Open Your Class with this Tomorrow
The Memory Illusion: Remembering, Forgetting, and the Science of False Memory

Background: In the book, *The Memory Illusion: Remembering, Forgetting, and the Science of False Memory* the author discusses the concept of photographic memory. According to the author, the scientific term that is most closely related to the popular idea of photographic memory is called eidetic memory. Individuals who possess this type of memory skill are called *eidetikers*. Psychologists who study *eidetikers* use a method called picture elicitation. In this test, participants are shown an image on an easel for 30 seconds which is considered sufficient because most individuals stop encoding details and lose attention after about that much time. After the image is removed from the easel, the person is then asked to describe everything about the image. Individuals with eidetic memory will report that they can still see the image which makes answering questions easier. *Eidetikers* report that they can use their memory of the image in a way that is similar to the experience of the image still being present, speak about the missing image using the present test and can recall a great amount of detail. Eidetic images are different from the visual afterimages experienced when we stare at something for too long which are the result of overstimulation of visual receptor cells in the retina. They are also not the same as typical visual memories which can, in theory, last forever because they do fade away involuntarily and can last only a couple of minutes. Importantly, research suggests that eidetic memory may only exist in young children and appears to be more prevalent in children with developmental disabilities.

Directions
1. Show one of the video clips of autistic artist Stephen Wiltshire. Many researchers believe that eidetic memory does not exist in adults. Do you believe Stephen Wiltshire could be considered an eidetiker?
2. Utilize the provided PowerPoint to facilitate a test of eidetic memory.