

# Clueless Critics:

## Repeated Exposure to Success Fosters Unfounded Criticism of Those Who Try (And Fail)

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<https://tinyurl.com/yykrhdkm>

### Abstract

- **Repeatedly watching expert performances of a task leads people to perceive the task as less difficult**
- **Therefore, they become more critical of others' failed attempts at the task**

### Intro

- "Illusion of skill acquisition" (Kardas & O'Brien, 2018) suggests that the more people watch a skilled performance, the more they believe they can perform it too (despite no actual improvement in skill)
- => **How does this relate to interpersonal judgment of others' failures?**
- Do people criticize others' failures more harshly when...
  - they know the **target** has repeatedly watched **success**?
  - they **themselves** have repeatedly watched **success**?

### Discussion

- **Watching** a successful performance 20 times (vs. just 1 time) **increases criticism** of another person's failed attempt
- Knowing that the **bad performer watched** the successful performance 20 times (vs. just 1 time) **also increases criticism** of that person's failed attempt (despite the fact that repeated watching does not actually improve performance)
- **Attempting the skill oneself debiases** judgments and attenuates this unjustified criticism

Kardas, M., & O'Brien, E. (2018). Easier Seen Than Done: Merely Watching Others Perform Can Foster an Illusion of Skill Acquisition. *Psychological Science*, 29(4), 521–536.

### Methods

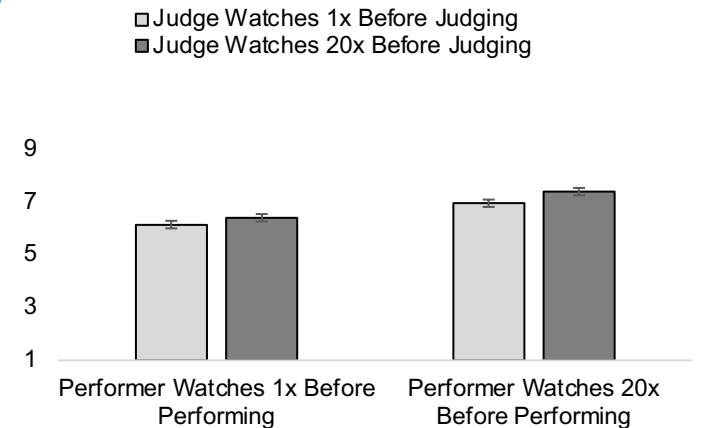
#### Experiments 1 & 2 (brief summary)

- Watching a successful performance 20 times (vs. only 1 time) **inflates expectations** of both **one's own and others' performances** (even when others have not even viewed the successful performance at all)

#### Experiment 3

- Participants watched a video of another person's **successful performance** of a dance move, either **1 time** or **20 times** (*between-subjects*)
- They then watched another video of someone else's **poor attempt** at the same dance move, and were told this person had watched the same successful video either **1 time** or **20 times** (*between-subjects*)
- Finally, they **rated how much they would criticize** this poor attempt

Judge's Criticism of Performer (1 to 10)



#### Experiment 4

- Participants watched a video of another person's **successful performance** of how to draw a hand, either **1 time** or **20 times** (*between-subjects*)
- They then saw another person's **poor attempt** at making the same drawing, and **reported how much of a bonus payment that person should earn** based on the quality of their attempt
- Finally, they **attempted the drawing themselves**, and then **re-reported the bonus they would award** to the other person

Judge's Bonus Awarded to Performer (\$0.00 to \$0.10)

