

Developing An Evidence-Based Approach To HUMINT Interactions

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Abstract

My research investigates tools and techniques related to memory, by developing an evidence-based approach to Source Handler interactions. There are a variety of methods that agencies can use to collect intelligence. One of the dominant collection capabilities is Human Intelligence (HUMINT), the discipline charged with eliciting intelligence through interactions with human sources, such as Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS). CHIS report to their handlers about past and future events, which can potentially disrupt, dismantle or prevent serious crime and its related organised crime networks. Therefore, a CHIS's memory is vital to subsequent intelligence collection.



Phase Three: Audio Recorded Source Handler Interactions

To date, there is no analysis of Source Handler interactions with CHIS, together with limited academic literature regarding the collection of HUMINT within a policing context. This research proposes to develop an evidence-base for this form of HUMINT interaction, by progressing the findings from phase 1.

Research Aim:

- Promote best practice, highlight areas for future training needs and identify further areas of research within Source Handler interactions supporting an Evidenced-Based Policing (EBP) approach.

Methodology:

This phase will analyse audio recorded Source Handler interactions in a secure site, by applying a developed bespoke coding scheme created with academic and practitioner input. The developed coding scheme will explore elements of rapport, the types of questions utilised, and the use of cognitive retrieval techniques.

Research Support:

Phase three has the support of the following National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) working groups:

- NPCC Intelligence Practice Research Consortium
- NPCC National Source Working Group

Phase One: Interviews With HUMINT Police Officers

Phase one consisted of structured interviews with 24 HUMINT police officers who worked within Counter Terrorism Dedicated Source Units (CTDSU) responsible for Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS). This provided an empirical exploration of the successes and challenges in gathering intelligence, covering key topics such as training, rapport, interview techniques, and the provenance of intelligence.

Research Aim:

- To critically investigate HUMINT police officers' experiences and perceptions of gathering intelligence from CHIS.

Research Findings:

- Rapport was perceived as essential, particularly with regards to maximising the opportunity for intelligence elicitation.
- Participants highlighted the importance of building and maintaining rapport.
- The majority of participants believed rapport could be trained to some degree.
- While rapport was not viewed exclusively as a natural skill, participants commonly perceived some natural attributes are required to build rapport; that can be refined and developed through training and experience.
- Participants were asked whether they had ever tried to access academic research to inform their current practices (N = 23); no (n = 12); yes, with regards to non-academic research material provided by the police and operational partners (n = 7); and yes, with regards to academic material (n = 4).
- Importance placed on planning for the HUMINT interaction - references made to the PEACE model.
- The use of Cognitive Interviewing techniques linked to the Source Handler's training and knowledge.

Phase Two: Proactive Encoding: Does Cued Contextual Encoding Improve Recall?

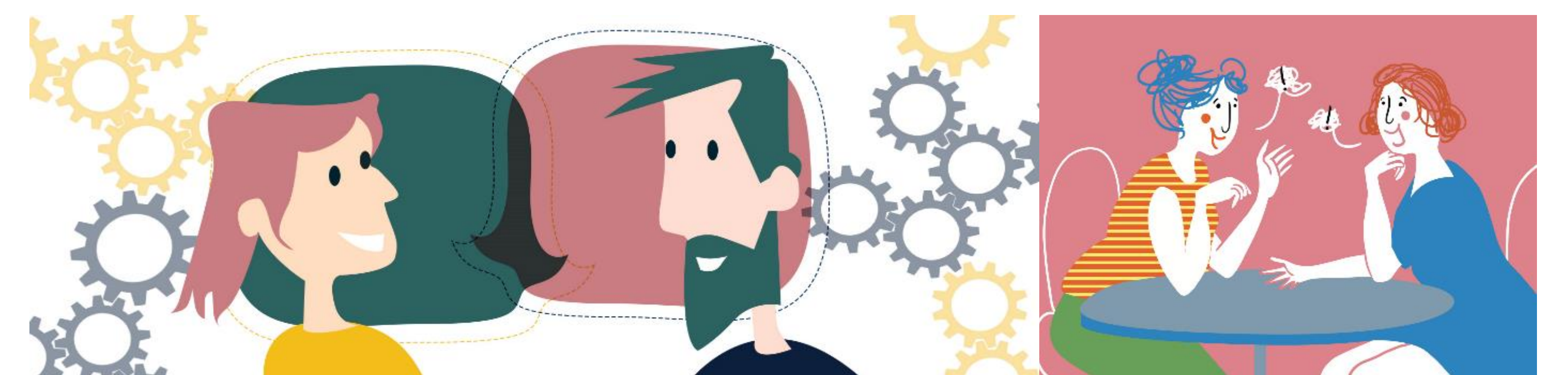
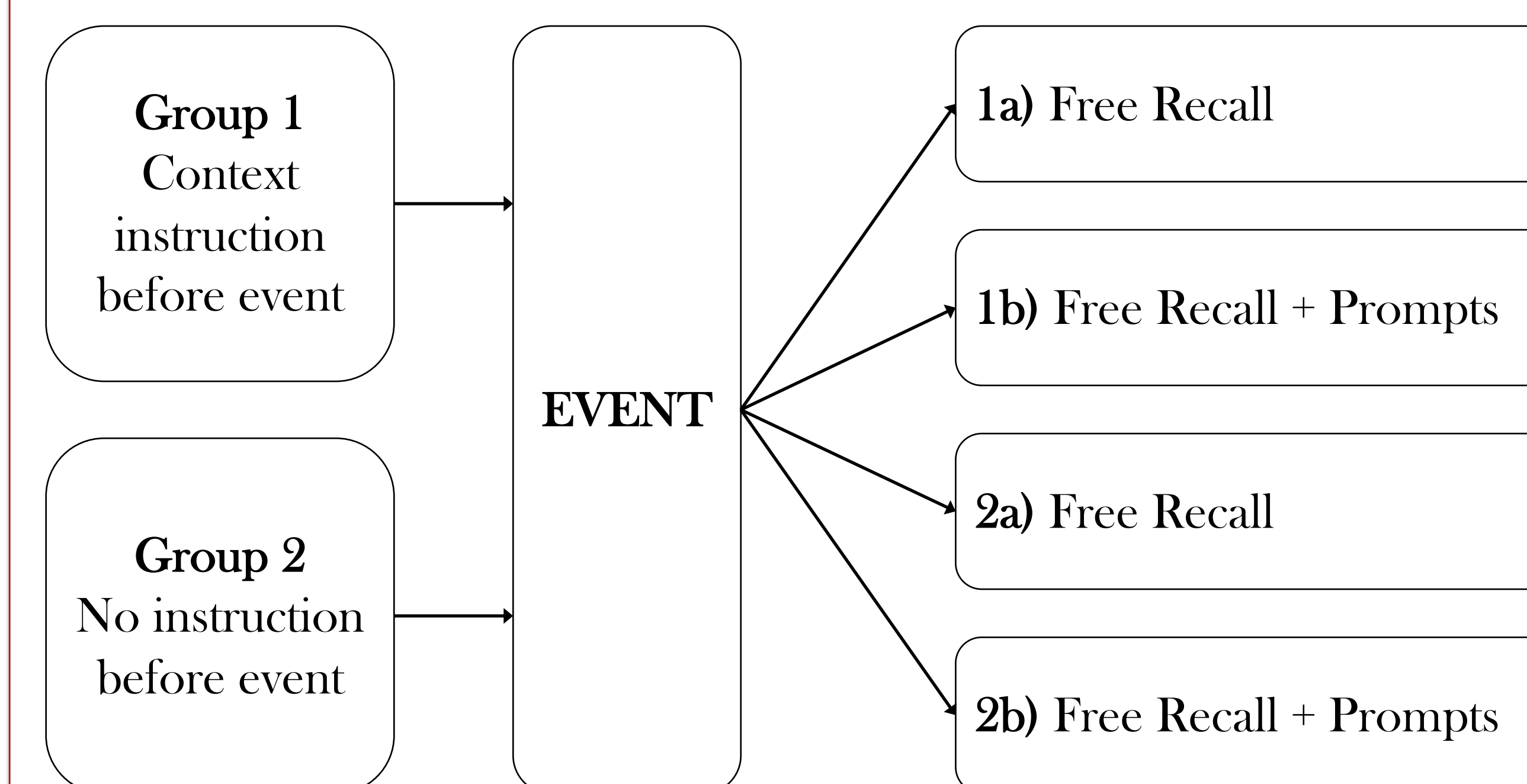
A CHIS may be tasked hours, if not days before the event takes place. This creates an opportunity to provide techniques for the CHIS prior to witnessing the event, which may later enhance recall - a priming effect.

Research Aim:

- To investigate whether the use of an encoding context instruction enhances CHIS' recall.
- Explore the impact of using prompts on memory recall.

This phase tests if the use of a context instruction (e.g., conversation, layout of room, people present etc.) given prior to attending a to-be-remembered event increases reliable recall. The goal is to reinforce the contextual dependence of memory, by priming an individual to focus on the context while encoding the to-be-remembered event, and matching this at retrieval (e.g., prompts), enhancing memory recall. Data analysis is currently underway.

Methodology:



Outputs

- Nunan, J., & Milne, R. (2016). Turning research into practice in investigative interviewing. *Crest Security Review*, (1): 22-23.
- Nunan, J. (2017). Gathering full and faithful human intelligence. Retrieved from <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/comment/nunan-gathering-human-intelligence/>
- Stanier, I. P., & Nunan, J. (2018). Reframing Intelligence Interviews: The Applicability of Psychological Research to HUMINT Elicitation. In A. Griffiths, & R. Milne (Eds.), *The Psychology of Criminal Investigation: From Theory to Practice* (pp. 226-248). London: Routledge.