

Reconstructive or Associative Memory Schemas or False Memories

When to use: When teaching about reconstructive memory, associative memory, or schemas.

Purpose: To demonstrate the constructive and reconstructive nature of memory. This activity can also be used to talk about metacognitive awareness and strategy use.

Materials: PowerPoint of words, or simply reading them will work.

Directions: Tell the students that they are to remember the following list of words. Show the students the words on the slide, one at a time (this also works if one just reads the list). Wait a couple of minutes and then ask the students if the words WALL, GRASS, SUN, HOUSE, AARDVARK, SLEEP, CHAIR were on the list. More than half of the participants will say “no” to all words except SLEEP. Show the original word list so that every can see that sleep is NOT on the list.

Time: 5 minutes

Source: This activity was created based on Roediger, H., & McDermott, K. (1995). Creating false memories: Remember words not presented in lists. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 21(4), 803-814.

REST

TIRED

AWAKE

DREAM

SNORE

BED

EAT

SLUMBER

SOUND

COMFORT

WAKE

NIGHT