identify its missing piece from the six choices on the right:



3. Vocabulary Test

Out of the four words on the right, determine which has a similar meaning to the word in the box on the left:

TALK | draw | eat | speak | sleep

QUERULOUS | maniacal | curious | devout | complaining