



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2012 PROJECT SUMMARY**

Name(s) Garrett C. Baltz	Project Number S0404
Project Title The Effects of the Presence of Representative Information on the False Consensus Effect	
<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>Objectives/Goals This is a study designed to investigate the effects of the presence of representative information on the false consensus effect as measured by the mean score received on a survey where representative information was given or not given. The false consensus effect is an egocentric bias that occurs when people who engage in a given behavior will estimate that behavior to be more common than it is estimated to be by people who engage in alternative behaviors.</p> <p>Methods/Materials A between subjects design was used and participants were randomly divided into an experimental group of 13 (4 males and 9 females) and a control group of 13 (7 males and 6 females). The study was conducted at a high school computer lab with a survey created by the researcher. The survey's questions prompt participants to make a choice between two options and then estimate the choices of a hypothetical subgroup. Participants in the experimental group received information that represents other participants' choices. Participants in the control group received no information. The independent variable was the presence or lack thereof of representative information and the dependent variable was the mean score on the survey.</p> <p>Results A one-tailed t-test comparing the estimations of the control and experimental group demonstrated there was significance at the $p < .0001$ level of confidence with 24 degrees of freedom. At the 99.9% level of confidence, the t-value was 4.737, exceeding the required critical value of 3.745.</p> <p>Conclusions/Discussion This implies that representative information (other participants' choices) nullifies the false consensus effect, showing that when participants are presented with consensus information, they will consider it over their own personal bias.</p>	
Summary Statement The Effects of the Presence of Representative Information on the False Consensus Effect	
Help Received My high school IB Psychology instructor	