

Open Your Class with This Today

Directions: The following page includes different handouts for the members of your class. Divide the class in half. Hand copies of the first sheet to one half of the class and copies of the second sheet to the other half of the class. Ask the students to read the instructions on the handout silently. Once students have read the instructions, proceed by reading the list of statements below. After reading all of the statements, move temporarily to another activity for about 5-10 minutes. When you return, ask students to write down as many of the statements as they can recall and compute the mean number of statements recalled for each group.

Note: This activity is adapted from Matthew Lieberman's book *Social: Why Our Brains are Wired to Connect*. Social Psychologist David Hamilton at the University of California Santa Barbara conducted the original version of this activity and is cited in *Social*.

Read the following statements aloud to the class; pause briefly after reading each statement.

Statements:

1. Walking the dog.
2. Doing the laundry.
3. Reading the paper.
4. Driving a green four-door sedan.
5. Watering the daisies.
6. Working as a marketing assistant.
7. Visiting mom.
8. Going to the grocery store.
9. Hosting a block party.
10. Playing basketball.
11. Shopping for new shoes.
12. Going for a bike ride.
13. Travelling to Europe.
14. Attending a conference.
15. Eating Chinese food.
16. Riding a roller coaster.
17. Reading a science fiction book.
18. Calling an old friend.
19. Attending a concert.
20. Volunteering at a soup kitchen.

Summary: The first set of instructions asks students to memorize all of the statements for a test later. The second set of instructions asks participants to create in their mind an overall impression of the person being described. Students who were asked to form an overall impression of the person they were hearing about should remember far more information than those who were told to memorize the statements, despite those with the making the social connection were never told to memorize the statements. In *Social*, Lieberman indicates that this type of activity speaks the importance of creating a social connection for a situation to aid in memory. The second task which involves forming an impression of a person is easier Lieberman argues because we are wired to make meaningful connections to others. The second task uses self-referent encoding is a deeper level of processing than structural or phonetic encoding (used in the first group) and will also last longer than other levels of processing. Lieberman calls this the social encoding advantage.

Books for Psychology Class

<http://booksforpsychologyclass.weebly.com>

Open You Class with this Tomorrow

Handouts for Students

Print numerous copies of each of the following sets of directions to be distributed to members of your class.

Group #1

Directions: Listen carefully to the following statements and try to memorize all of the information, there will be a memory test later. Do not write anything down while the statements are being read.

Group #2

Directions: Listen carefully to the following statements. Do not try to memorize the information; rather try to form an overall impression of the individual being described. Later, you will be asked some questions about the impression you have formed. Do not write anything down while the statements are being read.