

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Study Title: Encoding processes and unitization, EEG study

Principle Investigator: Rachel A. Diana, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology

I. Purpose of this Research/Project

You are being asked to participate in a research study. We hope to learn more about human thought, behavior, and brain activity. Brain activity will be measured via electroencephalography (EEG) which is the recording of the small electrical signals on the scalp that are produced by brain activity. We will publish the results of the study in a scientific journal for the purpose of advancing scientific knowledge.

II. Procedures

If you decide to volunteer, we will ask you to participate in the following tasks over the next 1 to 3 hours, as specified by your experiment signup (feel free to ask the experimenter for details about your particular session time).

1. Several locations on your face will be cleansed and disks made of silver and plastic (electrodes) will be stuck to those locations with a sticker. Additional electrodes will be placed in an elastic cap that you will be asked to wear over your head.
2. A small amount of electrode jelly (a hypoallergenic, water soluble, and non-toxic conductive saline gel) will be applied to your skin where the electrodes make contact using a blunt-tipped plastic gel applicator. If you have a semipermanent hairstyle (dreadlocks, braids, twists, etc.) the gel application is likely to affect the integrity of that styling.
3. You will sit in a comfortable chair in a small room (located in the Diana Research Lab in Williams Hall) and pay attention to sounds, words, or pictures shown to you by the experimenter using a computer.
4. You will be asked to make decisions about what you see or hear and to make responses to the stimuli by pressing buttons or speaking.
5. At the conclusion of the experiment the electrodes will be removed from your scalp and face and you will be given the opportunity to clean off the gel residue using a towel. You will need to wash your hair before the gel will be entirely removed. There is a sink in the lab that you are welcome to use (with a sprayer attached) but you may be more comfortable washing your hair at home. Some participants bring a hat or hair band since your hair may be more unruly than usual after participating.

III. Risks

The risks of participating in this study are minimal. The stimuli presented by computer will not be emotionally provocative or threatening in any way. You may become bored during the procedure. If this becomes a problem please notify the experimenter. You are free to take a break at any time if necessary. EEG waves are measured using standard machines designed to make the procedure harmless. No stimulation will be applied to your scalp, only your own brain's electrical signals will be measured. Some electrode gel (a hypoallergenic, water soluble, and non-toxic conductive gel) may remain in your hair until it is washed. If you have a semipermanent hairstyle (dreadlocks, braids, twists, etc.) the gel application is likely to affect the integrity of that styling. You will be allowed to clean up the gel as best as possible before leaving the experiment. Please notify the experimenter if you experience any discomfort at any time. Note that the EEG data recorded is for research and not meant to evaluate your health in any way. The EEG waves will not receive clinical review by physicians.

IV. Benefits

It is not likely that you will benefit directly by participating in this study, except for the educational experience of participating in a research study. Please feel free to ask the experimenter about the methods, purpose, and expected outcome at the end of the study if you are interested. We hope that this research will improve our understanding of human cognition, which would yield benefits for society. By signing this consent form, you confirm that no promise or guarantee of benefits have been made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

We will maintain confidentiality of your data. This means that you may be identifiable but the researchers promise not to divulge any identifying information. The data that we obtain from you in this study may be published as scientific abstracts, scientific posters, or journal articles for the purpose of advancing scientific knowledge, but your name will not appear in any publication. To maintain the confidentiality of your records, we will assign you an arbitrary identification number that will be used when we process your data. All paperwork with your identifying information (such as this consent form) will be stored separately from the study data and will be kept in a locked, private location. Only investigators directly involved in this study will have access to identifying information about you. It is possible that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research. Identifying data from this study will be destroyed 7 years after publication of the results.

VI. Compensation

You will receive SONA credit from the Psychology Department for your participation in this study. The amount of extra credit that may be earned due to that SONA credit is determined by your instructor in the course affiliated with the SONA system. An alternative method of earning extra credit is available in lieu of experiment participation, determined by your instructor; please refer to your course syllabus.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, you will receive credit for the time you spent participating in the study. If you are a student and you choose to withdraw, you will not be penalized by a reduction in points or grade in a course. You are free not to answer any questions or respond to any experimental situations that you choose without penalty. The investigator may withdraw subjects from the study at his/her discretion and such a decision does not imply that you or the investigator has done anything improper. In such cases you will receive credit for the time you spent participating in the study.

VIII. Questions and Concerns

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the following research investigators:
Rachel A. Diana, PhD, Faculty Advisor, rdiana@vt.edu, 540-231-1913
Roseanne Foti, PhD, Psychology Department Chair, rfoti@vt.edu, 540-231-5814

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board at irb@vt.edu or (540) 231-3732.

IX. Subject's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

1. To notify the investigator if I experience any discomfort or would like to discontinue participation from this study.
2. To notify the investigator I have any questions or concerns regarding participation in this study.

X. Subject's Permission

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

_____ Date _____
Subject signature