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METHOD "EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY CHARTS" IN THE TEACING ENGLISH

An Eyewitness Testimony Chart is a three-column graphic organizer that prompts students to imagine events in their reading as if they were physically present themselves. It is an effective strategy for the law enforcement training. That is to say, one important application of research into memory is eyewitness testimony. It is used as evidence in criminal trials in countries all over the world.

Many people believe that memory works something like a videotape. Storing information is like recording and remembering is like playing back what was recorded, with information being retrieved in much the same form as it was encoded. However, memory does not work in this way. It is a feature of human memory that we do not store information exactly as it is presented to us. Rather, people extract from information the gist, or underlying meaning. In other words, people store information in the way that makes the most sense to them. We make sense of information by trying to fit it into schemas, which are a way of organising information. Schemas are general purpose 'packets' of knowledge that correspond to frequently encountered people, objects or situations. They allow us to make sense of what we encounter in order that we can predict what is going to happen and what we should do in any given situation.

Moreover, schemas are a very effective way of processing information. Besides making the world more predictable, they remove the need to store similar information more than once. Begin with a preplanned live interaction with another person, with your students as witnesses. Follow three main steps.

Ask a colleague to walk into your classroom and initiate a short but spirited argument with you. After your collaborator leaves, turn to your students and ask them to quickly write down their eyewitness accounts of what they just observed. Caution them not to share their recollections but to draw exclusively on their personal memories.

Ask students to exchange their accounts with a partner, again without conversation. As they read their partners' statements, ask students to be alert for specifics their partners included that they omitted and for any discrepancies between these individual versions of the event. Finally, allow them an opportunity for conversation to clarify with each other what they agree they observed.

With the entire class, solicit the elements of a reliable eyewitness account. As they talk about their experiences with this activity, students will likely relate that some witnesses were more discerning and noticed more details. Acknowledge that eyewitnesses might disagree in their interpretations but should agree on the facts of the event. Inform students that accounts that are inconsistent with the facts are deemed unreliable.

All things considered, have students read a selection, and then distribute three-columns. The first column ("I Was There") identifies the aspects of the selection that form the focus of the eyewitness testimony. The middle column ("The Author's Words") represents the facts that each testimony should be based on. The third column ("My Version") is reserved for how each individual student imagined this part of the author's message.

In conclusion, *Eyewitness Testimony Charts* isn't just about classroom strategy for interactive learning. People always try to recall things in a way that is consistent with out schemas and that memory is the imaginative reconstruction of experience.

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