

## **Open Your Class With This Tomorrow- *How Do We Know Ourselves: Curiosities and Marvels of the Human Mind***

### **Demonstration for Self-Serving Bias**

In *How Do We Know Ourselves*, David Myers discusses ways in which we protect our very fragile egos. One of these ways is the self-serving bias which occurs when we take credit for our success and blame other for our failures. By doing this, we consciously or unconsciously reassure ourselves that we are competent (or more than competent) on at least some tasks or skills which protects us from feeling inferior.

#### **Directions:**

Present students with the following statements and ask them to honestly rank themselves on a scale of 5 (well above average) through 1 (well below average). Reassure students that these rankings are confidential and nobody else will see their rankings.

#### **Scale**

5. Well above average
4. Above average
3. Average
2. Below average
1. Well below average

Compared with other students of the same class level as yourself, how would you rate yourself on the following characteristics?

1. Leadership ability
2. Athletic ability
3. Ability to get along with others
4. Tolerance
5. Energy level
6. Helpfulness
7. Responsibility
8. Creativeness
9. Patience
10. Trustworthiness
11. Sincerity
12. Thoughtfulness
13. Cooperativeness
14. Reasonableness
15. Intelligence

**Analysis:** Ask students to add up the total number of 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s, and 5s. According to the self-serving bias, those in individualistic countries are more likely to rate

themselves above average on most scales (more 4s and 5s). If students are from a collectivist background their ratings may be lower (more 1s and 2s).