Class Activities

# Chapter 7: The Reconstructive Nature of Memory

## 1. Implicit Learning

Demonstrate implicit learning by conducting the mirror tracing task in class. Depending on the size of your class, you may want to ask for a single volunteer to come to the front of the class or you may want to have small groups to work on the demonstration independently. For the demonstration, you will need to make a copy of Handout 7-1, a mirror, and an 8.5 × 11 sheet of cardstock. Instruct the student to sit at a desk facing the mirror. Place the handout on the desk and give the student a pencil. Then, cover the student’s hand with the cardstock, so they can only see the star and their hand by looking in the mirror. Have the student trace the star and time how long it takes them to complete it from the designated starting and stopping point. Repeat this with the other stars on the handout. As the student progresses from star 1 to star 4, the time to complete the task should decrease, and the errors in tracing should be less apparent.

## 2. Connectionism

The purpose of this activity is for students to understand the connectionist view of cognition. Begin by dividing students into small groups. Then, give the students a word, such as “hat” and have them write the word in the center of scratch paper. Next, have the groups write three words associated with hat. Then, have them think of three words associated with those three words. The number of connections is up to you, but at least three, as described above, is required for optimal results.

Have each group present their model to the rest of the class. Discuss how the tangential words may seem to be completely unrelated to one another but that they are related through their connection with the word “hat.” I like to use this exercise to discuss the distribution of memory and how any of the tangential words can serve as a path to a memory so that the more distributed the memory is, the more routes one will be able to access the memory. I also like to describe that the more dots you have to connect, the better able you will be at interpreting the picture.

## 3. Basic Level of Categorization

To help students understand categorization, provide them the basic-level categories below and have them generate a superordinate category, additional basic-level categories, and subordinate categories for each. For example, if you provide them with “Dog,” they may generate “Animal” as the superordinate, “Cat” and “Bird” as the additional basic-level categories, and “Great Dane,” “Shih Tzu,” and “Labrador” as the subordinate categories.

Basic-Level Category

Dog

Phone

Rope

Eyeglasses

Pond

Handout 7-1

1 Q2A

1 Q2A

1 Q2A

1 Q2A