

The Dogs by Allan Stratton Memory Activities

Eyewitness Game

Have you ever been an eyewitness to a crime? Is your memory of the crime the same as other people's recollection? Here is a way to explore eyewitness memory. Plan to have someone (a teacher or a student) come into your class. Let's call this person, "X". X should plan on doing several things in class such as:

- Change the time on the clock
- Take a book and put it in a bag
- Erase the chalkboard
- Close a window
- Talk to someone

Before X comes into the room, have all of the students working or reading at their desks. When X comes into the room, most of the students will be curious about what he or she is doing. After X leaves the room, have the students write down all the things that happened. (You can do this immediately after X leaves or sometime later). Once everyone has finished writing, find out what everyone remembers and what he or she did not.

What details do they recall? What did X wear? How long was X in the room? What book did X take? Who did X talk to? What did X say? You may even ask some leading questions to influence memory. For example, if X was not wearing a hat, ask, "What color hat was X wearing?". Compare how everyone's memory was the same and different.

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False Memories

Sometimes your brain makes up its own memories. Try to "implant" a memory by asking people to remember the words on list 1. Wait about five minutes, and then probe their memory by asking them which words on list 2 they remember.

List 1: read, pages, letters, school, study, reading, stories, sheets, cover, pen, pencil, magazine, paper, words

List 2: house, pencil, apple, shoe, book, flag, rock, train, ocean, hill, music, water, glass, school

Did they say that "book" was on list 1? Only pencil and school were on list 1.

Try these words:

List 1: sheets, pillow, mattress, blanket, comfortable, room, dream, lay, chair, rest, tired, night, dark, time

List 2: door, tree, eye, song, pillow, juice, orange, radio, rain, car, sleep, cat, dream, eat

Did they say that "sleep" was on list 1? Only pillow and dream were on list 1.

Make up your own lists and see if you can create a false memory.