

Jensen A R. How much can we boost IQ and scholastic achievement?

Harvard Educ. Rev. 39:1-123, 1969.

Individual differences in intelligence, as a scientific construct, can be reliably measured and indexed as IQ. IQ is the best single predictor of scholastic achievement, and has other occupationally, economically, and socially important correlates. Individual variation in IQ is largely genetic, as shown by heritability analysis of kinship data. Social class differences involve genetic factors, and many lines of evidence suggest it is a reasonable hypothesis that genetic factors may be strongly implicated in the one standard deviation average IQ difference between whites and blacks. [The *Science Citation Index*[®] (*SCI*[®]) and the *Social Sciences Citation Index*[™] (*SSCI*[™]) indicate that this paper was cited a total of 638 times in the period 1969-1977.]

Arthur R. Jensen
Institute of Human Learning
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720

December 15, 1977

"The question of genetic factors as a partial cause of the well established fact of a 15-point average difference between the IQs of blacks and whites in the US was only a small (less than 10%) part of this lengthy article. But it was that, more than anything else, that sparked the incredible academic and public uproar which so quickly followed publication.

"Although unfortunately the heat and fumes of the reaction to my position have not yet entirely abated, even after nine years, I believe that some scientific good has resulted from my having pulled this most taboo question out from under the carpet, whither it was swept decades earlier by the wake of Hitler's holocaust. Today, geneticists and psychologists and other behavioral scientists, in small but increasing numbers, are publicly acknowledging that the cause of the black IQ deficit, with all its socially significant correlates, is scientifically an *open question*.

And that is all I stated in my article, or have ever insisted on. We advance scientific knowledge by formulating and empirically testing *competing* hypotheses, and I have since presented more complete evidence and argument that a genetic hypothesis of the black-white IQ difference is a worthy contender in the scientific arena.¹

"In the nine years following my controversial article, there has been a major revival of scientific interest, vigorous debate, and new research on the nature and measurement of intelligence and its genetic aspects. But the topic of genetic racial differences, *treated as an open question*, is still generally a taboo on most college campuses, both here and abroad, and those who dare to suggest that genetic factors are a plausible part of the explanation still must pay a price that is not only unappealing, but understandably intimidating to many academicians or their families. The risk of being labeled 'racist,' even though patently false, is dreaded by many.

"My unrelenting research in the so-called 'IQ controversy,' for example, has resulted, over the years, in the loss of the friendship of a number of my colleagues; in near-riotous demonstrations by student activists at many colleges where I have been invited to speak; and in last-minute cancellation of invited lectures, vilification in student newspapers and leaflets, and physical threats to me and my family, occasioning the need for police protection, even as recently as a month ago, and as far away as Australia. One may imagine subtler penalties, too, such as the loss of academic status and respectability, but this is more difficult to assess. It does not worry me perhaps as much as it should. The fact that I am not only alive and well, but reasonably happy and unstintingly carrying on my research on all aspects of human intelligence will no doubt be attributed to personal eccentricity. But I hope it will also be encouraging to others. From my experience I can say that, in the long haul, the consequences of sticking your neck out when you think you should, are not too bad. It is an exercise in conscience and self-respect, in which neither suffers, given the faith that the scientific pursuit of the currently most tabooed question will prove worthwhile to humanity."

REFERENCE

1. **Jensen A R.** *Educability and group differences*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973. 407 p.