

Fallacy of Personal Attack

The fallacy of personal attack involves assaulting the arguer rather than the argument. This fallacy is very common. Personal attack is like not accepting an argument because of the way one looks or because they eat seafood any you do not. This form of rejection is not logical. There are three forms of personal attack, character assassination, circumstantial and tu quoque.

Character assassination is a personal attack where the arguer's reputation is considered evidence that his argument is false. For example, if a convicted felon out of jail has an argument, most people will not believe him because of his prior involvement with illegal matters. By rejecting his argument only because he was in jail, a personal attack has occurred.

Circumstantial personal attack is another form of the fallacy. If a person thinks that university professors teach better than community college professors, then that person has made the circumstantial personal attack fallacy.

The last type of personal attack is tu quoque. Tu quoque is like hypocrisy. For example, if a person who is in jail because of drug charges tells a teenager not to do drugs and the teen says "Don't tell me not to do drugs...you did!" then the fallacy of tu quoque has occurred.

