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SCREENING FOR REMOTE VIEWING TALENT

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ABSTRACT

A multi-level screening effort to identify potential high-quality remote viewers was continued during FY 1989. Specifically, during FY 1989 the Cognitive Sciences Project was tasked to:

- (1) continue the two-stage screening of groups as we had in FY 1988, and
- (2) evaluate individual experienced remote viewers from other research laboratories.

A total of 256 people (from three separate groups) participated in the group screening. Of these, eight qualified for the second-stage screening. To date, no second-stage tests with these selected individuals has yet taken place; this work will be continued during FY 1990. In addition to the group effort, one person with claimed remote viewing ability from another laboratory was evaluated by the second-stage screening task; this individual demonstrated robust ($p \leq 0.0025$, *effect size = 1.01*) remote viewing ability.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF TABLES	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	iii
I INTRODUCTION	1
A. Overview	1
B. Objective	1
II METHOD OF APPROACH	2
A. General Description	2
B. Group Screening Protocol	2
C. Second-Stage Screening Protocol	7
III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	9
A. Summary	9
B. First-Stage Results	9
C. Second-Stage Results	11
D. Conclusions	12

LIST OF TABLES

1a.	Military Target Category	3
1b.	Scientific/Industrial Target Category	3
1c.	Natural/Non-technical Target Category	4
1d.	Projects Target Category	4
2.	Qualitative Rating Scale	6
3.	Results of First-Stage Screening	9
4.	Parameters of the Scoring Distributions	10
5.	Two-Sample t-Test Results	11
6.	Results of Second-Stage Screening with Viewer 389	12

LIST OF FIGURES

1.	Distribution of Scores	10
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I INTRODUCTION

A. Overview

Traditionally, psychoenergetic experimenters at SRI have relied on the remote viewing ability of a relatively small number of talented persons. But, as the number and nature of experiments and/or applications increases, the necessity for discovering additional talented individuals becomes acute. In FY 1984, in anticipation of more process-oriented experiments, the Cognitive Sciences Project at SRI International began to increase the number of remote viewers available for experimental work. Three directions were pursued: (1) train selected individuals, (2) screen using psychological correlates to remote viewing ability, and (3) screen groups of people using a carefully developed remote viewing task.*† This report details the continuing screening work conducted during FY 1989, as well as the work to evaluate the claims of individuals who purport to have remote viewing abilities.†

B. Objective

Although it has not been documented to what extent remote viewing abilities exist in the general population, certain individuals appear to have a capacity for accessing information not available by known sensory processes. Some of these persons may have had spontaneous experiences that lead them to be more or less aware of an extrasensory potential while others with such potential may not have had these experiences and thus remain unaware of their remote viewing abilities. The goal of the FY 1989 group screening effort was to identify individuals who possess a natural talent for remote viewing.

To accomplish this goal, we used a two-stage process, which we developed in FY 1988, for screening large numbers of people. The objective was to screen several hundred people at the first stage and then to invite the most promising persons to participate in eight individualized laboratory trials in anticipation of finding a few persons who would show robust and consistent remote viewing performance.

* Lantz, Nevin D., Edwin C. May, *Mass Screening For Psychoenergetic Talent Using A Remote Viewing Task*, Final Report, Objective B, Task 1, Project 1291, SRI International, Menlo Park, CA (September, 1988).

† This report constitutes the deliverable for Statement of Work, item 6.0.5.

II METHOD OF APPROACH

A. General Description

A two-stage screening process was used to find high-quality remote viewers. The first stage included a lecture presentation summarizing remote viewing research conducted at SRI International during the past 17 years. This presentation was designed to attract interested audiences of 25 or more persons. Following the lecture, the audience was asked to voluntarily participate in four remote viewing trials using targets randomly selected from a previously constructed target pool. Based on a qualitative assessment of the data collected during the first stage, the best individuals were chosen to participate in further screening activity. The second-stage screening consisted of a formal test with the selected individuals using independent trials.

B. Group Screening Protocol

1. Targets

A special set of 16 targets was constructed for the screening procedure. The target pool contained both dynamic (targets with motion) and static (still photographs) targets. Dynamic targets consisted of action film clips edited from popular movies. The static targets were a series of thematically related still photographs shown in succession for five seconds each. The targets ranged in length from approximately 60 to 100 seconds and were stored on two video disks.

The 16 targets were divided into four categories of four targets each. Categories included: Military, Scientific/industrial, Natural/non-technical, and Projects. Targets in the first three categories were film clips of the dynamic variety. Each target in the fourth category showed a project title (e.g., Project Blue Book) interspersed with images related to the purpose of the project (e.g., UFOs). Four categories were chosen to allow for the possibility that different types of targets might be easier to view than others. No attempt was made to maintain target orthogonality (i.e., significant differences) across categories, but considerable effort was expended to maintain within-category orthogonality.

Two factors were considered in choosing the targets. Within each category, the targets were chosen because they were thematic, interesting and possessed geometric elements that could be drawn easily. Secondly, they were selected to be as distinct as possible, so that the other targets within that category could be used as decoys in the analysis procedure.

Tables 1a-d show the target categories, the specific targets within a category, and a brief description of each target.

Table 1a

Military Target Category

Name	Source / Description
Aircraft carrier	<u>Final Countdown</u> --Multiple takeoffs of mostly F-16s. Characterized by triangular shapes and high drama.
Control room	<u>Wargames</u> --Control room sequence. Characterized by rectangular shapes and rotating lights.
Russians in space	<u>Superman IV</u> --EVAs and the collision of two satellites. Characterized by tubular shapes and Russian singing.
Atomic bomb blasts	<u>Atomic Cafe</u> --Continuous series of atmospheric atomic blasts. Characterized by fireballs, bright light, buildings being destroyed, and trees in violent motion.

Table 1b

Scientific/Industrial Target Category

Name	Source / Description
Bottling factory	<u>Take This Job and Shove It</u> --Bottles on a conveyer belt. Characterized by multiple cylindrical shapes.
Building construction	<u>Steel</u> --Girder construction by helicopter. Characterized by rectangular shapes "floating" in air.
Tacoma Narrows bridge	<u>Documentary on the Bridge Disaster</u> --Wild oscillation of the bridge. Characterized by linear shapes in torsional motion.
Launch of John Glen	<u>The Right Stuff</u> --Single rocket launch. Characterized by singular tubular shape and bright light.

Table 1c

Natural/Non-technical Target Category

Name	Source / Description
Skiing	<u>The Spy Who Loved Me</u> --James Bond skiing fast. Characterized by snowy mountain scenes and dramatic skiing off a cliff.
Ostriches	<u>Animals are Beautiful People</u> --Ostriches in synchronized dance. Characterized by black and white, fluffy birds.
Waterfall	<u>Emerald Forest</u> --Aerial view of a waterfall. Characterized by dramatic vertical fall and flying raptor.
Greek temple	<u>Jacques Cousteau</u> --Helicopter view of the Posiden temple ruins.

Table 1d

Project Target Category

Name	Source / Description
Manhattan Project	<u>Various Still Photographs</u> --Oppenheimer, Fat Man, Little Boy, Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, and an air blast.
Project Blue Book	<u>Various Still Photographs</u> --Hynek, UFOs, and "landing" imprints.
Project Deep Quest	<u>In Search Of</u> --Schwartz and others, underwater submersible, and large rectangular block.
Project Ultra	<u>Various Still Photographs</u> --Turing, code machine, and bombed-out cathedral at Coventry.

2. Subjects

Potential subjects were recruited by offering an evening lecture program to local adult groups having an interest in educational seminars. The lecture described remote viewing research at SRI International and promised voluntary audience participation in four remote viewing trials. During FY 1989, screening was conducted with members of a San Francisco Bay Area social/cultural club and two university alumni groups. Each of these screening programs involved groups of between 30 and 160 people with all individuals participating in the same trial simultaneously. (Because participation was voluntary, not all audience members submitted trial response papers.)

3. Target Preparation

Several hundred target packets were assembled prior to the first screening session. To prepare a single packet, a research assistant randomly chose one target from each of the four categories.* The target numbers were individually placed into opaque envelopes, sealed, and randomly numbered to indicate the order of presentation. A packet was formed by sealing the four smaller envelopes into a larger unmarked envelope. The packets were shuffled and locked in the project safe. For each different screening session, the assistant selected different packet for use during that session.

4. Session Protocol

A group screening session begins with an introduction to remote viewing presented by the project director. In addition to a historical review of the research conducted at SRI, the presentation included good, and not so good, examples of remote viewing. After a short break, the project director initiated the audience participation portion of the session.

The four-trial audience participation requires a number of assistants. One of these, designated the sender, is sequestered in an isolated and locked laboratory (two floors above the session auditorium) throughout the four-trial series. The sender is responsible for the target display during each trial. While each trial is in progress, the sender views the target material (on a video monitor) and mentally attempts to "send" the target information to the assembled group. The remaining assistants are responsible for collecting the data (the response papers), session security, and providing target feedback.

Before the series begins, the project director describes what is expected during the four trials, the logistics of data collection, and provides a short list of "hints" on how to accomplish remote viewing. The participants are encouraged to write and/or draw their first impressions on the single sheet of paper provided. The sender is introduced to the group before leaving for the isolated laboratory. The sequence of events for each trial is as follows:

- a one-minute relaxation period during which group members are encouraged to clear their minds and, while staying alert, relax as much as possible;
- a single telephone ring (i.e., the sender does *not* answer the phone) signals the sender to begin a trial and to view the target continuously until further notice;
- a five-minute viewing period;
- the data (the response sheets) is collected and sealed in large envelopes;
- feedback: an assistant telephones the sender, obtains the target number, and displays the target on a video monitor for the group;

* A standard pseudo random algorithm (i.e., feedback shift register) was used throughout this study to provide random target/packet selections.

- a short break before beginning the next trial.

Because the response sheets include carbonless carbon paper, the participants have copies of their original responses and can compare their individual responses with the target material during the feedback phase of each trial.

5. Analysis

Quantitative scoring presents several problems when testing groups of subjects. Because all subjects have seen the same four targets, a single judge cannot produce an independent rank ordering for each person. Therefore, since the goal was to find persons with high-quality natural talent for additional testing, a more qualitative assessment was done by the analyst to find any individuals who had produced striking matches to discrete target elements.

Qualitative assessments of the responses from the first stage of screening formed the basis for deciding which persons might be invited for second-stage screening. The qualitative judging was based on the seven-point rating scale shown in Table 2.* An analyst was instructed to start at the top of the scale and find the highest rating that describes the match between each response and its intended target, post hoc.

Table 2
Qualitative Rating Scale

Scale	Criteria
7	Excellent correspondence, including good analytical detail (e.g., naming the site by name), and with essentially no incorrect information.
6	Good correspondence with good analytical information (e.g., naming the function), and relatively little incorrect information.
5	Good correspondence with unambiguous unique matchable elements, but some incorrect information.
4	Good correspondence with several matchable elements intermixed with incorrect information.
3	Mixture of correct and incorrect elements, but enough of the former to indicate viewer has made contact with the site.
2	Some correct elements, but not sufficient to suggest results beyond chance expectation.
1	Little correspondence.
0	No correspondence.

* In other work, this seven-point scale was found to correlate with "blind" analysis ($r=0.56$, $df=34$, $p \leq 5 \times 10^{-5}$).

C. Second-Stage Screening Protocol

1. Viewers

The goal of second-stage screening is to select exceptional individuals who could participate in research. Individuals who showed qualitative evidence of remote viewing ability in the group screening described above, either by producing an average qualitative rating above three or producing a qualitative rating of six or seven on at least one trial are invited to participate in a second round of individualized screening in the laboratory.

2. Targets

Targets for second-stage screening were the same as for the initial group screening.

3. Session Protocol

For the second-stage screening, no sender was used. Before a session begins, a remote viewing monitor (i.e., an individual who interviews the viewer) selects the top opaque envelope, containing a target number as described above, from a randomly ordered stack of envelopes. The monitor places that sealed envelope adjacent to the video disk unit which is locked in a separate and isolated room during the remote viewing session. The sequence of events for each trial was as follows:

- The monitor and viewer enter a remote viewing laboratory which is isolated from the target room. They sit opposite each other across a table in a well-lit, office-type environment. (This is SRI's standard remote viewing protocol.)
- After a brief relaxation period, the viewer is instructed to describe the target with written words and drawings.
- The remote viewing session is five to fifteen minutes. During this time, the monitor is free to seek clarification from the viewer about words, drawings, and other information that arise during the session. (NOTE: The monitor is blind to the target selection.)
- The data (response papers) is collected, secured, and copied.
- The viewer and monitor leave the remote viewing laboratory and enter the target room. The target is displayed on a video monitor for the viewer as feedback. (NOTE: The viewer only has a copy of his/her response. Thus, there is no opportunity to add anything to the response.)

4. Analysis

Quantitative analysis presents no problem if each viewer is tested individually. Each response was ranked against the intended target and its three associated decoys by an independent

analyst (who was otherwise uninvolved with the experiment). In this procedure, the target and its three decoys from the designated category were presented in random order. The analyst rank-ordered the targets in order of decreasing similarity to the response (i.e., a rank of 1 means that the target best matches the response, and a rank of 4 means the worst match). The output from each trial was the rank number the analyst assigned to the correct target. The sum of ranks over the total number of trials was used to calculate p-value and effect size (r) for the second-stage viewer.

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Summary

In FY 1989 three groups ranging in size from 26 to 125 were screened at the first or group stage for a total of 256 individuals. Of that number eight showed qualitative evidence of ability to report target-related material.

B. First-Stage Results

Table 3 shows the results of first-stage screening. A total of 256 individuals participated in three separate screening sessions at SRI International. The first session was open to members and guests of a university alumni group. Twenty-six individuals participated in that session and none were selected to participate in second-stage screening. The second session involved members and guests of a San Francisco Bay Area social/cultural club; 105 persons submitted responses. Seven of these were selected for individualized testing. The third and final session was open to members and guests of another university alumni group; 125 persons participated in the four-trial series. Qualitative judging produced one person who was selected for second-stage screening.

Table 3

Results of First Stage Screening

Organization	# of Participants	# Selected for Stage II
1. Peninsula Stanford Club	26	0
2. San Francisco Mensa	105	7
3. Stanford Alumni Club of Palo Alto	125	1

Qualitatively, the San Francisco Mensa organization appears to be a better population for screening for remote viewers, because seven individuals met the a priori criteria for inclusion in the second-stage screening, and only none or one did from the other two groups, respectively.

A different view of this same data is shown in Figure 1 as the distribution of scores for each four-trial series for each group. For example, 26% and 35% of the Mensa responses achieved scores of 1 and 2, respectively. For the Peninsula and Palo Alto Stanford group, the percentages are 48 and 29, and 33 and 17, respectively. Quantitatively, the means of the distributions differ slightly (see Table 4). However, two-sample t-tests show significant differences between all pairs of means of the three groups. Table 5 shows the t-test statistics including the effect size for the pairs.

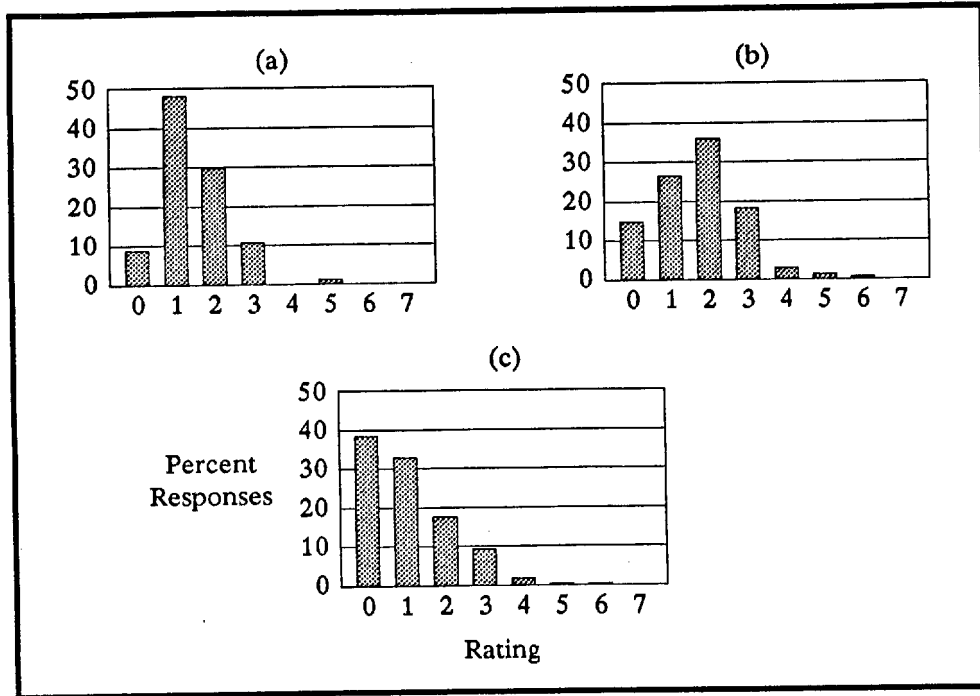


Figure 1. Distribution of Scores for (a) Peninsula Stanford Club
 (b) San Francisco Mensa
 (c) Stanford Alumni of Palo Alto

Table 4

Parameters of the Scoring Distributions

Statistic	Peninsula Stanford Club	San Francisco Mensa	Stanford Alumni Club of Palo Alto
Number of Viewings*	104	412	479
Mean Score	1.490	1.735	1.044
Standard Deviation	0.878	1.129	1.079

* Not all participants submitted responses for all trials; therefore, the number of viewings does not equal four times the number of participants.

Table 5

Two-Sample t-Test Results

Statistic	Mensa/Peninsula	Mensa/Palo Alto	Peninsula/Palo Alto
Two Sample t	2.061	9.337	3.947
Degrees of Freedom	514	889	581
p-Value	0.020	5.0×10^{-21}	4.5×10^{-5}
Effect Size	0.025	0.299	0.006

As measured by the effect size, the only "meaningful" comparison is between San Francisco Mensa with the Stanford Alumni Club of Palo Alto. It is premature to conclude, however, that something exists within Mensa that predisposes its members toward possessing remote viewing ability. There are a number of problems that prevent such a conclusion. First of all, the analyst was *not* blind to the groups, and thus could distort the scoring. Even if the analyst were blind, however, such a conclusions would still be unwarranted, because of the lack of statistical independence among the subjects. Additional circumstantial evidence in favor of Mensa would be realized if the seven individuals chosen for the second-stage screening continue to demonstrate high-quality remote viewing ability.

C. Second-Stage Results

Although there were a total of eight persons from the first-stage screening who showed qualitative evidence of potential exceptional remote viewing abilities, none participated in second-stage screening in FY 1989 because of timing and/or availability. These eight individuals will be invited to participate in individualized second-stage screenings as part of the FY 1990 screening work.

In accordance with the FY 1989 Statement of Work—Task 6.0.5, we asked a long-time remote viewer who has produced quality results in dream and Ganzfeld studies conducted at Maimonides Medical Center in the Division of Parapsychology (1972–1978), to participate in a second-stage screening. Table 7 shows the target and the rank assignments for each of Viewer 389's eight trials. The resulting sum of ranks was 11 ($p \leq 0.0025$, effect size = 1.01). A 75% hitting rate (6 of 8 first-place matches) where the mean expectation is 25% is the best we have obtained for any of our second-stage screenings during the past two years. Viewer 389 has joined our research program and is currently participating in one experiment.

Table 6

Results of Second-Stage Screening with Viewer 389

Session #	Target	Rank
1	Project Blue Book	1
2	Manhattan Project	1
3	Skiing	1
4	Atomic Bomb Blasts	2
5	Tacoma Narrows Bridge	1
6	Greek Temple	3
7	Tacoma Narrows Bridge	1
8	Project Deep Quest	1

D. Conclusions

In the past, the group screening procedure has been successful in selecting people with natural remote viewing ability. Two individuals from approximately 200 were asked to become regular remote viewers in the Cognitive Sciences Program.

Because of scheduling difficulties, successful candidates from this year's first-stage screening have yet to participate in the second-stage. Even if all of these candidates satisfy the second-stage requirements, this screening procedure is a labor-intensive and time-consuming method of identifying individuals with natural ability for high quality remote viewing.