

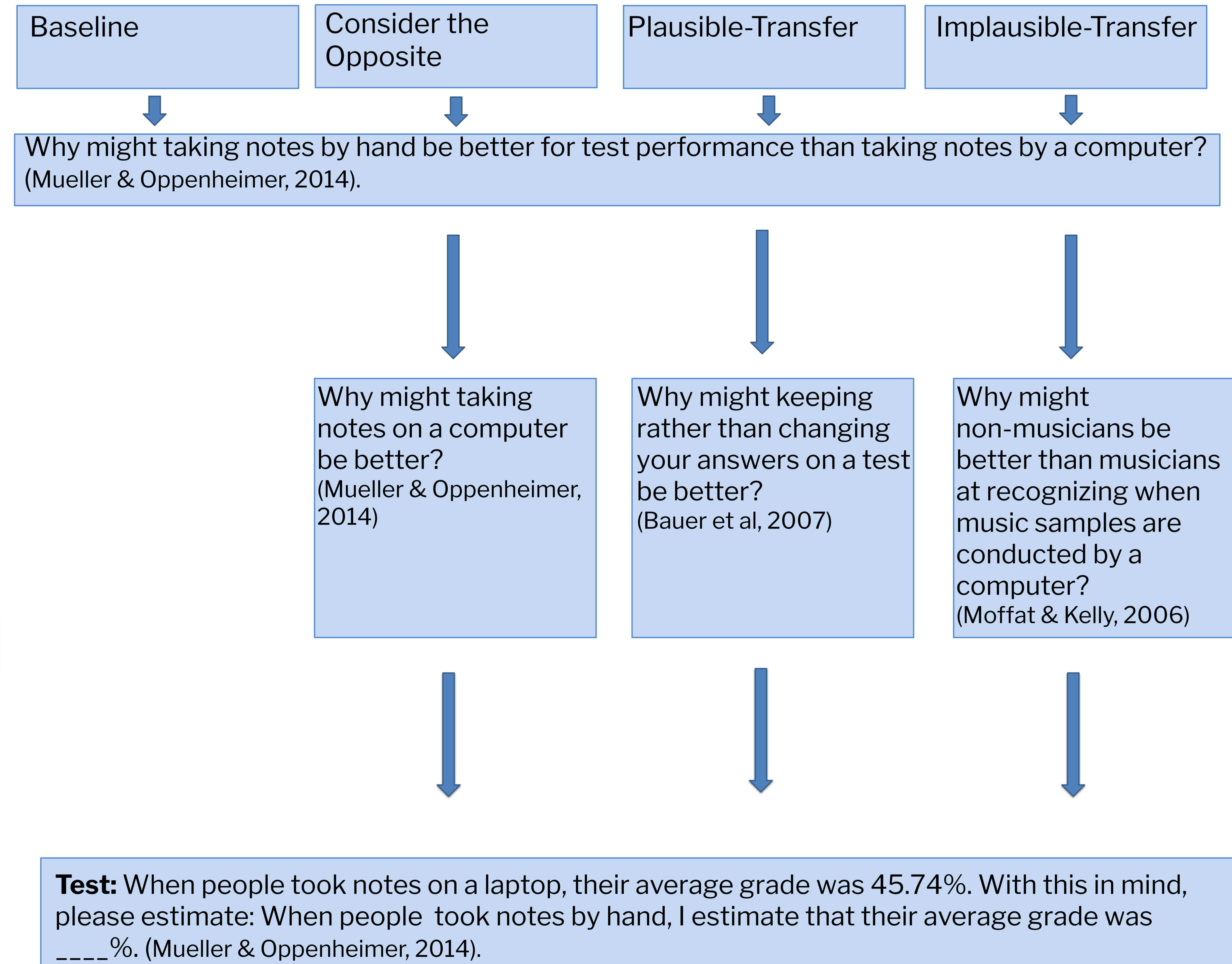
## Background

- Hirt, Kardes, & Markman (2004) found that by asking participants to generate alternative reasons (i.e. reasons for why a Portland basketball team would win against \_\_ ) it reduced biases in the participant's judgement as it led them to recognize that the focal outcome was not inevitable. Participants avoided, therefore, overestimating the likelihood an outcome would occur.
- This study also found that the benefits of counterfactual thinking were transferable, meaning once one was promoted to think counterfactually in one domain, they had reduced judgments in an unrelated domain.
- Similar to previous research, Hirt et al. (2004) noted that judgmental biases were only reduced when alternatives were easy to generate, as a difficulty to think of alternatives leads to belief that the focal outcome was inevitable (i.e. reasons for why a notoriously bad basketball team would win against an elite basketball team is hard to think of, therefore it reinforces the idea that the elite basketball team will win) (Schwarz & Vaughn, 2002; Sanna et al., 2002).
- This study is designed to determine whether the benefits of counterfactual thinking are applicable to understanding psychological research. It will also test whether the ease of generating alternative reasons will affect if judgement biases are reduced and if the effort is transferable.

## Method

- **Participants** will be recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk and the General Psychology Pool. Materials will be used in the format of an online survey via Qualtrics.
- **Procedure**  
To do so, this study will be giving participants the same tasks seen in Hirt et al. (2004), except using psychological studies.
  - **Baseline:** Participants are asked to explain the outcome of one psychological study (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014)
  - In addition to this, other groups do the following:
    - **Consider The Opposite:** Participants are asked to explain the alternative outcome for Mueller & Oppenheimer (2014).
    - **Plausible—Transfer:** Participants explain the alternative outcome for a study where consideration of the alternative is easy (Bauer et al, 2007)
    - **Implausible—Transfer:** Participants explain the alternative outcome for a study where consideration of the alternative is difficult (Moffat & Kelly, 2006)
- **Test (all groups):** Participants are asked to estimate the results of Mueller & Oppenheimer (2014).

## Design



## Predicted Results

- In line with Hirt et al.'s findings, we predict:
- **Baseline:** Participants will estimate **high** test scores for those who took notes by hand.
  - **Consider the Opposite:** Participants will estimate **low** test scores for those who took notes by hand.
  - **Plausible-Transfer:** Participants will estimate **high** test scores for those who took notes by hand (if transfer).
  - **Implausible-Transfer:** Participants will estimate **low** test scores for those who took notes by hand (if transfer).

## References

- Hirt, E. R., Kardes, F. R., & Markman, K. D. (2004). Activating a mental simulation mind-set through generation of alternatives: Implications for debiasing in related and unrelated domains. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 40*(3), 374–383. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2003.07.009
- Sanna, L. J., & Schwarz, N. (2003). Debiasing the hindsight bias: The role of accessibility experiences and (mis)attributions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 39*, 287–295.
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