

## Case Study 2

Two 4<sup>th</sup> year dissertation students submit their dissertation thesis to their supervisor as part of their assessment. As is common, the students worked together as part of a group project. Let's call them student A and student B. Student B is an exceptional student with aspirations of continuing in higher education and undertaking a PhD. Their best friend is student A. They have known each other since primary school, and both aspired to undertake a degree in Sport and Exercise Science. Whilst student B has excelled at University, student A has found the experience tough. There have been many times that they wanted to quit the course to do something else, but they have always been persuaded to stick with it after conversations with student B. Given how close these students are as friends, it was no surprise that they both agreed to work together on a project for their dissertation.

It was clear from the onset that student B was taking the lead on the dissertation project. They wrote the ethics application, recruited all the participants and pilot tested all the data collection procedures. Although student A was present and proof-read the ethics application, they were very much taking a back seat on the project. As the weeks flew in, data collection was almost complete. The supervisor was delighted on the progress they had made and with student B leading the project, they had confidence that the data collected was robust.

The night before a data collection session, student B became ill. Rather than cancel the data collection session for two participants at such short notice, student A agreed to take the session alone. By all accounts it seemed that student A had done what was asked of them and when student B was well enough to return to university, they were provided with the collected data from the two participants. Alongside the completed informed consent forms.

As the weeks progressed, students A&B wrote up their dissertations and submitted their work. The following day after submitting their dissertations, student B bumped into someone on campus. After exchanging pleasantries, the mood turned somewhat. The person that student B bumped into on campus was in fact one of the participants that agreed to participate in their dissertation project. This participant was scheduled to attend the laboratory during the session that student A led. The participant informed student B that they, alongside another participant, attended the lab as scheduled and met

student A outside the lab. Student A informed them that their session had to be cancelled as there was a fault with the equipment. Student A explained that they would be in touch if they were able to fix the equipment and apologized for their inconvenience.

Student B was taken by surprise and believed that they attended the lab and participated in their dissertation project. They even explained that they had their data and informed consent forms. It became clear very quickly that the data given to student B, from student A, must have been made up. The participant also confirmed this as no data collection session was undertaken with these two participants. After speaking with student A, student A admitted that the data was made up. They had become very nervous at the thought of leading the data collection session alone and panicked. Not wanting to let student B down, student A decided to make up the data.

As student A now knows the truth behind the situation, they have sympathy with student A and can understand why they did it. However, they also know that they have both submitted their dissertation that contains falsified data. One of the participants whose data was falsified knows this too.

If you were student B, how would you proceed in these circumstances? Feel free to chat through the scenario with other students and then **Provide your answer in the text box within the slide.**