

Institution: University of Portsmouth		
Unit of Assessment: UoA4 - Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience		
Title of case study: Self-administered investigative techniques: Changing policy and practice for securing evidence and gathering intelligence		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2009 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Lorraine Hope	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor of Applied Cognitive Psychology	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 1/09/04 – date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 01/08/2013 - 31/12/2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Securing reliable evidence and intelligence is critical for delivery of justice and protecting national security. Professor Hope and colleagues developed the Self-Administered Interview and Timeline Technique as innovative investigative tools to elicit comprehensive memory accounts from witnesses, victims, and informants in time-, resource-, and security-critical contexts. These tools have been adopted into policy in the UK (e.g. College of Policing), US (e.g. FBI) and Europe (e.g. Sweden), leading to improved practice and training in police forces and national security agencies. Operational personnel confirm a range of impacts, including significant contributions to national security in both the UK and US.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The underpinning research summarised here was conducted jointly by Professor Lorraine Hope (University of Portsmouth, between 2009 and 2020), and Professor Fiona Gabbert (Goldsmiths, University of London, between 2014 and 2020). This collaboration integrates complementary but distinct expertise in the contexts of intelligence gathering (Hope) and police interviewing (Gabbert).</p> <p>General Context. Two major societal challenges - the delivery of justice and preservation of national and international security - rely on obtaining reliable information from cooperative witnesses, victims and informants. Poor investigative interviewing practice, uninformed by memory science, can lead to incomplete or unreliable evidence and intelligence. The risks posed by inefficient investigations and increased threats to national security are exacerbated in contexts involving (i) large numbers of witnesses (e.g., terrorist attacks); (ii) limited resources (e.g., lack of time or access to qualified personnel to conduct interviews); or (iii) complex events taking place over extended time periods (e.g., when informants operate in organised crime networks over months or years). These real-world challenges informed the applied programme of research described below.</p> <p>Benefits of self-administered investigative interviews. Hope and Gabbert identified a novel solution to directly address such challenges, enabling cooperative individuals to provide their own accounts using standardised and evidence-based self-administered interview formats. Integrating memory science (e.g. benefits of memory cues; role of associative cuing), the research team developed two core self-administered interviewing formats, the Self-administered Interview (SAI; R1) and the Timeline Technique (R5), to increase the elicitation of reliable information and evidence in investigative contexts. The SAI is designed for use in contexts involving multiple witnesses or where available resources to conduct interviews with witnesses are limited, while the Timeline Technique is designed for debriefing individuals who have information to report about multiple, complex or extended events. In a series of laboratory-based experiments, designed to reflect real-world scenarios (e.g. eliciting intelligence information about meetings of a crime gang), this research developed and tested interviewing formats that optimise both the quantity and quality of information reported from memory. This was the first systematic programme of research on self-administered reporting methods in the field of investigative interviewing.</p> <p>Self-Administered Interview (SAI). The SAI, initially developed by this team in 2009, is an investigative tool designed to elicit comprehensive initial statements from witnesses, quickly and efficiently (R1, G1, G2, G3). It takes the form of a standardised protocol including clear instructions, retrieval facilitation techniques, and open questions that guide witnesses through the</p>		

process of producing their own statement without the need for a trained interviewer to be present. Since 2014, the original SAI has been significantly extended by new research to develop self-administered tools assisting specific types of investigation, specifically, missing persons investigations (SAI-Missing; **R2**), workplace accidents (Self-administered Witness Interview Tool, SAW-IT; **R3**) and road traffic collisions (SAI-RTC; **G4**). These new SAI tools have been developed in collaboration with law enforcement organisations (e.g., National Crime Agency, South Wales Police) to ensure context-relevant adaptations. For example, SAI-Missing includes the use of targeted retrieval cues designed to elicit personal details about the missing person, while SAI-RTC prompts for information about precipitating factors in collisions. Experimental research confirms the efficacy and versatility of these new SAI tools, relative to existing reporting formats (e.g., average increase of 35% for missing person descriptions; **R2**).

Timeline Technique. The Timeline Technique, initially developed by the team in 2013, is a self-administered reporting format that uses a “timeline” to provide a structure for remembering in investigative contexts (**R5**, **G5**). Drawing on memory theory and, importantly, responding to specific challenges identified by operational personnel in intelligence gathering and law enforcement, this technique is designed to enable interviewees to provide detailed information about complex events involving multiple people and/or repeat incidents occurring over extended periods of time. The Timeline Technique dispatches with the conventional idea that witnesses should provide an account in a linear narrative, starting “at the beginning”. Instead, the self-administered timeline format used in the Timeline Technique enables witnesses to report and structure information as they remember it, to best reflect what actually happened. Empirical research shows that this novel format helps interviewees organise their recall of an event and report events in the order in which they occurred, identify individuals involved, link individuals with their actions (**R5**, **R6**) and provide information about conversations (**R4**) by mapping out the timeline for the relevant time period.

3. References to the research

3.1. Research outputs

R1. Gabbert, F., **Hope, L.**, & Fisher, R. P. (2009). Protecting eyewitness evidence: examining the efficacy of a self-administered interview tool. *Law & Human Behavior*, 33(4), 298-307.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10979-008-9146-8>

R2. Gabbert, F., Tamonyte, D., Apps, J., Caso, A., Woolnough, P., **Hope, L.**, Handscomb, M., & Waterworth, G. (2020). Examining the efficacy of a self-administered report form in missing persons investigations. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 25(1), 1-16.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/lcrp.12163>

R3. MacLean, C.L., Gabbert, F., & **Hope, L.** (2019). The Self-Administered Witness Interview Tool (SAW-IT™): Enhancing witness recall of workplace incidents. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 33(6), 1212-1223. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3568>

R4. **Hope, L.**, Gabbert, F., Kinninger, M., Kontogianni, F., Bracy, A., & Hanger, A. (2019). Who said what and when? A timeline approach to eliciting information and intelligence about conversations, plots and plans. *Law and Human Behavior*, 43(3), 263-277.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000329>

R5. **Hope, L.**, Mullis, R., & Gabbert, F. (2013). Who? What? When? Using a timeline technique to facilitate recall of a complex event. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 2(1), 20-24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2013.01.002>

R6. Kontogianni, F., **Hope, L.**, Taylor, P. J., Vrij, A., & Gabbert, F. (2018). The benefits of a self-generated cue mnemonic for timeline interviewing. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 7(3), 454-461. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2018.03.006>

3.2. Evidence for the quality of the research

All outputs listed report original research using experimental designs and all have been published in field leading, peer-reviewed journals. Combined, these outputs have been cited 146 times to date [Scopus]. R4 is submitted to REF2 with Output ID 16024897.

3.3. Related grants

G1. Gabbert, F., **Hope, L.** (Col), & Fisher, R. P. *Protecting Eyewitness Evidence: Testing the efficacy of a Self-Administered Interview Tool*. Funded by the British Academy. 03/2006 - 11/2006 (GBP7,153)

G2. Gabbert, F., **Hope, L.** (Col) & Fisher, R. P. *Supporting Eyewitness Memory with a Self-Administered Scene of Crime Recall Tool*. Funded by the British Academy. 09/2007 - 09/2008 (GBP55,622)

G3. Gabbert, F. and **Hope, L.** (Col) *Improving the delivery of justice for victims, witnesses and society: Field Trials of the Self-Administered Interview Recall Tool*. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, 08/2009 - 11/2010 (GBP28,737)

G4. Horry, R, **Hope, L.** and Gabbert, F. *Developing the SAI© for investigation of Road Traffic Accidents*. Funded by the Road Safety Trust. 01/2018 - 12/2020 (GBP77,886)

G5. Vrij, A., **Hope, L.**, & Milne, B., *CREST: Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats – Eliciting Information Programme*. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, 10/2015 - 09/2018 (GBP462,392).

4. Details of the impact

Overview: Prior to the development of the SAI and Timeline Technique, no empirically-tested, psychologically-informed, self-administered reporting tools existed for use by investigators. The SAI and the Timeline Technique, both freely available to end-users, have been implemented in **policy**, adopted as **core professional practice**, and incorporated into **training** by national level defence, security, and policing organisations in the UK, US, and Europe. Below, we outline the key pathways to impact and the key impacts.

4.1. Key Pathways to Impact: Working with end-users to co-identify routes to implement research on the SAI and Timeline Technique into practice comprised a range of activities. These can be categorised as (i) targeted dissemination and knowledge exchange activities, and (ii) co-production of bespoke self-administered tools. This multi-channel dialogue with end-users paved the way for implementation of new self-administered tools into policy and practice.

4.1.1. Targeted dissemination and knowledge exchange activities

The following activities reflect a deliberate strategy of targeted knowledge exchange across national and international law enforcement and intelligence agencies:

- Invited presentation to US military and national security personnel (North Carolina; February 2019; ca. 40 attendees).
- Invited Masterclass on Intelligence Gathering, Norway (June 2019; 50 attendees from 30 different agencies and 16 countries worldwide).
- Invited Keynote and presentations to the Singapore Police Force and the Singapore Home Team Behavioural Sciences Centre (July 2019, ca. 100 attendees from across law enforcement units).
- Invited contribution to Research Briefing issued by Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology tasked with providing impartial analysis to UK Parliament; publicly available POST briefing cites the SAI as a means to improve witness testimony (July 2019).

In addition to targeted dissemination, our pathways to impact also involved implementation events with operational and policy specialists. Implementation events served as drivers to embed the use of the SAI and Timeline Technique in end-user training and practice:

- In the UK, between 2015 - 2019, **Hope** and Gabbert delivered training and implementation events to the College of Policing, National Crime Agency (NCA), Ministry of Defence – Defence Human Intelligence, UK intelligence agencies, and regional police forces (ca. 200 attendees).
- Internationally, between 2018 - 2019, **Hope** and Gabbert delivered specialist training and implementation events for federal agents and intelligence personnel at the High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group in Washington, US (15 advanced practitioners each cohort), and to the Icelandic police (ca. 30 attendees).

4.1.2. Co-production of bespoke self-administered tools and techniques

Disseminating early-stage research findings led to co-development of tools for use in specific investigative contexts and subsequent field trials:

- Collaboration on successful funding bid to conduct field trials of SAI-RTC with South Wales police as co-investigators (**G4**).
- Collaboration with Missing Persons Unit within the UK NCA to develop a new version of the SAI for missing persons investigations; resulted in co-author academic article with NCA personnel (SAI-Missing; **R5**).

4.2. Key impacts: As a result of the activities above, the SAI and the Timeline Technique have been adopted into professional practice, training, and policy in the UK and internationally. In addition to addressing the challenges of eliciting reliable information from witnesses, victims and informants, testimonials highlight the impact of these tools in terms of capacity building and overcoming practical or other obstacles to collecting information in particular contexts, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Key impacts are described below:

4.2.1. Impact on Training and Operational Practice – UK and International

- Since 2015, the Timeline Technique has been integrated into the training curriculum for intelligence agencies in the UK. The UK Joint Forces Intelligence Group (an integral part of the Ministry of Defence) noted that *'this methodology ensures we remain world leaders in relation to HUMINT [Human Intelligence Gathering]'*, citing widespread use of the technique *'extensively, on a daily basis'* that has been *'pivotal in the recent operational success that has been achieved'* with *'greater detail being established relating to individual's movements and actions via the Timeline Technique'* (**S1**)
- The Centre for Protection of National Infrastructure, the UK government authority for protecting national security, confirmed that *'research carried out by Lorraine and her colleagues has been used by practitioners in unusual situations, for example the timeline technique has been used by Hostage Negotiators [who]..are using it with those who have been held for long periods (over one year), and those who have been held for short periods (e.g. 1 hour), as a means of allowing them to recount a traumatic experience in their own time and not being subject to more traditional questioning methods, which through Lorraine's research have been shown to reduce the amount of accurate detail being obtained.'* (**S2**)
- In an independent impact review conducted in 2019 for the UK intelligence agencies, use of the Timeline Technique was cited as *'providing greater insights into key national security issues and significant information relating to recruiting techniques and locations used by a terrorist organisation'* (**S3**)
- In 2019, the Timeline Technique was adopted as a "best practice" component of formal interview training curriculum (Skill Level III for Advanced Interrogators/Analysts; **S4**) in the High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group, a three-agency US entity comprising the FBI, Central Intelligence Agency, and Department of Defence. It has been used in key interviews in security contexts with feedback from one case study testifying that the technique *'allowed the interviewee to cue his own memory to differentiate between the different events and to provide substantially more detail than had been obtained through a standard interview process...ultimately the use of the Timeline Technique led to significant information relating to recruiting techniques and locations used by this terrorist organization'* (**S5**)
- In 2018, following collaboration with the NCA, use of the SAI-Missing became part of missing persons investigations and feedback from trials confirms *'The missing persons SAI has made a real contribution to the way in which investigators can collect critical information from families and friends about the missing person and also enables them to contribute meaningfully to the search'* (**S6**)
- Since 2019, South Wales Police have conducted trials of the SAI for Road Traffic Collisions (SAI-RTC) and have reported positively on the impact of the SAI-RTC on victim and witness statement quality. For example, for a recent incident, the investigating officer reported *'I can honestly say despite being a seasoned statement taker there is no way I would have been able to capture the quality of evidence that she has recorded in the SAI.'* (**S7**)
- Most recently (2020), the research team worked directly with the Service of Behavioural Sciences of the Belgian Federal Police and Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) to enhance response capability during the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in the development of a new version of the SAI for use with victims of sexual violence. Feedback from SARC notes the impact of the SAI on the services offered in this period, enabling victims to provide detailed accounts

about their experiences when the opportunity to conduct in person interviews has been curtailed: *'This tool certainly represents a real added value for providing legal assistance to victims of sexual violence, and all the more in view of the circumstances related to COVID-19, which can represent a real barrier for victims to come to the SARC and/or to file a complaint'* (S8).

4.2.2. Impact on Policy - UK and International

- In 2019, the College of Policing (professional body for the police service in England and Wales, mandated to set professional standards including codes of practice) issued new evidence-based guidelines for frontline police officers on obtaining initial accounts from eyewitnesses to 43 UK forces. These recommendations were “designed to improve the accuracy and quantity of information provided by witnesses and victims in their first account to the police” and include the strategic recommendation that *'Interview advisers should consider use of the Self-Administered Interview in single incidents involving high numbers of witnesses'* e.g. critical and terror-related incidents (S9). Also in 2019, the Independent Office for Police Conduct updated policy to recommend use of the SAI by officers submitting personal initial accounts on incidents of death or serious injury.
- In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the College of Policing issued updated policy guidance specifically advising for the use of the SAI (including all versions), to facilitate timely accounts from crime victims or witnesses, particularly those who were shielding or self-isolating (S10).
- Internationally, the SAI has been adopted as an investigative tool by police forces in Norway (since 2014), the Netherlands (since 2016) and Sweden (2020) in country-wide force policy. In 2018, the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, a branch of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE; the world's largest security-oriented intergovernmental organisation) implemented an adapted version of the SAI into their standard operation post-incident reporting procedure (S11).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1. Letter from Joint Forces Intelligence Group [Defence HUMINT unit; Ministry of Defence] confirming successful use and impact of the Timeline Technique in intelligence gathering contexts (18/03/2019).

S2. Statement by [text removed for publication] Centre for Protection of National Infrastructure (27/01/2021)

S3. Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats Independent Impact Report; focus on Timeline Technique, including testimony from security stakeholders (09/2019)

S4. Excerpt from Training Curriculum for Advanced Interrogators; High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group (HIG) confirming the Timeline Technique as requirement for Professional Development Plan for Skill Level III: Advanced Interrogators (Course: Timelining; 2019-21).

S5. Statement from Training Lead & Team Lead, HIG, confirming successful use and impact of the Timeline Technique in intelligence gathering contexts (13/08/2019).

S6. Testimonial evidence provided by [text removed for publication] National Crime Agency, with respect to the modified SAI (09/07/2020).

S7. Testimonial evidence provided by Road Policing Officer, South Wales Police describing enhanced quality of statements through the use of the modified SAI (3/04/2020).

S8. Testimonial from [text removed for publication] Institut pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes, Brussels, Belgium, confirming the added value of the SAI tool for providing legal assistance to victims of sexual violence (27/05/2020).

S9. College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice guidelines for 'Obtaining initial accounts from victims and witnesses: Guidelines for first responders' (2019).

S10. College of Policing guidance on 'Interviewing witnesses and suspects' updated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (31/03/2020).

S11. OSCE Post-Incident Procedure Policy and Standard Operating Procedures for Post-Incident Procedure requiring use of the SAI for obtaining accounts (see p13; 03/06/2016).