

Child Suggestibility

Suggestibility is the degree to which one's recollection can be altered by post-event influences. Suggestibility is not a constant trait. Factors such as age, source monitoring ability, strength of the memory, interview context, and interviewer bias have been shown to be influences on children's susceptibility to suggested information.

Articles cited by Dutton:

Goodman & Bottoms, 1993; Bruck et al., 1998; Ceci & Bruck, 1995; Doris, 1991; Geddie et al, 2001; Hobbs & Goodman, 2018; Lamb et al., 1995; Leavitt, 1997; Pipe et al, 2004; Poole & Lamb, 1998; Reed, 1996; Rudy & Goodman, 1991; Rush et al., 2015; Saywitz & Goodman, 1996; Saywitz & Nathanson, 1993; Saywitz et al, 1991.

Areas of Inquiry and Summary for Expert Testimony and Supporting Research Citations

Wendy A. Dutton, M.A., Ph.D., LPC, February 2022

From Dr. Dutton's doctoral dissertation, Page 35-40

Laboratory studies have also indicated that given the right conditions, inaccurate reports or false memories are relatively easy to create in young children, especially children under the age of five (Ceci, Huffman, Smith, & Loftus, 1994; Ceci, Loftus, Leichtman, & Bruck, 1994; Leichtman & Ceci, 1995).

Rudy and Goodman (1991) studied 4- and 7-year old children's recall of their interaction with an unfamiliar male. Pairs of children were sent into a trailer and interacted with a male research assistant who was dressed as a clown. The children were interviewed, and were asked specific and misleading questions about their interactions. Some of these questions falsely suggested abuse, such as, "He took your clothes off, didn't he?" Both age groups of children were highly resistant to suggestions of abuse. However, they were more likely to make errors in response to suggestive questions unrelated to abuse.

Goodman and her colleagues (1995) studied the effect of interviewer status and preconceived bias on the accuracy of recall by four-year-old children about a staged event. In this laboratory study, 40 children engaged in play activities with an unfamiliar female adult. The children were randomly assigned to one of four interview conditions. The children were interviewed about the activities by either their mothers or by an unfamiliar female interviewer. The mothers and the unfamiliar interviewer conducted the interviews in one of two conditions--either uninformed, or they were given misleading or biased information by the researcher about what occurred during the play activities. Children provided less accurate information when questioned by misinformed strangers. Children were found to be more accurate, resistant to misleading suggestive questions about abuse-related topics when asked by their mothers. Overall, children's free recall accuracy was diminished by biased interviewers. Children provided less information, or made more errors with regard to the order of events when questioned by misinformed interviewers.

In 1994, Stephen Ceci and his colleagues published seminal studies in which they demonstrated how false memories can be implanted in preschool aged children (Ceci, Huffman, Smith, & Loftus, 1994; Ceci, Loftus, Leichtman, & Bruck, 1994). These studies have come to be known as the "mousetrap" studies, both in the research community and popular media. In the first study, (Ceci & Huffinan, et al., 1994), the researchers asked children's parents about events that had actually occurred in children's lives. The researchers then instructed children that they were going to read

a list of events that may have happened to them, based on conversations that the interviewer had with their parents. The interviewer warned that not all of the events really happened. The fictitious events included a description of the child getting his or her finger caught in a mousetrap and having to go to the hospital for treatment. During the first session, children were told to think about the event and were asked if they could remember it. The children were interviewed seven to ten times with a several day interval in between over a ten-week period. Results indicated that by the final interview, 34% of the children assented to the fictitious events, and some provided elaborate narrative accounts of the false event. Ceci & Loftus et al., (1994), repeated this experiment with some key differences. The children were told that the fictitious events had actually occurred, and the time span of the study was increased to 12 weeks, with children undergoing seven to ten interviews. Results indicated that false assents increased from an initial 34% to 45% among the three- and four-year old subjects and from 25% to 40% for the five- and six year olds over the course of the study.

Researchers have also studied whether children can incorporate false details into their memories for an event (Leichtman & Ceci, 1995; Poole & Lindsay, 2001). These studies have been conducted in controlled laboratory experiments in which researchers either staged an event or presented media depictions of an event. Subjects were then interviewed several times about the event, using leading or suggestive techniques. A final interview was conducted using open-ended techniques. The degree to which suggested information was incorporated into the subjects' accounts was then evaluated.

One of the most well known of these laboratory studies is the "Sam Stone" study, conducted by Leichtman & Ceci (1995). Children were exposed to stereotypic inductions-a statement about Sam Stone indicating that he was clumsy but well-meaning by their preschool teacher. These statements were made once a week for four weeks. Another group of children was used as a comparison and were not exposed to the stereotypic inductions. A research confederate posing as Sam Stone made a brief visit to the classroom of both groups of children, during which no adverse events occurred. The two groups of children then interviewed four times over a 10-week period. The comparison group was interviewed using no suggestive techniques. The experimental group was interviewed using suggestive questions indicating that Sam Stone tore a book and soiled a teddy bear. One month after the interviews, the children were interviewed again by a new interviewer in a non-suggestive manner. In the comparison group, none of the five-and six year olds and only 10% of the three-and four- year olds reported that Sam Stone ripped a book or soiled the teddy bear. In the experimental group, the results were different---44% of the younger children and 11 % of the older ones reported that they actually witnessed Sam Stone do one or both of the fictitious misdeeds.

Other authors have focused on the effect of post-event information on children's memories and abilities of children to distinguish the source of their knowledge (Poole & Lindsay, 2001). One of the most often cited laboratory studies is known as "Mr. Science" (Poole & Lindsay, 2001). The subjects in this study were children ranging from 3 to 8 years of age. The children participated in a science demonstration that included four different activities. Immediately after the demonstration, children were interviewed about what they observed using open-ended invitations. Three months later, the researchers sent books entitled "A Visit to Mr. Science" to the children's parents. Parents were instructed to read the book, which included their child's name, once a day for three consecutive days. The story was similar to the events the children experienced earlier, including two descriptions of the science activities they observed and two descriptions of science activities that were not part of the original demonstration. Children were then questioned about their visit to Mr. Science by different interviewers at the children's homes. Results indicated that

many of the children had difficulty distinguishing between events they actually witnessed during the science experiments and those that were depicted in the book.

Garven, Wood, Malpass, and Shaw (1998) conducted a laboratory study to examine the effects of interview techniques used by interviewers in the McMartin Preschool investigation. These techniques included suggestive questions, introducing information obtained from other witnesses, praising or criticizing answers, repeated questions and inviting speculation. Preschool children were exposed to a staged event in their classroom. The event consisted of a male research assistant introduced as "Manny Morales" reading a story in an animated way while wearing a large, colorful hat. One week later, the children were interviewed using one (suggestive questions only) or combination (suggestive questions, social influence, reinforcement and speculation) of these problematic techniques. The authors found that use of these combined techniques resulted in increased reporting of false allegations of the research assistant committing a misdeed such as stealing a pen or bumping the teacher.

Overall, laboratory studies have demonstrated that many factors can enhance or negatively influence children's accuracy. Interviewer variables such as bias, high status, emotional tone or friendliness have been shown to have effects on children's accuracy (Goodman, 2006). Interviewers who have a friendly demeanor and make supportive statements have been shown to increase children's narrative production and accuracy (Goodman, 2006). Interview techniques, such as repeated questions, repeating misinformation, social pressure, and stereotypic induction, have been shown to be detrimental (Garven et al., 1998). Bribes, rewards, and threats have significantly altered children's reports and accuracy as well (Ceci & Bruck, 1995). The overall body of memory and suggestibility research stressed the importance of minimizing the amount of information and conversational control introduced by the interviewer, while simultaneously providing support for children to maximize narrative information about their experiences (Goodman, 2006).

Gender differences in children's disclosures and legal narratives of sexual abuse.

Wendy A. Dutton. A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree doctor of philosophy. Approved April 2011, Madelaine Adelman, Chair. Arizona State University. Pages 35-40.

Children's eyewitness reports after exposure to misinformation from parents.

Poole, Debra Ann. Central Michigan U, Dept of Psychology, Mt Pleasant, MI, US

Lindsay, D. Stephen

Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied, Vol 7(1), Mar, 2001. pp. 27-50.

Abstract:

This study examined how misleading suggestions from parents influenced children's eyewitness reports. Children (3 to 8 years old) participated in science demonstrations, listened to their parents read a story that described experienced and nonexperienced events, and subsequently discussed the science experience in two follow-up interviews. Many children described fictitious events in response to open-ended prompts, and there were no age differences in suggestibility during this phase of the interview. Accuracy declined markedly in response to direct questions, especially for the younger children. Although the older children retracted many of their false reports after receiving source-monitoring instructions, the younger children did not. Path analyses indicated that acquiescence, free recall, and source monitoring all contribute to mediating patterns of suggestibility across age. Results indicate that judgments about the accuracy of children's testimony must consider the possibility of exposure to misinformation prior to formal interviews.

Individual Differences in Children's Suggestibility: A Review and Synthesis.

Bruck, Maggie, Melnyk, Laura, *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, Vol 18(8), Dec, 2004. Special issue: Individual and Developmental Differences in Suggestibility. pp. 947-996.

Abstract:

Over the last decade, there has been a significant growth in the study of individual differences factors predicting children's suggestibility. In this paper, we synthesize the results of 69 studies examining the relationship of demographic factors (socioeconomic status and gender), cognitive factors (intelligence, language, memory, theory of mind, executive functioning, behavioural ratings of distractibility, and creativity), and psycho-social factors (social engagement, self concept/self-efficacy, stress/emotional arousal/state anxiety, maternal attachment styles, parent-child relationship, parenting styles, temperament, and mental health) and children's suggestibility. We found that for cognitive factors, language ability and creativity were fairly consistently related to suggestibility. The highest correlations for psycho-social factors and suggestibility were obtained for measures of self-concept/self-efficacy, maternal attachment, and the parent-child relationship. Implications for future research and mechanisms underlying children's suggestibility are discussed.

Repeated Questions, Deception, and Children's True and False Reports of Body Touch.

Quas, Jodi A., et al

Child Maltreatment, Vol 12(1), Feb, 2007. pp. 60-67.

Abstract:

Four- to 7-year-olds' ability to answer repeated questions about body touch either honestly or dishonestly was examined. Children experienced a play event, during which one third of the children were touched innocuously. Two weeks later, they returned for a memory interview. Some children who had not been touched were instructed to lie during the interview and say that they had been touched. Children so instructed were consistent in maintaining the lie but performed poorly when answering repeated questions unrelated to the lie. Children who were not touched and told the truth were accurate when answering repeated questions. Of note, children who had been touched and told the truth were the most inconsistent. Results call into question the common assumption that consistency is a useful indicator of veracity in children's eyewitness accounts.

Children's false memory and true disclosure in the face of repeated questions.

Schaaf, Jennifer M., Alexander, Kristen Weede, Goodman, Gail S., *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, Vol 100(3), Jul, 2008. pp. 157-185.

Abstract:

The current study was designed to investigate children's memory and suggestibility for events differing in valence (positive or negative) and veracity (true or false). A total of 82 3- and 5-year-olds were asked repeated questions about true and false events, either in a grouped order (i.e., all questions about a certain event asked consecutively) or in a nongrouped order (i.e., questions about a certain event were interspersed with questions about other events). Interviewer gender was also varied. Individual differences, including attachment style, inhibition, and behavioral adjustment, were examined as potential predictors of memory and suggestibility. Results revealed significant age, valence, and veracity effects on children's memory reports. Path analysis demonstrated that individual differences in behavioral problems and inhibitory ability predicted children's provision of inaccurate information. Implications for psychological theory and legal application are discussed.

Deficient cognitive control fuels children's exuberant false allegations.

Poole, Debra Ann, Dickinson, Jason J., Brubacher, Sonja P., Liberty, Allison E., Kaake, Amanda M., (2014). *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, Vol 118, Feb, 2014. pp. 101-109.

Abstract:

In eyewitness studies as in actual investigations, a minority of children generate numerous false (and sometimes incredulous) allegations. To explore the characteristics of these children, we reinterviewed and administered a battery of tasks to 61 children (ages 4–9 years) who had previously participated in an eyewitness study where a man broke a "germ rule" twice when he tried to touch them. Performance on utilization, response conflict (Luria tapping), and theory of mind tasks predicted the number of false reports of touching (with age and time since the event controlled) and correctly classified 90.16% of the children as typical witnesses or exuberant (more than 3) false reporters. Results of a factor analysis pointed to a common process underlying performance on these tasks that accounted for 49% of the variability in false reports. Relations between task performance and testimony confirmed that the mechanisms underlying occasional intrusions are different from those that drive persistent confabulation and that deficient cognitive control fuels young children's exuberant false reports.

Suggestibility in Adolescents and Adults

Constructing rich false memories of committing crime

Shaw & Porter, 2015

This is the first study to provide evidence suggesting that full episodic false memories of committing crime can be generated in a controlled experimental setting. With suggestive memory retrieval techniques, participants were induced to generate criminal and noncriminal emotional false memories, and we compared these false memories with true memories of emotional events. After three interviews, 70% of participants were classified as having false memories of committing a crime (theft, assault, or assault with a weapon) that led to police contact in early adolescence and volunteered a detailed false account. These reported false memories of crime were similar to false memories of noncriminal events and to true memory accounts, having the same kinds of complex descriptive and multisensory components. It appears that in the context of a highly suggestive interview, people can quite readily generate rich false memories of committing crime.

- 70 students met the participation criteria, and the first 60 eligible students participated in the interview stage (Phase 2) in exchange for \$50.
- Used a modified familial-informant false narrative paradigm to attempt to convince young adult participants that they had committed a crime when they were between the ages of 11 and 14.
- They were asked about both the true and the false memory in each of the three interviews.
- Questionnaire sent to their primary caregivers. The questionnaires were returned by the caregivers of 91 participants, of whom 70 were deemed eligible to participate.
- Eligibility was based on the caregiver reporting that the participant had experienced at least one highly emotional event in the specified time frame, had not experienced any of the target criminal events, and had never had police contact.
- Instructed caregivers to not discuss any of the events with the participants under any circumstances until the end of the study.
- In Phase 2 of the study, participants completed three interviews, at approximately 1-week intervals. The interviews were on average around 40 min long.
- One that the participant had experienced (true event) and one that the participant had not experienced (false event), were verbally presented to the participant. The true event was always presented first in an effort to maximize the researcher's credibility.
- They were asked to use context reinstatement and guided imagery to retrieve the memory.
- The strategies that were employed throughout all interviews in this study were based on literature regarding factors that facilitate the generation of false confessions (e.g., Kassin et al., 2012). The tactics that were scripted into all three interviews included incontrovertible false evidence ("In the questionnaire, your parents/caregivers said. . ."), social pressure ("Most people are able to retrieve lost memories if they try hard enough"), and suggestive retrieval techniques (including the scripted guided imagery).
- (70%) were classified as having false memories of being involved in the criminal event resulting in police contact.
- Participants reported significantly more event details for true than for false memories, had more confidence in true than in false memories, and reported that their true memories were more vivid than their false memories.
- The t-tests also revealed that for participants classified as having false memories, there were no significant differences between the true and false memories in the number of cognitive-operations details, reported anxiety during the event, or the presence of any of the sensory components.

- Not only could the young adults in our sample be led to generate such memories, but their rate of false recollection was high, and the memories themselves were richly detailed. Additionally, false memories for perpetrating crime showed signs that they may have been generated in a way that is similar to the way in which false memories for noncriminal emotional memories are generated. False memories for committing crime also shared many characteristics with true memories.
- Our results align with the literature suggesting that exposure to misinformation provided by interviewers can lead to major distortions in memory (Morgan et al., 2013), and that malleable reconstructive mechanisms may be fundamental to episodic remembering
- Fuzzy trace theory (Brainerd & Reyna, 2002), propose that a memory may be retrieved not by accessing a fixed representation of a past event, but rather by reactivating incomplete fragments that can be either distorted or accurate, and that may have arisen from other real events. This implies that false memories may actually be recalled in a way that is surprisingly similar to how memories for real events are retrieved.
- True and false memories have many similar features—including being highly detailed and multisensory. These results are also in line with neuroimaging research showing that true and false memories evoke similar brain activation patterns (Stark et al., 2010), and that even highly emotional content may not reliably indicate memory accuracy.
- The relevance of imagination for false memories may be partially explained by the source-monitoring framework (e.g., Johnson, Hashtroudi, & Lindsay, 1993), which refers to people’s tendency to confuse imagination with reality. Individuals who are recalling details from a visualization exercise or experimenter misinformation can forget the source of their ideas and may think they are recalling details from a genuine experience.
- In particular, it has been shown that forced-fabrication paradigms, such as the one used here, lead participants to incorporate causally relevant misinformation into memory over time so as to help make sense of events that participants accept or believe happened but cannot remember (e.g., Chrobak & Zaragoza, 2008). In other words, imagined memory elements regarding what something could have been like can turn into elements of what it would have been like, which can become elements of what it was like.
- This plausibility shift has been supported by the work of Mazzoni, Loftus, and Kirsch (2001), who suggested that perceived plausibility needs to pass only a relatively low threshold in order for a personalized manipulation to produce changes in belief that may then be incorporated into memory.
- Our participants were as willing to accept false criminal accounts as they were to accept false noncriminal accounts.

Corrigendum: Constructing rich false memories of committing crime

Shaw & Porter, 2015

Main Findings

Only one finding of interest in the original article was nonsignificant in the corrected analysis: The article reported that “*participants were found to be significantly more likely to report adopting multiple perspectives (i.e., being able to see themselves in the memory as well as to see things from their own perspective) in the true than in the false memory*” (pp. 297–298); however, as shown in Table 1, that difference was not significant in the corrected analysis. Other changes of note include the following. The mean number of total details recalled for false memories was 64.95 (not 71.76). This was because incorrect cells were included in the original calculation of the details for participants told they had committed assault and assault with a weapon. The mean number of details recalled for

assault was 66.25 (not 75.63), and the mean number of details recalled for assault with a weapon was 62.29 (not 71.29).

False Memories of Fabricated Political Events

Steven J. Frenda (2013)

In the largest false memory study to date, 5,269 participants were asked about their memories for three true and one of five fabricated political events. Each fabricated event was accompanied by a photographic image purportedly depicting that event. Approximately half the participants falsely remembered that the false event happened, with 27% remembering that they saw the events happen on the news. Political orientation appeared to influence the formation of false memories, with conservatives more likely to falsely remember seeing Barack Obama shaking hands with the president of Iran, and liberals more likely to remember George W. Bush vacationing with a baseball celebrity during the Hurricane Katrina disaster. A follow-up study supported the explanation that events are more easily implanted in memory when they are congruent with a person's preexisting attitudes and evaluations, in part because attitude-congruent false events promote feelings of recognition and familiarity, which in turn interfere with source attributions

- Over 5,000 subjects were asked if they remembered fabricated political events.
- About half of the sample showed evidence of memory distortion.
- Political preferences appeared to guide the formation of false memories.
- Suggestions that are congruent with prior attitudes and evaluations can produce feelings of familiarity and recognition.
- These can in turn bias source judgments, leading to false memories

Misinformation can influence memory for recently experienced, highly stressful events

C.A. Morgan III (2012)

A large body of research has demonstrated that exposure to misinformation can lead to distortions in human memory for genuinely experienced objects or people. The current study examined whether misinformation could affect memory for a recently experienced, personally relevant, highly stressful event. In the present study we assessed the impact of misinformation on memory in over 800 military personnel confined in the stressful, mock POW camp phase of Survival School training. Misinformation introduced after the negatively affected memory for the details of the event (such as the presence of glasses or weapons), and also affected the accuracy of identification of an aggressive interrogator. In some conditions more than half of the subjects exposed to a misleading photograph falsely identified a different individual as their interrogator after the interrogation was over. These findings demonstrate that memories for stressful events are highly vulnerable to modification by exposure to misinformation, even in individuals whose level of training and experience might be thought to render them relatively immune to such influences.

- the “misinformation effect”. The term refers to the errors in recalling the details of a past event made by individuals who were subsequently exposed to false or erroneous information about the event. The misinformation effect appears to operate largely outside a person's awareness. That is, when people claim erroneously that they have seen the misinformation details, they seem to truly believe that they did.
- false memory endorsements about non-trivial items (i.e., weapons) were observed in at least 27% of participants. Even higher endorsement rates, upwards of 80% of participants, occurred with respect to misinformation about uniforms or human faces. That we were able to alter memory for such non trivial events in military personnel trained to resist propaganda and exploitation techniques extends the applicability of false memory research to a wider population than heretofore examined, and suggests that these observations

should be taken seriously by professionals who work with victims of traumatic stress and who interact with the criminal justice system.

- Consistent with previous reports suggesting that misinformation is more readily accepted by a person when the misinformation is paired with someone who is trusted or who is familiar to that person,
- Thus, it may be that misinformation is more likely to be accepted when presented in association with persons perceived, by the recipients, to be in positions of authority.

The impact of interrogation stress on compliance and suggestibility in U.S. military special operations personnel

Morgan (2020)

Summary The present study was performed to test whether acute stress exposure would significantly increase human compliance and suggestibility. One hundred active duty military participants enrolled in military survival school training were randomized to receive the Gudjonsson Compliance and Suggestibility Scales (GCS and GSS) prior to, during or after exposure to interrogation stress. All participants were also assessed prior to, and after stress exposure for symptoms of dissociation. Stress exposure significantly increased compliance in individuals who exhibited a pre-stress propensity to dissociation; stress exposure significantly increased suggestibility. These data support the view that some individuals are more likely than others to experiencing an increase in compliance and in suggestibility if exposed to interrogation stress. These data also suggest that individuals who are vulnerable to stress induced increases in suggestibility and compliance can be identified using psychological measures of dissociation.

Reconstructing alcohol-induced memory blackouts

Robert A. Nash (2011)

Blackouts therefore afford an excellent opportunity to study the strategies people use to reconstruct forgotten experiences. We conducted a survey of university students to explore how people choose to reconstruct blackouts, and the likely accuracy of these reconstructions. Our findings add to the growing research literature on people's strategies for validating their past experiences, and highlight the important role of external sources in the reconstruction process. The data show that people's desire to "fill in the blanks" can lead them to rely on rather unreliable sources, and may also encourage them to adopt weaker source-monitoring criteria. Indeed, in at least some cases reconstructing blackouts appears to lead to the development of false beliefs or memories.

- A total of 280 students (78.2% female; age M 22.2 years, SD 5.10, Range 18 47) voluntarily completed an Internet survey investigating students' experiences of the effects of alcohol on memory.
- Section 1. The first section of the survey assessed participants' evaluations of different strategies for reconstructing blackouts. We told participants to imagine they went to a party and drank a lot of alcohol, but the next morning they remembered nothing that happened after arriving. We then asked participants how motivated they would be to find out what happened at the party and how motivated they would be to use each of eight strategies . . . to this end.
- Finally in this section, our participants rated how reliable they thought each strategy would be for obtaining accurate information.
- Section 2. The second section asked participants about their experience of helping others to reconstruct blackouts. We asked whether any of the following statements were true of at least one such occasion: (1) "some of the details may have been unintentionally inaccurate"; (2) "I made up some of the details"; (3) "I gave the other person an entirely

made-up account of what they did.” Where applicable, participants were asked to describe what they had told the blackout sufferer, and the reasons for their possible inaccuracies.

- Section 3. Section 3 asked about participants’ experiences of reconstructing their own blackouts.
- Participants first reported whether they had ever experienced a partial or total blackout. Participants who selected “Total” or “Partial” were asked to select which if any external source types (intoxicated people; non-intoxicated people; photos/videos; other physical evidence) they had relied on to reconstruct real blackouts.
- Finally they were asked whether they had ever learnt that they did something during a blackout, only to discover later that it never really happened.
- Overall, participants said they would be highly motivated to reconstruct a blackout.
- Blackout sufferers were relatively more motivated to rely on friends who had been intoxicated
- When blackout sufferers reported the external sources they had consulted to reconstruct real blackouts, we observed that consulting intoxicated people was somewhat more common.
- Although our retrospective data rely on self-reports, and so are vulnerable to recollection biases and errors, they suggest that when people reconstruct forgotten recent episodes just as when verifying childhood memories they tend to rely on rather unreliable information sources.
- One interesting finding was that blackout sufferers as compared to drinkers who had never experienced a blackout placed significantly more confidence in the reliability of intoxicated people, and said they would be more motivated to obtain information from them.

Assessing the Diagnosticity of a Persuasion-Based and a Dialogue-Based Interrogation Approach

Joseph Eastwood, 2020

The current study assessed the relative propensity of a persuasion-based and a dialogue-based interrogation approach to generate true and false confessions (i.e., their diagnosticity). Following the Russano cheating paradigm, participants were first either induced or not induced to cheat on an experimental task to create innocent and guilty conditions. An experimenter, blind to the participants’ guilt or innocence, then attempted to generate a confession using a persuasion-based or a dialogue based interrogation approach. Chi-square analyses showed that both interrogation approaches generated an equally high proportion of true confessions from guilty participants (95% for both approaches; $p = 0.942$) but that the persuasion-based approach generated substantially more false confessions from innocent participants than the dialogue-based approach (45% vs. 0%, respectively; $p = 0.001$). The dialogue-based approach’s clear advantage over the persuasion-based approach in this study adds to the call for law enforcement organizations to utilize dialogue-based approaches within real-world interrogations.

- The predominant interrogation approach utilized in North America today is the Reid Technique and similar accusatorial style approaches (Inbau et al. 2011; Miller et al. 2018). The Reid technique can be classified as a persuasion based approach as it uses psychologically manipulative tactics to try and generate confessions from suspects deemed likely to be guilty (Meissner and Russano 2003).
- These tactics include having the interrogator stress that they are certain of the guilt of suspect at the beginning of the interrogation (e.g., “There is no doubt in my mind that you took the money”; direct positive confrontation), providing face-saving justifications that minimize and normalize the crime (e.g., “Maybe you just took the money to help buy food for your family; theme development), not allowing the suspect to voice denials regarding

their involvement in the crime, and eventually presenting the suspect with two options for why they committed the crime, one reprehensible and one understandable (e.g., Did you steal the money to buy drugs, or to buy food for your family?; alternative question). It is argued that systematic application of these tactics through the Reid technique's nine-step process will cause many suspects to confess to their involvement in a criminal offence (Inbau et al. 2011).

- Kassin and Kiechel (1996) found that over 90% of participants falsely confessed to making a computer crash when presented with untrue inculpatory evidence
- A collaboration of academics and law enforcement officers in the UK created the PEACE model of investigative interviewing in the early 1990s (see Snook et al. 2010). PEACE is an acronym for the five stages of the interview process: Preparation and Planning, Engage and Explain, Account, Closure, and Evaluation. The PEACE model is an inquisitorial method that employs a noncoercive information gathering approach to interviewing all interviewee types (Meissner and Russano 2003; Snook et al. 2010; Gudjonsson and Pearse 2011).
- Unlike the Reid technique and similar approaches, PEACE contains no tactics designed to explicitly generate an admission or confession from the suspect and instead focuses primarily on generating dialogue with a suspect which can then be compared with the existing case evidence to determine veracity (see Centrex 2004).
- Analyses of confession rates in the UK before and after the implementation of the PEACE model, however, show similar rates of confessions (Hartwig et al. 2005).
- A fundamental feature of an effective interrogation approach is its diagnosticity—the ability to generate true confessions from guilty suspects while not generating false confessions from innocent suspects.
- The sample consisted of 80 students
- The two interrogation scripts were designed to represent either a persuasion-based approach or a dialogue-based approach. Both approaches contained two pieces of evidence that supported the experimenter's belief in the participant's guilt—identical wrong answers on a specific question in the individual problem-solving task and that the confederate suggested to the experimenter that the participant had in fact helped on that question. In the persuasion-based approach, the experimenter used the following script to try and elicit a confession:
- Both persuasion-based and dialogue-based approaches were highly effective at eliciting true confessions—approximately 95% of guilty participants in both conditions confessed.
- The persuasion-based approach elicited substantially more false confessions than the dialogue-based approach (45% vs. 0%, respectively).
- There was a notable difference across interrogation conditions for innocent participants. Specifically, almost half of the participants in the persuasion-based condition provided a false confession compared with no false confessions within the dialogue based condition.
- Not a single participant in the innocent condition provided a false confession—despite this appearing to be a key motivator for guilty participants to confess.