

# Research Methods

## Thinking Critically With Psychological Science

# Hindsight Bias

- How it's easily tested
  - Give ½ group the following “research finding”:  
“psychologists have found that separation weakens romantic attraction. As the saying goes, ‘out of sight, out of mind.’ When asked to imagine why, they had no trouble doing it.
  - Give OTHER ½ group the following “research finding”:
    - “psychologists have found that separation strengthens romantic attraction. As the saying goes, ‘Absence makes the heart grow fonder.’ ”
    - When asked to imagine why, they had no trouble doing it.

# Hindsight Bias

- If both groups , can equally imagine opposite “findings” then there a big problem.



“out of sight, out of mind”



“Absence makes the heart grow fonder”

# Hindsight Bias

- I knew it all along phenomenon (think of an example....)
- Widespread:
  - More than 100 studies have observed this in many different countries
- Keep in mind that our intuition is often correct, but we can't let that fool us into thinking it is ALWAYS correct

# Overconfidence

- Huge problem when it comes to facts that we know
- Richard Goranson (1978):
  - WREAT = WATER
  - ETRYN = ENTRY
  - GRABE = BARGE

# Overconfidence

I CAN DO IT IN 10  
SECONDS FLAT!!



But average person  
took 3 minutes

# How can we sift reality from illusion?

- The Scientific Attitude:
  - **Curiosity** (be willing to explore and understand without misleading or being misled)
  - **Skepticism** (be skeptical of information)
  - **Humility** (be aware that we could be wrong)

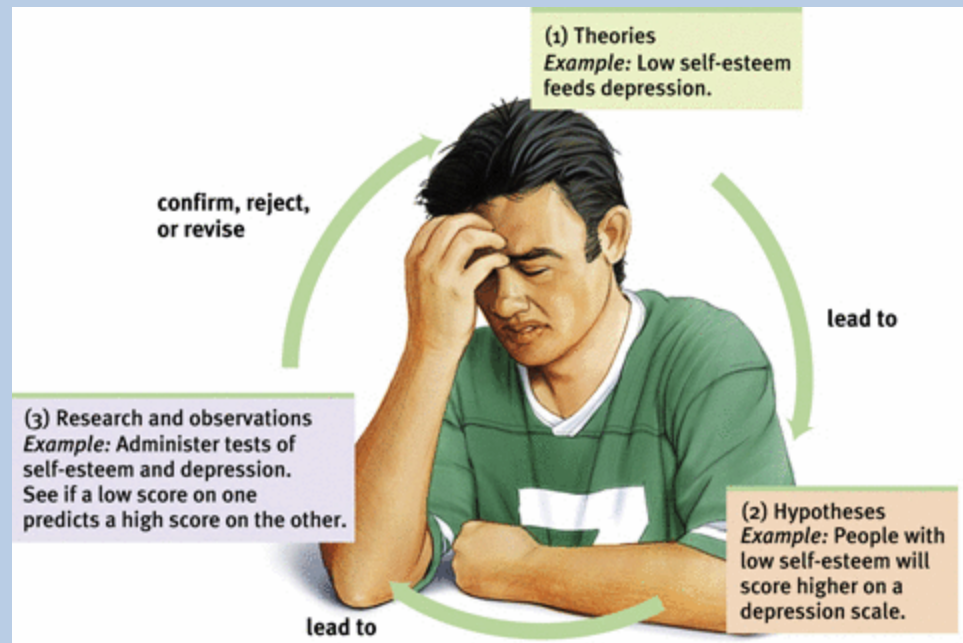
# Critical Thinking

- Examines assumptions
- Evaluates evidence
- Assesses conclusions
- Do YOU ask GOOD questions?
  - WHO is saying it?
  - Do they have an AGENDA?
  - Is it based on research or ANECDOTAL evidence
    - A good practice is to watch an infomercial and ask yourself these questions



# The Scientific Method

- Theory
- Hypothesis
- Research & observations



# Try it on your own

- Topic:
- Teenagers would make just as good voters as adults make