**Introductory Topics on Psychology – Paper 1 – Memory**

**The Cognitive Interview**

**Activity A – what do we know about forgetting?**

Eye witnesses can be inaccurate for many reasons, and an eye witness would not knowingly give false information unless he or she wanted to break the law. Through psychological research, we have found that… (write down a number of ways in which we may inadvertently give incorrect information during an eye-witness testimony)

1)

2)

3)

4)

**Activity B – what are the techniques in cognitive interview called?**

When psychologists worked to develop the cognitive interview, they suggested four techniques that trained police could use to help retrieve accurate eyewitness testimony. Identify the correct statements below and delete the incorrect statements

**Encourage witness to only state the important information**

 **Recreate the context of the original incident**

**Show a picture of the suspect Allow the witness to talk to the victim**

 **Recreate the scene using actors Take the witness back to the scene of the crime**

 **Interviewer must develop questions before the interview**

**Report every detail Help the participants if they are missing any information**

**Interview witnesses in pairs or small groups**

 **Recall the event in reverse order Change perspectives**

**Activity C** – **Differences between standard interview and cognitive interview**

Identify the name of each technique on the left hand side, then link the standard interview technique to the improvement made in the cognitive interview

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of technique | Cognitive interview technique |  | Standard police interview |
|  | Tell the witness that although it may not feel normal, to try and tell the story in the reverse order, starting at the end of the event or at a significant part of the event. This should help stop witnesses recreating the event in relation to expectations or stereotypes about what normally happens in crimes such as was witnessed |  | *Police do not ask witness to recreate the context, instead just to free recall the events and then answer questions* |
|  | Tell the witness that some people withhold information because the feel it is irrelevant, but they should try and tell the whole story, leaving nothing out. Here the interviewer must be extremely patient and allow the recall as the witness sees it |  | *The police interview uses the repetition technique, where they repeat the questions needed for the eyewitness testimony, often interrupting the witness* |
|  | Instruct the witness to recall the event from a different physical perspective, from a location other than where he or she was during the event. What might they have seen from across the street? What did any of the other witnesses see? What would they have heard? Again this is used to disrupt the personal expectations of what usually happens in a crime (as seen in films etc.) |  | *The police would ask for free recall, which would usually end up with a chronological account of events.* |
|  | Ask the witness to try and picture the circumstances surrounding the crime. Next ask the witness to think about, or visualise the scene. Ask what the scene looked like, who was present or nearby, where the furniture was, what the weather was like, how the witness was feeling at the time or how they reacted to the event |  | *The standard interview is more likely to focus only on the witness’s point of view, asking questions about what they saw directly.* |

**Activity D – an example of CI**

Watch the dramatisation of a cognitive interview from the series Criminal Minds (US)

1. What two techniques is the interviewer using?
2. What two techniques did the interviewer not use?

**Careers** - A possible career in Forensic Psychology? – there are a small number of universities offering degrees in Forensic Psychology; for example, the one below at Portsmouth University. You would need to achieve the equivalent of three Bs at A level to qualify (and one B in Science, which includes psychology), although these can change from year to year.

**N.B.** It is important that courses such as this are accredited by the BPS, so that you can use the degree professionally if you want to pursue a career in psychology. This one at Portsmouth is. Also look out for placement opportunities, again, this is offered at Portsmouth. A similar course is offered at UCLAN (University of Central Lancashire). However, it is likely that further postgraduate qualifications would be required to become a fully practicing Forensic Psychologists, with wages starting from about £24,000 per year and eventually reaching £45,000 depending on responsibilities and experience.

(Clipping from Portsmouth University Website 16/12/2015)

Activity E: **answer the exam question below**

**Students often lose marks in scenario questions because they do not refer to the text, or do not identify the criteria required to answer the question. For this question, look at the mark scheme first, and then try to answer based on what you have read.**

**MARK SCHEME:**

1 mark for naming one relevant technique: 2 marks for naming two or more relevant techniques or for a very brief outline of how one technique could be used.

Further marks for elaboration. Candidates who refer to only one technique should include more

detail than those who refer to more than one. **3 or 4 marks can only be awarded if the outline could relate to this event.**

An American space shuttle exploded soon after it was launched. All of the astronauts on board were killed. Crowds of people were watching, including friends and relatives of the astronauts. Six months after the explosion, a student decided to investigate the accuracy of some of the eyewitnesses’ memory of this event

**5 (a)** Outline how the student could have used a cognitive interview to investigate this event. Include **at least one** example of what the participants would be asked to do. (4 marks)

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**Activity F: Evaluation** Imagine that you were answering the question “Evaluate the use of the Cognitive Interview in police interviews (8 marks)

Please add the grounding to each evaluative point. The first one has been completed for you

**(P)** The cognitive interview has been shown to be effective in research studies, suggesting it is worthwhile law enforcement techniques using it to get accurate EWTs. **(E)** Geisleman et al. (1985) studied 89 students who watched videos and were later interviewed by trained US law enforcement officials. The researchers found that significantly more items were recalled correctly by those who were interviewed using cognitive interview (average number of correctly items recalled was 41.5) compared with those who had experienced the standard police interview (average number of correctly items recalled was 29.4) **(S)** This shows that the Cognitive Interview does create more accurate EWTs than the standard interviews, and resources and training should be used in the techniques to improve the reliability of EWTs in legal proceedings.

**Now your turn…**

**(P)** The research findings have shown to be reliable, **(E)** for example, Kohnken et al (1999) carried out ameta-analysis of 53 studies investigating cognitive interview, albeit an enhanced version, and found, on average, a 34% increase in the amount of correct information generated compared with standard police interviews,

**(S)** – (example) link this to the importance of reliability of findings, further supporting the use of CI.

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**(P)** Additionally, since the initial reconceptualisation of the police interview, there have been a number of changes to the original use of the cognitive interview, and new techniques known as enhanced cognitive interviews (ECI) are now common **(E)** for example, dynamics were taken into account, such as when to (or not to) establish eye-contact, ways to reduce anxiety, minimising distractions, asking the witness to speak slowly and to ask open ended questions.

**(S)** – (example) link this to the importance of further research in refining the cognitive interview and how this should continue

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**(P)** However, the economic impact of the cognitive interview must be considered. **(E)** The Cognitive Interview tends to take longer and use more resources than the traditional interview, and some critics suggest that some of the procedures are more valuable than others, whilst others are mindful of the increase in time and resources required to conduct the interviews, it also requires more training.

**(S)** In times when police funding is under pressure, it may be more viable to only use aspects of the CI, or not use it at all, so that time and resources are not being used without good reason to do so, although it could be counter argued that the increase in accuracy ***(please continue)*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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