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## A Theoretical Analysis of the Directed Lie Question (DLC)

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The Directed Lie Comparison (DLC) question is being used in the field increasingly as some researchers have continuously suggested its use in a pedantic manner with statistical smoke and mirrors to replace the traditional Probable Lie Comparison (PLC) question.

The DLC is employed by basically informing the examinee that all people have done these things in their lifetime (lied, broke a traffic law, etc.) however, so the examiner can see exactly what happens physiologically when they lie they are to answer these questions “No.”

The concept seems to have gained some support in governmental examinations because it is “politically correct,” or because it alleviates the examiner from having

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to possess the ability to properly structure and introduce the PLC. The “politically correct” argument is that if an examiner is testing a superior he or she does not have to go into their actual life background to create a question, which may not be well received by the person of higher rank.

John Reid is credited with introducing the PLC in the 1940’s. He defined it as a question broad in scope, similar but less severe than the target issue, and something that everyone has probably done however the examinee would not want to admit to it due to their present circumstances. Cleve Backster defined his theory of “psychological set” as the focusing of an examinee’s mind on those questions in a format that hold the greatest immediate threat to their general wellbeing. Since 1980, we have taught “psychological set” as the focusing of the mind to those questions in the format that hold the greatest immediate threat or interest to the examinee. Recently some have named this concept “salience.”

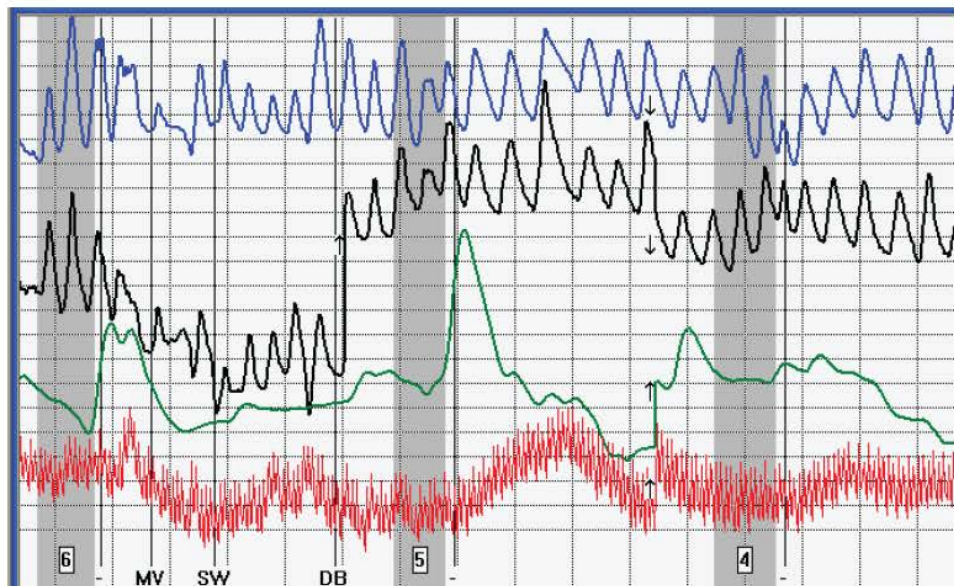
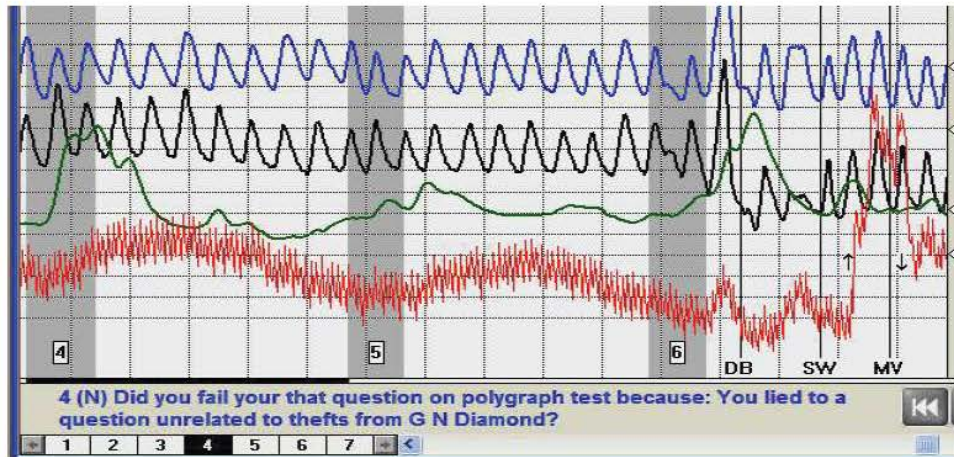
Backster stated that a polygraph test is a scientific test that monitors the examinee’s flow of psychological set. If the examinee is innocent they will self-direct their focus to the PLC questions, and if guilty to the Relevant test questions.

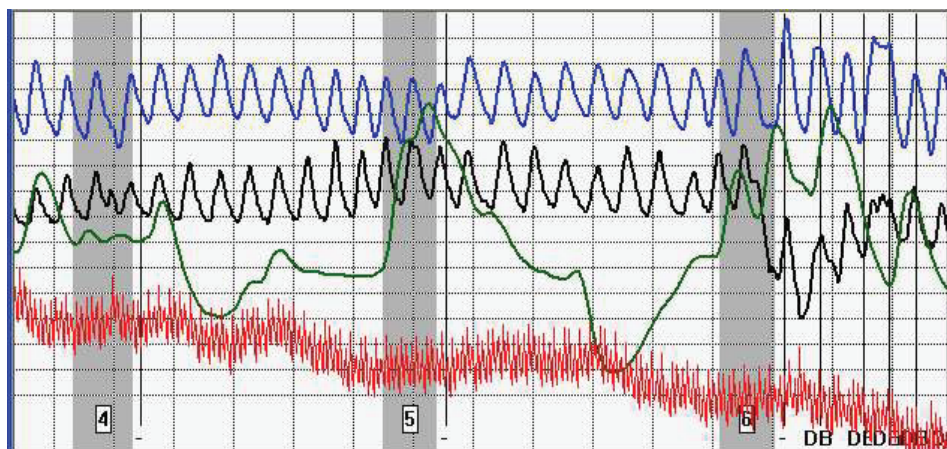
While the DLC may be politically correct and require less skill for the examiner to utilize, I fear it also creates False/Negative outcomes for several reasons, some of which were shared by Dr. Stanley Abrams (2001), and demonstrated in research by Matte and Reuss (1999).

Problem 1: Introducing the DLC does not allow for the natural flow of “Psychological Set;” instead it creates a false focus to the DLC. If I tell you that what happens physiologically in your body to this question allows me to identify your body’s reaction to deception, which I can then use to compare to the reactions in the Relevant questions and determine their veracity, then the DLC becomes the “KEY” to the revealing of the guilty examinee’s involvement. Psychologically, the DLC, the KEY, can become more important than the Relevant test questions, resulting in False/Negative outcomes.

Problem 2: You do not have to be a “rocket scientist” to realize that if the reactions to the DLC are greater than those to the Relevant test questions you will pass the test. Interestingly, the researchers deny this, and yet they instruct examiners not to score respiration because it can be controlled by the examinee. Breathing is the effector and the EDA and Cardio are the affected. If we cannot trust the Pneumo component how can we trust what it affects? Once again we are looking at an increase in False/Negatives. Here are three charts with Relevant Question 5 enveloped by a PLC and

a DLC. Notice the deliberate distortions to the DLCs. Thus, the DLC invites countermeasures! The question now becomes who is better, the examinee at employing them, or the examiner and spotting them.





Perhaps the argument for the DLC should be that in a test that has a higher False/Positive rate, than False/Negative rate a procedure that reduces the former by creating more of the latter is a good solution. I may be behind the times, however, my goal as an examiner is to come to a proper conclusion, not create one type of error to compensate for another.

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