

Problem Solving with Personality Experimenter Script

Please note that several elements of this script have been adapted from Russano et al. (2005) and Perillo and Kassin (2011).

1) Introduction

The confederate will wait in the hallway. If the participant arrives first, let her/him know that you are waiting for another participant to show up. Once they are both there, greet them in the hallway using their names with the informed consent clipboards:

Are you here for experiment # 493, Problem Solving with Personality—it's a 2-credit study? My name is _____ and I'll be leading you through the study today.

Hand out informed consent sheets.

I'd like you to read the consent form on your clipboard and sign it if you agree to participate. There's also a section for you to initial to verify that you meet the two requirements of participation

I just want to remind you both that in order to participate in the study you need to be a native English speaker and you must be 18 years of age or older.

Leave for a minute and come back. Once the informed consent sheets are initialed and signed, turn participants' attention to credit receipts.

You should receive your study credit on-line automatically through the SONA system however, in case you do not, your credit card receipt is attached to your clipboard under your informed consent document.

2) When participant (and confederate) have filled out the informed consents and put away their credit receipts:

Subjects who refuse to participate are dismissed without penalty. Escort the participant and confederate into the lab. After taking their informed consents, stand between them and the entries to rooms A & B. Open the door to room B such that you are between them and the interior of the room.

You can put your stuff here (inside room B). **Also, before we get started, I would like to request that you both turn off your cellphones—any noise emitted from cellphones will be distracting and could negatively affect the results of the experiment. Then feel free to put them under here with the rest of your stuff.**

I would also like to remind everyone that this is a 2-credit experiment, which means it will be an hour and a half in duration.

Close the door to room B and instruct participant and confederate to follow you into room A, and have them sit at the table, preferably leaving their belongings in room B. Check to make sure they kept their pens (from the Informed Consent clipboard), if not, return the pens to them. Once everyone is inside room A, shut the door.

I'd like to start by telling you a little about the study. The researchers are interested in comparing and contrasting how people solve problems together and individually. To begin, we have some questions we would like you to answer about yourself. Please answer each question as honestly as possible. All of your responses will be kept confidential.

3) Provide the participant and confederate with the appropriate questionnaire—check to make sure the participant gets the one with the *real* participant ID.

I will be preparing the rest of the materials. When you're done I would like one of you to open the door to this room.

4) Close the door to room A after you leave. Once participants have completed the initial questionnaire (and you have returned), grab the two nametags you set out previously in room B and close the door behind you.

Most of the time, when people are assigned to work on a team project, they usually work with someone they know, like a co-worker or a friend. They don't typically work with a complete stranger. We want to make our study as realistic as possible, so what I'd like you to do is to get to know each other a little bit. To get you started, please write your name on these nametags and put them on.

Hand them each a nametag. When nametags are on:

I'll give you guys a few minutes to get to know one another. I'll be back in a few minutes.

- 5) Close the door to room A when you leave. After 3 minutes has passed, grab the logic problems and re-enter the room closing the door behind you. Hand out the logic problems—check to make sure the participant gets the one with the *real* participant ID. Place the team packet in between them.

Ok, what I have here are the logic problems – two of them are the individual logic problems and one of them is the team logic problems. The individual packets are identical and you need to work on those alone.

When you work on the team packet, be sure to discuss with one another your strategy for solving the problem and the answer you came up with. In other words, one person shouldn't simply sit back while the other one does all the work.

After you complete the first individual problem, move on to the first team problem. You'll continue with this alternating pattern until you have completed all 2 individual and all 2 team problems. Remember you must wait for both of you to complete an individual problem before you move on to a team problem.

You have to come up with an answer for each problem, and it's important that you try as hard as you can to get the correct answers. We expect you to take this task seriously. Each problem should take no more than 5 minutes, so you can check your time on the clock (gesture to the clock). Some of the problems are challenging, but please give it your best effort. Please do not make wild guesses, and always write down an answer after working on the problem. Do you have any questions about that?

Ok, I'm going to leave so the two of you can get started. When you are finished with all the problems, just open the door again to let me know. (Close the door behind you).

- 6) Grab the next set of questionnaires, and re-enter the room closing the door behind you. Collect the logic problem packets and hand out the third questionnaire—check to make sure the participant gets the one with the *real* participant ID:

Ok. I'm going to start scoring your logic problems. While I'm doing that I'd like each of you to fill out this survey – This survey will help us to understand how people with different personalities interact in problem-solving situations. Please answer the questions as honestly as possible. All of your answers will be kept confidential. Again, once you've completed the questionnaires, I request one of you open the door and I will present the next portion of the study.

- 7) When the confederate or participant opens the door to room A, return to the room from room C looking distracted/worried and HAVE THE LOGIC PROBLEM PACKETS IN YOUR HAND. Go in and collect surveys while saying:

MUST BE MEMORIZED COMPLETELY:

Ok. Well, I have to check on something, so I'll be back in a moment. (Close the door behind you and exit the lab into the hallway).

- 8) Re-enter 2 minutes later, leave time to drop off the logic problem packets and grab the other clipboard you prepared—the one with the blank pages of paper, Exit Survey, blank informed consent, and counseling services sheet:

Alright, it looks like we may have a problem here. Um, I think what I'm going to do is speak with each of you separately. (Looking at confederate say...) Why don't you come with me? (Looking at real participant say...) I'll be back in just a minute. Close the door to room A.

Escort confederate to room C and begin recording right before exiting.

- 9) Re-enter with confederate 3 minutes later—You should still have the clipboard with you. Escort participant to room C and close the door to room A. Close the door after you have entered room C with the participant:

Well, I've just been talking to [Name of Confederate], and it looks like we do have a problem here. What I'm going to ask you to do is to just hear me out and listen to what I have to say before you say anything, ok? While you two completed the last questionnaire, I started to score your logic problems. Based on what I saw, I became concerned that the two of you did not follow the rules of the experiment. My concern is that the two of you shared answers on one of the individual problems because you have the same wrong answer on the triangle problem. If this happened, it is a MAJOR problem, because it would mean that not only did you break the rules of the experiment, but you may have compromised the integrity of the study.

After speaking with [Name of Confederate], I wasn't really sure how to handle this situation, so I called my professor to find out what I should do. Just so you know, I could tell by talking to my professor that he's pretty annoyed already that this is happening. He said that he might have to turn the case over to the Department of Psychology's Human Research Ethics Review—although cheating is rare, they do have recommended procedures for it when it occurs in research studies. Depending on the severity of the case, if someone is found guilty, they can administer punishments such as indefinite academic probation and/or a loss of research privileges and credits.

Look, my professor doesn't want to make too big a deal about this. He said he understands that people may cheat because they don't comprehend the importance of following study instructions. Or, how cheating can negatively affect the integrity of research. This study is pretty important to him though so I'm sure it will make things better for you if you just cooperate.

THE FOLLOWING LINES DIFFER BY CONDITION!!!

CONFESSION-NO BLUFF:

My professor is requesting that you agree to sign a written admission of what happened here today so we can move things along for now. Whether you sign or not, the case will be turned over to the Human Research Ethics Review.

I will need to get this sorted out before we can leave here so I can tell my professor what happened.

CONFESSION- BLUFF:

My professor reminded me that there is a hidden camera set up in the other room that recorded the whole session. It could reveal whether you cheated or didn't cheat. The video is automated and only exists for security reasons. Because, I guess the lab had a break-in last year or something. Unfortunately, the camera feeds directly into a locked server that records video, but is limited to a 24-hour loop due to data storage limitations. This server is only accessible by an off-campus security firm, but my professor is calling them right now to save the video before it is erased.

Given the time and effort necessary to access the video, my professor is requesting that you agree to sign a written admission of what happened here today so we can move things along for now. Whether you agree to sign or not, the firm is being called to access the video before it is erased so it can be turned over to the Human Research Ethics Review.

I will need to get this sorted out before we can leave here so I can tell my professor what happened.

PLEA BARGAINING-NO BLUFF:

My professor is willing to drop this accusation now if you agree to work in the lab 20 hours over the next month.

If you do not agree to sign, the case will be turned over to the Human Research Ethics Review.
I will need to get this sorted out before we can leave here so I can tell my professor what happened.

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RESUME CONSISTENT MEMORIZATION!!

I'm going to write out the statement he wants you to sign. (Grab a blank piece of paper from clipboard—Make sure you don't reveal "Exit Survey" in the process).

10) On paper, write the following—STATEMENTS DIFFER BY CONDITION:

CONFESSION: I admit to having shared answers on the individual triangle problem in the Problem-Solving with Personality study.

X _____

PLEA: I agree to work 20 hours on the Problem-Solving with Personality study by (write in month after date).

X _____

First repeat: **I understand you don't want to sign, but I think it's in your best interest to do it. My professor would really like some sort of resolution before we can leave.**

Second repeat: **Ok. I'm just afraid that maybe you're making a mistake. Are you sure you don't want to sign it?**

Alright, I'm going to call my professor and let him know how this worked out. I'll be right back.

11) Close the door to room C behind you and pick up the last questionnaire. Close the door to room B and re-enter room C 2 minutes later (clipboard in hand) with the last questionnaire:

Alright, well, my professor said that he wants me to finish up the experiment since we are almost done. There's just one more survey to complete. (Give participant final questionnaire) **I'll be back in a minute or two.** (Close door behind you).

Re-enter 2 minutes later with the clipboard with the "Exit Survey" again. Wait until they've completed the questionnaire, and then:

12) **Well, the experiment's almost done, but before we wrap things up my professor wanted me to talk with you for a minute about the whole cheating thing. Do you have any questions about what's going to happen?**

Other possible questions (use only if they fit participants' responses):

"Why aren't you worried?"

"So, like, what kinda stuff are you worried about?"

"Can you explain that a little bit more?"

Begin taking notes on Exit Survey (on clipboard) while leaving blank pages on top so participant can't see you taking notes on the survey (if they notice you taking notes on a typed survey that deals with the cheating they may get suspicious earlier than we'd like).

My professor has some more specific questions he wants me to ask you about this cheating thing so he can be totally informed about the status of the situation. I wrote all the questions down here.

Again, only say what is in bold out loud—Only mention a couple of the options if they provide you with a semi-vague answer—for instance, if they say, "Kinda willing", you can say, "So would that be a little willing or somewhat willing?" If you list all the options it will come off as too scripted.

BACK ON SCRIPT/FINAL EXIT SURVEY (though you still need to keep survey hidden):

- 1) For participants who AGREED to sign the statement: **Why did you agree to sign the statement?**
- 2) For participants who AGREED to sign the statement: **What benefit do you believe you were gaining by signing the statement?**
- 3) For participants who AGREED to sign the statement: **Given the evidence in the current situation, if you hadn't signed the statement—**

How likely is it that you would have been charged with cheating?

I'd like you to respond on a 10-point scale from 1 being extremely unlikely to 10 being extremely likely.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Extremely Unlikely									Extremely Likely

- 1) For participants who REFUSED to sign the statement: **Why did you refuse to sign the statement?**
- 2) For participants who REFUSED to sign the statement: **What benefit do you believe you were gaining by NOT signing the statement?**
- 3) For participants who REFUSED to sign the statement: **Given the evidence in the current situation—**

How likely is it that you will be charged with cheating?

I'd like you to respond on a 10-point scale from 1 being extremely unlikely to 10 being extremely likely.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Extremely Unlikely									Extremely Likely

- 4) **How severe did you feel the possible consequences of not agreeing to the statement were?**

- A. Very severe
- B. Somewhat severe
- C. Slightly severe
- D. Neutral
- E. Not at all severe

- 5) **How severe did you feel the consequences of agreeing to the statement were?**

- A. Very severe
- B. Somewhat severe
- C. Slightly severe
- D. Neutral
- E. Not at all severe

- 6) **How willing were you to accept the statement offered to you?**

- A. Not at all willing
- B. A little willing
- C. Somewhat willing
- D. Pretty willing
- E. Very willing
- F. Totally willing

7) Did you feel the evidence against you regarding the cheating accusation was strong?

- A. Very strong
- B. Somewhat strong
- C. Slightly strong
- D. Neutral
- E. Slightly weak
- F. Somewhat weak
- G. Very weak

8) Did you feel the evidence against you regarding the cheating accusation was plausible?

- A. Very plausible
- B. Somewhat plausible
- C. Slightly plausible
- D. Neutral
- E. Not at all plausible

9) Did you feel trapped into signing the statement?

- A. Totally trapped
- B. Somewhat trapped
- C. Slightly trapped
- D. Neutral
- E. Not at all trapped

10) Were you frightened by the consequences of not agreeing to the statement?

- A. Very frightened
- B. Somewhat frightened
- C. Slightly frightened
- D. Neutral
- E. Not at all frightened

11) Why were you (or were you not) frightened?

12) How anxious were you when I accused you of cheating on the triangle problem?

Let them answer and then say, **So, would you say you were...**: (circle appropriate answer)

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all anxious	Slightly anxious	Neutral	Somewhat anxious	Totally anxious

13) I'd also like to know much pressure you felt to sign the statement? I'd like you to respond on a 10-point scale again from 1 being no pressure at all to 10 being as much pressure as you could imagine. (Circle the answer here).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No pressure at all									Most pressure I could imagine

NEXT QUESTIONS ARE ONLY FOR PARTICIPANTS IN BLUFF CONDITIONS!!!

14) For participants in BLUFF conditions: Did the existence of the video make you more willing to sign the statement, less willing, or did it not have an effect on your decision?

A. If they say MORE willing, ask: **On a scale of 1 to 10, how much more willing were you to sign the statement because of the existence of the video?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not Much More Willing				Somewhat More Willing				Much More Willing

B. If they say LESS willing, ask: **On a scale of 1 to 10, how much less willing were you to sign the statement because of the existence of the video?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not Much Less Willing				Somewhat Less Willing				Much Less Willing

15) For participants in BLUFF conditions: **What do you think will happen to the video of your study session now?**

16) For participants in BLUFF conditions: **What do you think the video would show happened during the individual triangle problem?**

No need to continue hiding survey:

17) **Do you have any questions about the experiment?**

I just want to make sure that you understand what the purpose of the experiment is. So, can you tell me in your own words, what we're looking at in this experiment?

Alright, any other thoughts or other ideas?

If participant says that s/he thought cheating thing was fake,

Ask her/him: ***"What makes you think that?"***

At this point, I'd like to tell you about the experiment. It's very important that you not share this information with others who might participate in our study in the future. If a participant knew the study's purpose before participating, their data would be invalid and our findings would be invalid as a result.

This study was designed to examine the rates at which both innocent and guilty people would be willing to accept a plea bargain or sign a confession. Accordingly, we set up a situation in which participants were accused of cheating during the study. Your partner was a confederate working with the research team and her or his behavior was part of the experimental procedures. In particular, she or he was trained to ask some participants, but not others, for help on one of the problems that was designated as an individual problem. So all of that was staged. Past research that has used this procedure has shown that almost everybody who is asked for help gives it. So helping in this situation is the typical response. I also want to tell you that there is no professor who is angry or upset. That was also just part of the experiment. So, you are not in any trouble at all.

I also want to explain why we did all of this. The underlying purpose of the research is to understand plea-bargaining behaviors; in particular, the frequency at which innocent people accept plea-bargains and why they may be tempted to do so. Over 95% of all criminal cases in the 50 states are settled in plea negotiations and it is thus, integral to our system of justice that we understand what factors affect people's willingness to accept a plea negotiation whether innocent or guilty.

We didn't tell you these things up front because sometimes people will consciously or unconsciously change their behavior if they know what the true purpose of a study is about. Because of this, it's very important that you not share this information with others who might participate in our study in the future. If a participant knew what the study was about before participating, their data would be invalid and our study would be ruined. Do you promise not to tell?

RECORD THEIR ANSWER ON FINAL EXIT SURVEY.

If somebody asks you what the study is about, you can tell them it's about how people make decisions together and that during the experiment you answer surveys and some logic problems.

Ok. Now that you know what the study is about, I would like to ask you some questions about what you were thinking during the study....

Thinking back, which of the following statements best reflects what you were thinking at the time that I accused you of cheating?

1. I totally believed everything that you said.
2. The whole situation seemed very believable to me.
3. I thought to myself "*This might be serious*".
4. I thought to myself "*I may be in trouble here*".
5. I didn't know what to think.
6. I wasn't sure what was going on.
7. I really didn't think anything one way or the other, I just reacted.
8. I wasn't sure whether it was staged or real.

Follow-up: *At what point did you begin to wonder?* _____

9. I thought that it was probably an act, but wasn't sure.

Follow-up: *At what point did you begin to think that?* _____

10. I absolutely knew it was staged.

Follow-up: *At what point did you become absolutely sure?* _____

FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO AGREED TO THE STATEMENT:

Thinking back, which of the following statements best explains why you signed the statement.

1. I thought I would get in less trouble if I agreed to it.
2. I thought that if I signed the statement, I might be able to end to the whole thing.
3. I was afraid of what might happen if I didn't agree to it.
4. I didn't think it mattered whether I agreed to it or not, so I chose to sign it.

FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO REFUSED THE STATEMENT:

Thinking back, which of the following statements best explains why you refused to sign the statement.

1. I thought I would get in more trouble if I agreed to it.
2. I thought that if I refused the agreement, I could convince the experimenter that I was innocent.
3. I was afraid of what might happen if I agreed to it.
4. I didn't think it mattered whether I agreed to it or not, so I chose not to sign it.

How relieved were you when I told you that the whole thing was staged and you weren't in any trouble at all?

1. not at all relieved
2. a little relieved
3. moderately relieved
4. quite relieved
5. extremely relieved

The last thing that I want to tell you is the data that you provided today is anonymous, will be combined with the responses of other participants, and will be kept in a secured, locked office. In addition, the data files will be stored in a password-protected computer that can only be accessed by members of the research team. Do you have any questions?

These documents are for you. (Hand the participants a blank informed consent and a counseling services information from the bottom of the clipboard)

One is a blank copy of the consent form you filled out before. The other provides information about counseling services. I'm going to give you a minute to look these over. You may keep both documents if you want, but if you don't want to, then you can leave them on the table and I'll re-use them. Once you're done, you may come back to room B to get your stuff.

Exit room C and close the door behind you, wait in room B but do not close the door.

Before you go, I just want to underscore how important it is that you do not tell anyone about the details of the experiment. You can imagine if a participant would come in here knowing that I was going to accuse them of cheating...it would ruin the whole experiment and the participant would essentially laugh at me.