

appears to be an important component in quelling student anxiety. An unanticipated but welcome finding has been that students who apply to graduate programs find that their TA experience is rated favorably and in some cases has resulted in their being offered TA positions in graduate school.

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Notes

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Coordinating the Psychology Human Research Participant Pool

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In this article, we discuss procedures for coordinating the psychology human participant pool for research purposes. We describe our research requirement and the mechanics of how we recruit participants and report credit for research participation. We also provide an evaluation of the procedures from the viewpoints of experimenters, instructors, and students. Although we identify some problems, the procedures have worked well for us. We discuss areas needing improvement.

Universities and colleges at many levels strongly encourage professors to conduct and publish research. In many cases,

published research is an important component of the tenure and promotion evaluation. A brief glance at advertisements for academic positions suggests that even schools that have historically emphasized undergraduate teaching now require that prospective faculty have an active program of research.

With the increasing emphasis on research comes an increasing need for a stable research participant pool. At many universities and colleges, researchers studying humans recruit students who are taking an introductory psychology course. Compared to the 1970s, there are far more psychology departments in the United States and Canada that require their

introductory psychology students to participate in experiments as part of a course requirement (Lindsay & Holden, 1987; Sieber & Saks, 1989). In the late 1980s, approximately 74% of U.S. psychology departments with graduate programs (Sieber & Saks, 1989) and 72% of Canadian universities with programs in psychology (Lindsay & Holden, 1987) had human research participant pools.

Not all universities and colleges have efficient systems for coordinating their human research participant pools. For example, our university, which emphasizes research, did not have an organized system until a few years ago. Furthermore, a review of the literature shows that the mechanics of administering a research participant pool are not discussed in detail anywhere; indeed, only a few articles even mention the issue of administration (Cardillo & Butler, 1992; King, 1970; Sieber & Saks, 1989).

In this article, we discuss our department's research requirement and procedures for coordinating a research participant pool. A faculty member either volunteers for or accepts the assignment of coordinator from the chair, and a graduate student assists the coordinator. The procedures comprise a selective combination of those used at other universities (e.g., Florida State University, Indiana University, Vanderbilt University) as well as attributes we have created. They can be used whether participation is required or voluntary, and whether participant pools are large or small. An evaluation of our procedures suggests that they are efficient.

Research Requirement

There is some discussion of whether psychology departments should require students' participation in experiments (e.g., Lindsay & Holden, 1987; McCord, 1991). However, the literature on this topic suggests that most students view participation in psychology experiments as a positive experience, especially when they receive an explanation of the purpose of the experiment (Britton, 1979; King, 1970; Landrum & Chastain, 1995; Leak, 1981; Nimmer & Handelsman, 1992; cf. Coulter, 1986). In particular, King (1970) asked introductory psychology students whether participation in experiments was a valuable learning experience. He found that 833 out of 1,167 students (71%) answered yes. Similarly, Nimmer and Handelsman found that introductory psychology students whose research participation was mandatory ($n = 139$) had positive attitudes toward psychology experiments, and that their attitudes did not differ from students who received extra credit for their participation ($n = 150$). Finally, Landrum and Chastain found that introductory students ($N = 200$) agreed with statements such as "I learned about psychology by participating in a research project" and "I think that participating in this project helped me understand research better."

Based on a decision by our department, students in our introductory psychology classes must accrue three units of research participation as part of their course grade. A unit consists of 1 hr or less of research participation. Experiments typically offer one unit of credit; however, if the experiment takes more than 1 hr (but less than 2 hr), students receive two credits. We experimented with offering $\frac{1}{2}$ unit credits for up to 30 min of participation but realized the bookkeeping was too cumbersome. As part of the decision, the faculty accepted

the responsibility of ensuring that enough units would be offered for each student to fulfill the requirement.

On the first day of class, each student receives a research requirement handout with the syllabus. The instructor discusses the handout during the first class. The handout presents the research participation requirement, including how it is calculated into the grades and the rationale for the requirement. The handout also provides details about (a) signing up for experiments, (b) the importance of showing up for the experiment, (c) the penalty for failure to do so, and (d) how to cancel an appointment. Finally, it presents information about the option of writing a brief paper as an alternative to participating in research.

In lieu of participating in experiments, students may write a brief paper on a topic that relates to any of the research projects underway. From our perspective, if students choose not to participate in experiments, at least they will become familiar with the topic areas that are under study. A paper is worth one unit of research credit. It must be two to three pages in length, and students can base it completely on information obtained from the introductory psychology textbook. Students may opt for any combination of papers and experiment participation, as long as they receive three units. Approximately 3% of the students choose to write at least one paper.

About 3 weeks into the semester, we offer one or more "screening" sessions for research credit. The purpose of the screening session is to allow researchers who need special populations to select students who fit their criteria, based on the information collected during these sessions. A typical screening session lasts 1 hr and includes between three and six questionnaires or survey instruments, each requiring 10 min or less to complete. We use a single, general consent form encompassing all surveys, although some researchers have additional consent forms for their particular studies. About 60% of the students participate in the screening sessions.

Students who miss an appointment without canceling it beforehand receive a one-unit deduction from the credit they have accrued or will accrue. The deduction is one unit, no matter how many units the experiment is worth. To fulfill the course requirement of three units, students must offset the penalty by participating in an extra experiment or writing an extra paper for each deduction. We view this penalty as similar to assigning a penalty for missing a required attendance day. Unlike the required attendance day, however, research participants can cancel the research appointment. Thus, we view the research requirement policy as more flexible than the required attendance policy. Based on our experience, students tend to be more reliable with the penalty than without it.

Our research requirement is "all or none" and is worth 5% of the students' grade. On average, 80% of the students enrolled in the class meet their research requirements. The 20% who do not meet the research requirement include those who drop the class or who have quit attending but have not officially dropped as well as those who simply do not fulfill the research requirement.

If there are more research credits available than students need to complete the requirements for the course, the coordinator may offer students the opportunity to obtain extra-credit research units. The maximum extra-credit units we offer is three, and there have been semesters when no extra

credit was available. Extra-credit units also may consist of any combination of papers and research participation. For each extra unit the student obtains, the student receives 1 point added to their final percentage. Typically, over half of our students receive at least one extra-credit unit.

Recruiting Students

Before researchers can recruit from the research participant pool, they must formally request authorization from the coordinator. A copy of the official approval by the university-wide Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects must accompany the request. Using information from the request form, we construct a list of approved experiments (including where the experiments are conducted), construct a database, calculate the availability of research opportunities, and compile a list of topics for students who choose the aforementioned alternative to experiments. We also give the experimenters an information packet regarding the procedures for recruiting and reporting research credit. This packet includes a passage on treating participants amiably, courteously, and ethically.

Experimenters recruit participants by posting sign-up sheets on a board used exclusively for this purpose. We use a uniform sign-up sheet, with a carbon sheet and a colored paper attached. Students sign up for a specific day–date–time and also write in their phone number and their instructor's name. When the experimenters remove the original sign-up sheet, they place the colored copy in a folder on the bulletin board. Also located on the bulletin board are generic reminder slips that include the department's phone number in case the student wishes to cancel an appointment. Based on our experience, the combination of (colored) copies of the sign-up sheets and reminder slips—both of which give students the time and location of the experiment—increases the students' attendance at scheduled appointments. Other forms that we believe are helpful include one for students wishing to cancel an appointment and another for documenting that an experimenter did not show up for the appointment.

Reporting Credit for Participation

After a student completes an experiment, the experimenter gives the student a receipt that the student keeps for his or her records. In addition, the experimenter records on the sign-up sheet the number of units the experiment is worth (e.g., +1) if the student completes the experiment, a -1 if the student missed an appointment without canceling it beforehand, or a 0 if the student canceled the appointment beforehand. The assistant records this information in a database.

Cardillo and Butler (1992) reported procedures for creating and updating a database. However, these procedures use a complex database system (ORACLE) that is not available to us. As its replacement, we have used both SYSTAT (1990) and SPSS (1994) with comparably satisfactory results. The database includes all students from all sections of the introductory course. Because in our case missed appointments result in penalties (i.e., negative units), we create two vari-

ables for each study—one for units earned and one for units deducted. The database is available to only the coordinator and the assistant and includes only information about the students' research participation.

About 2 weeks before the end of the semester and after the last day of classes, we give instructors a research credit summary for their class. The summary includes the students' names and their earned units, deducted units, and net units. If a discrepancy arises between a student's records and ours, the student may request an investigation. Instructors use the final summary when calculating final grades. Neither the coordinator nor the assistant has access to the students' grades.

Evaluation

To evaluate the efficiency of this system, we sent surveys to experimenters who were eligible to recruit participants from the research participant pool, to instructors who teach the introductory psychology classes, and to the students who participated in the research participant pool.

Experimenters

Twenty-six experimenters (41%) responded to the questionnaire. Fourteen of these experimenters had recruited from the research participant pool; the others recruited from other populations. We asked the 14 experimenters to rate the efficiency of each step in the process of using the participant pool on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*very cumbersome*) to 7 (*very easy*).

The first step in the process, requesting permission from the coordinator to recruit introductory psychology students for research, received a mean rating of 6.00 ($SD = 1.41$). The second step, recruiting participants, had a mean rating of 6.21 ($SD = .98$). Experimenters gave the third step, reporting credit for students' participation, a mean rating of 5.86 ($SD = 1.66$). In sum, the experimenters thought the procedures were efficient and easy to use.

Instructors

Twenty-nine instructors (39%) who had taught introductory psychology since we instituted the new procedures responded to the survey. Instructors rated the efficiency of the research participant pool records management on a 5-point scale from 1 (*bad*) to 5 (*excellent*). Efficiency received a mean rating of 3.72 ($SD = .84$). The instructors rated the accuracy of the summaries, or how consistent the reports were with what students believed they had earned, on a scale ranging from 1 (*very inaccurate*) to 4 (*very accurate*). Accuracy received a mean rating of 2.84 ($SD = .69$). In addition, instructors rated how informative the lists of students' research participation were on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*lacking important information*) to 4 (*very informative*). Informativeness received a mean rating of 3.04 ($SD = .55$).

We also asked instructors about several other aspects of the system. First, we asked if they received reports of students' research participation frequently enough. The answer was negative; 63% of the instructors answered no. When asked how many reports would be optimal, the mean was 3.13 ($SD = 1.14$). Many instructors indicated that midterm, before the final week of classes, and after the final week of class would be optimum times for the reports. If we were to add a fourth update, instructors indicated that it should be three quarters of the way through the semester.

We asked instructors whether the amount of time they spent on matters related to the research participant pool was reasonable. The majority of instructors (76%) said yes. Regarding the alternative of writing papers, we asked the instructors if it was cumbersome dealing with students who chose the alternative. Most of the instructors (73%) indicated that they had no students choosing the alternative. An additional 24% answered that it was not cumbersome, whereas 3% said it was cumbersome.

We believe the instructors' evaluations of the procedures are lower than we expected (and desired) partly because they have the difficult task of being the intermediary between the students and the coordinator. The instructors' role in coordinating the research participant pool is (solely) to disseminate information received from the coordinator to the students. Ideally, students should address questions and complaints about the procedures to the coordinator or assistant. Instead, the students often direct their questions and complaints to the instructors, who must find the answers and convey the complaints to the coordinator.

Students

A subset of students, representing five sections of introductory psychology classes, completed the survey ($N = 163$). Students answered eight questions about the research participant pool process, using a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). The sample size differs for each question because not all questions were applicable to every student.

Students thought the information received at the beginning of the semester—explaining the research requirement and how to fulfill it—was sufficiently informative ($M = 3.52$, $SD = .70$, $N = 163$). They also thought that signing up for experiments was relatively easy ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .75$, $N = 162$). The reminder slips seemed to be useful ($M = 3.53$, $SD = .72$, $N = 152$), as were the colored copies of the sign-up sheets ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .76$, $N = 89$). Updates were fairly accurate ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.02$, $N = 109$), but there is room for improvement.

The remaining questions, and their relatively low ratings, are illuminating. When asked to rate how easy it was to cancel an appointment, students responded with a mean rating of 2.97 ($SD = 1.04$, $N = 68$). We provide a phone number on the information sheet, on the bulletin board, and on the reminder slip. Despite the availability of the phone number, we suspect that students do not remember that they need to know the name of the experiment and the date and time of the appointment they are trying to cancel. (This information is in the handout given to the students at the beginning of the

semester.) If students do not know this information when calling to cancel, it is difficult to know which experiment they are trying to cancel. We need to emphasize to the students that they cannot cancel unless they know this information.

When asked to rate how easy it was to register a complaint, the mean rating was 2.69 ($SD = 1.08$, $N = 39$). Although we did not ask the students what their complaints were, we know informally that the most common complaints include inaccurate updates and lack of research opportunities (at a particular point in the semester). Less common are complaints that an experimenter did not show up for an appointment and rarely are there complaints about rude experimenters. The solutions to each of these problems seem to be straightforward. Although we tell the instructors how to respond to each of these situations, we do not explicitly tell the students what to do. At the risk of overloading the students with too much information at the beginning of the semester, we think they should know what to do in each of these circumstances. Further, the primary reason for inaccurate updates is that experimenters do not always turn in their sign-up sheets on time. To improve accuracy, one needs to emphasize continually that experimenters be responsible in this regard.

Finally, when asked to rate whether the alternative to participating in experiments (writing a paper) was easy, the mean rating was 2.07 ($SD = 1.11$, $N = 44$). The interpretation of this result is not clear. The low rating may indicate that the paper is not equivalent to participating in an experiment. The alternative of writing a paper was not intended to be difficult, as it could be based entirely on information from the introductory psychology text. However, it is likely that the paper takes longer to complete than does participating in an experiment. On the other hand, one may expect a lower rating for papers because many students do not like to write papers.

General Discussion

One may ask how our procedures differ from other universities' procedures. As we mentioned previously, our procedures include a selective combination of those used at this and other universities. Each point that we highlighted reflects this selective combination, from the research requirement to the penalty for not showing up for an appointment, and from the way we recruit participants to the way we report credit for participation. Any one of the differences from other systems may seem small, but in combination they have a large impact. In particular, they have made our system much more efficient and tolerable for all involved.

In terms of the evaluation of our procedures, the experimenters rated the system highly. We must confess that we originally designed the system primarily with the experimenters in mind. Although the research participation requirement has been in place here for many years, we instituted the procedures just 5 years ago. Prior to the procedures, experimenters recruited participants directly from the many sections of introductory psychology classes. Needless to say, this was a cumbersome and time-consuming process for the experimenters. Thus, compared to the previous system, we were not surprised the experimenters liked the new system.

However, we did not focus exclusively on the experimenters' perspective when we instituted the change. We also took into account the perspective of the instructors and students. For example, the previous procedures also were time-consuming for instructors and students because they wasted valuable teaching and learning time. With the procedures, overall, the instructors thought the amount of time they had to spend on issues related to the research participant pool was reasonable. Their ratings of the efficiency of the procedures and the accuracy of the reports were good but lower than we would have liked. From the students' perspective, signing up for experiments was easy, but they had concerns about the summary reports and the procedure for reporting complaints and cancellations. We believe the combination of issuing more summary reports and telling the students directly with whom they should talk regarding complaints will result in better evaluations in these areas. Students also had concerns about the alternative to participating in experiments.

There may be some general concern about our offering only one alternative to participating in research. Federal regulations (Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, 1991; see also National Institutes of Health, 1993) and American Psychological Association ethics codes (APA, 1992) require that students have more than one alternative for participating in research. Our interpretation of these regulations is that as long as students are not required to participate in any one experiment—that is, they can choose among many experiments—their participation in a particular experiment is voluntary. Thus, the students have available to them many different alternatives; however, only one alternative does not involve participating in experiments. This has been the understanding at many of the universities with which we are familiar. In any case, we now believe that it is in our best interests (legally and ethically), as well as in the students' best interests, to have more than one alternative to participating in research.

In the literature we found other ethical issues related to coordinating the research participant pool. Sieber and Saks (1989) stated that departments wishing to be sensitive to ethical constraints on managing their human research participant pools should follow certain guidelines. In particular, they suggested that departments should announce the research participation requirement in their catalog, offer and announce alternatives to participating in research, announce the right to withdraw with impunity, announce that experimenters are obligated to treat research participants respectfully, announce the complaint procedure, and always require that experimenters obtain written consent from the research participants. It seems clear to us that to create a more positive experience for the students, we need to address all of these items more explicitly. Further, Sieber and Saks argued that the alternative should not be a paper, additional course work, or a quiz. McCord (1991) provided excellent suggestions for other alternatives to participating in research. Two that we are considering would allow students to sign up as observers rather than participants and allow attendance at departmental colloquia to count as a unit of participation.

One change we already instituted is to offer extra-credit research units only after we are certain that everyone has had a chance to receive three units and that there will be enough experiment opportunities to support extra credit. We intro-

duced the change because students who signed up early often received all of their required units plus all possible extra-credit units before others began signing up, and those who waited until later in the semester had difficulty finding experimenters who still needed research participants. Another change we initiated is that we provide students with suggested deadlines for obtaining their credits, in part to allow us to determine whether we can offer extra credit. It is too early to evaluate whether these changes significantly reduce the problems.

From the perspective of the coordinator and research assistant, these procedures are not difficult. However, the duties are ongoing, and they must take time on almost a weekly basis to maintain the efficiency properly. We see no easy way around this time commitment. We believe strongly that the department should acknowledge the coordinator's and assistant's commitment in some way—perhaps in terms of a reduction in some other area that requires a significant time commitment. In our department, the coordinator receives a reduction in committee assignments. We are aware that others offer a course release.

In sum, we have presented our procedures for coordinating the introductory psychology human research participant pool in enough detail so other departments can compare theirs with ours. Our research requirement and our procedures for recruiting participants and reporting credit have worked well for us for the past 5 years. Based on the evaluation of the procedures by the experimenters, instructors, and students, the procedures are fair to all parties involved.

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The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Psychology Faculty Experience: A Concept Map

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Self-identified gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) graduate faculty (N = 39) in psychology-related fields responded with multiple phrases to a phenomenological probe, asking "What it's like to be a gay/lesbian/bisexual faculty member." A research team qualitatively reduced the responses to 61 representative items and returned them to respondents who (a) sorted items according to which ones went together and (b) rated items according to how well they described the respondent's own experience. The result was a 2-dimensional concept map, suggesting that the experience may be understood as having both positive and negative aspects and being both internally and externally mediated. Respondents typically indicated that the positive experiences associated with being a GLB faculty member were more salient for them than were the negative experiences.

Recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty is beneficial to psychology programs (Myers, 1982). Diversity brings a variety of strengths and experiences to the curriculum and provides role models for an increasingly diverse student body. Better understanding of the experiences of faculty members who contribute to that diversity may aid in the retention of these valuable members of the academic community.

There is a small body of literature that examines the experiences of various groups of academicians in psychology-related fields. Several authors have addressed the experience of being a relatively new psychology faculty member (Mintz, 1992; Pipes, McEwen, Ittenbach, & Sutherland, 1986; Wat-

kins, 1992) and of that experience when complicated by issues of race and gender (Fouad & Carter, 1992). No study of the experience of being a gay, lesbian, or bisexual (GLB) faculty member in psychology has yet been published. In fact, a recent literature search found only nine empirical studies of the workplace experiences of GLB people in any work setting (Croteau, 1996). A study of sexual-minority psychology faculty seems timely. There is a growing presence of openly gay and lesbian psychologists in academia (Brown, 1991), and 27% of psychology-related graduate programs report having openly gay or lesbian faculty in the department (American Psychological Association Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns [APA CLGC], 1993).

Recruitment and retention of GLB faculty is important to graduate programs in psychology for a number of reasons. Herek and Glunt (1993) found that knowing a gay man or a lesbian personally was a stronger predictor of positive attitudes toward gay men than was any other factor examined, including respondent gender, age, religion, political party affiliation, race, education, or geographic region. Thus, it may be that the best intervention for promoting gay-affirmative attitudes among psychology students is to have an openly GLB professor in the department.

The presence of openly GLB faculty may also be associated with the provision of training on these issues in the curriculum. Psychologists have repeatedly called for education on GLB issues (e.g., Betz, 1991; Buhrke, 1989a, 1989b; Buhrke

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