

Don't Be Fooled – They use the core elements of the Reid Technique (amended)

The Reid Technique is the foundation for many training programs on effective interviewing and interrogation techniques. Regardless of what some may claim, an independent audit of their course content will confirm the use the core elements of the Reid Technique. We will provide you with an illustration in this article.

The Reid Technique is oftentimes just thought of and is frequently referred to as simply an interrogation process or a confrontational process - it is much more than that. The Reid Technique is a structured interview and interrogation process that involves three primary stages: Fact Analysis, the Investigative Interview and, when appropriate, the Interrogation.

Fact Analysis

Factual analysis consists of reviewing the case facts and evidence in an effort to identify the potential scope of suspects, the probability of the offender's characteristics, and what their possible motive may have been.

The Behavior Analysis Interview

At the outset of the investigative interview the investigator must be sure to comply with all legal requirements, such as the appropriate advisement of rights. It is imperative that throughout the interview, the investigator maintains an objective, neutral, fact-finding demeanor.

The investigative interview should consist of three types of questions: questions about the subject's background; investigative questions that are relevant to the specific issue/crime at hand; and, behavior provoking questions (developed by John Reid and associates).

The Reid Nine Steps of Interrogation

The interrogation process in The Reid Technique is known as the Nine Steps of Interrogation. This process should only occur when the investigative information indicates the subject's probable involvement in the commission of the crime. These steps are:

- The initial confrontation
- Theme development
- Handling denials
- Overcoming objections
- Procurement of the subject's attention
- Handling the subject's passive mood
- Presenting an alternative question
- Developing the details of the admission
- Converting the verbal confession to a written or recorded document

The purpose of the interrogation is to learn the truth. There are several possible outcomes to a successful interrogation: the subject may be identified as innocent; it may be determined that the subject did not commit the offense under investigation but lied about some aspect of the investigation (motive, alibi, access, relationship with the victim, etc.); the investigator may determine that the subject did not commit the offense under investigation but knows who did; or, the subject may be identified as guilty.

The core of the interrogation process in the Reid Technique is to use empathy, sound reasoning and logic to elicit the truth – this is called theme development. It is important during the development of the theme that the investigator avoid any indication that the minimization of the moral or psychological blame will relieve the suspect of criminal responsibility.

The Comparison

In many interview and interrogation training programs the instructors include to one degree or another, the three stages referenced above, but covertly attempt to often disguise them so as to hide the Reid origin. For example, one firm has publicly stated that they do not teach the Reid Technique, but when you review the published content for a training program that they are offering in September 2019, the similarity is striking:

Behavioral Analysis Interview (BAI)
Nine Steps of Criminal Interrogation
Non-Confrontational Method
Theme Development/Rationalization
Handling Denials
Enticement Questions
Submission
Obtaining the Admission & Using Assumptive Questions
Development of the Admission into a Legally-Acceptable Confession
Elements of Written & Formal Statements
The Law as it Relates to Interview & Interrogation

Consider Step One – The Confrontation. Reid and Associates offers 5 ways to initiate the interrogation:

- *As a result of the investigation that we have conducted, and considering the information you gave me during our interview, the investigation indicates that there are some areas that we need to clarify.*
- *The results of our investigation indicate that you have not told me the complete truth about (issue).*
- *As you know, we have interviewed everyone in the area and you are the only one that we cannot eliminate from suspicion.*
- *I have in this file the results of our investigation into the (issue). The results of this investigation clearly indicate that you are the person who (committed the offense).*

- *The Non-Confrontational Approach. This interrogation process begins **without making any statement about the subject's involvement**, but simply beginning with what we call a "third person theme."*

A third person theme is a real or fictitious event about the investigator, friend or past case depicting a similar type of offense to that of the suspect's and the emotional state or extenuating circumstances that led to the act. One of the benefits of using a third person theme is that it does not encourage denials because it is not specifically directed at the subject's behavior. In our training programs we discuss what criteria to consider in determining the appropriate initial statement to use.

Other training firms only offer the Non-Confrontational approach to Step One, but the remainder of the interrogation mirrors the Reid Technique as illustrated above.

Our goal is to provide the most current, up to date and best training available for the development of the specialized skills to conduct interviews and interrogations. As a result of our success in helping investigators secure these skills, our material is regularly "used" by others, albeit in a disguised manner. Don't be fooled by imitators.

Amendment: After posting this entry on the What's New page on our website, we were advised by the referenced company that the program content that we listed for one of their upcoming training programs (September 2019) was from "an old marketing flyer that was still being used" by the agency training department which is hosting the September program, "which in no way reflects our current course materials."

A review of their training program, Criminal Interview and Interrogation, on their website (as of August 14, 2019) includes in the description of their current course content, which, among other topics, includes the following:

Interpretation of Verbal and Physical Behavior
...Non-Confrontational Method
Rationalizations
Handling Denials
Enticement Questions
Development & Substantiation of the Confessions
Elements of the Written and Formal Statements