Class Activities

# Chapter 8: Knowledge Representation: Storing and Organizing Information in Long-Term Memory

## 1. Can You Spot the Fake?

With the help of your university’s graphics department, recreate Plotnick’s (2012) study using images from around your school that are known to everyone on campus. First, select a few images such as your sports team logo, the university seal, or the university police crest from your school’s website. Then, work with graphics to modify each image slightly so that you end up with three iterations of each image. For each image, you will have the correct image and two very similar, but incorrect images. Present each set of images to the class and ask them to indicate which image they believe is the correct image.

## 2. Replicate the Carmichael et al (1932) Study

The text does an excellent job describing the Carmichael et al (1932) study, and how people form mental pictures almost effortlessly. To demonstrate this in class, find a photo of a relatively simple object. Without telling the class what the object is, give them step-by-step instructions, just like the Carmichael et al (1932) study did, on what to do to draw the object. Once you’ve completed the instructions ask the students to tell you what the object looks like in their mind. Then, present the photograph of the object to the class. Do your students’ mental image and physical representation of it differ from the photograph? Discuss.

## 3. Heuristics

Heuristics are rules of thumb that we sometimes tend to fall back on without even thinking. Although they seem to work most of the time, sometimes they do not, yet we continue to use them. Ask students to generate a list of heuristics they use, and compile the class’s list on the board to see which heuristic is most commonly used. You may then use this as a starting point for a discussion about whether heuristics actually work and why we continue to use them despite their relatively high failure rate.