RA Write-up on distance decay experiment

This was the first experiment that I work as a research assistant. Although I had no experience at the beginning, Jesse helped me by providing all the informations and procedures in order to run the subjects efficiently. Participating the real research experiment was very valuable experience since I could learn the way how the actual experiment is conducted.

First of all, I noticed that the research experiment involves a lot of time and resources. For this experiment, the program that tests subjects, reservation for the linguistics lab, subjects, and assistants are needed. As the experiments proceeds, constant maintenance and evaluation of result was also needed. For example, modification of the program was required when the difficulty level and stress makes hard to get the desirable result from the subjects. Also, assistants should be helpful for subjects to make them understand the procedures.

As an assistant, I noticed that the abilities of the subjects varies a lot. It is not about their smartness since the experiment is very straightforward. Some subjects did not take the test very seriously and failed tests three times since they just want to spend one hour without putting any efforts. However, some motivated subjects finished early and got a good score. I think this is the challenges for the research which requires an active participation of the subjects.
Subjects usually want to finish the experiment early. I observed that they got a better score once they know they have to retake the test if they don’t satisfy the passing grade. It is expected that they are trying to learn actively if they knew this information before the experiment.

Staring and solving the tests with the computer tends to be boring. It is very easy for them to get distracted if they don’t find much value and interest while they are taking the test. Their must be some way to make this experiment more entertaining. I thought about some scoreboard or extra credit for the participants who really did a great job.