Introduction to Psychology
APA IPI Tags: Theme #3
Content Area Tags: Memory, Cognition, Top-Down Processing, Eyewitness Testimony
Estimated Time: 15-20 minutes for activity; 10-15 minutes for questions

Telephone Around the World

Activity Instructions

- Students form groups of 5-10 (see **Activity Notes** below for instructions for very large classes)
- Instructor provides each group of students with a verbal description of something to draw (e.g., sunrise with a friend; playtime with my dog). Suggested time to draw is 1 minute maximum per student.
    - Student 1 spend a few minutes drawing the prompt *where no other students can see*
    - Student 1 passes the drawing to Student 2
    - Student 2 needs to provide a *written description* of the image on a new sheet of paper, then passes the description to Student 3, who will try to *draw an image* of the verbal description
- Repeat through the number of students in the group
- Compare final drawing and original verbal description from the instructor/original drawing from Student 1
- Have students review all steps in the telephone chain together to identify changes; have the artist/labeler explain their thought process to identify common themes

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Activity Learning Objectives

By completing this assignment, you will be able to…

- Identify and explain psychological, biological, social, and cultural factors that influence memory and cognition in your own words. (APA Theme 3)
- Analyze new situations for potential influences of psychological, biological, social, and cultural factors on recall of those situations. (APA Theme 3)

Post-Activity Discussion Questions

1. What changes occurred in the telephone chain? Are these changes likely to be the result of psychological, biological, social, or cultural factors? Explain your reasoning.
2. How does top-down processing apply to games of telephone like this?
3. How might top-down processing apply to real-world scenarios like witnessing a crime and being later asked to testify in court?

Activity Notes (for Instructors Only)

- Scalable to any class size
    - Small classes (5-25) can do this with every student

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    - Larger classes can do this in lecture or discussion with smaller groups
    - Super large class - ask for 5 volunteers and have class observe changes
- Works with synchronous or asynchronous classes
    - Works best in live, in-person classes BUT
    - Can do it online synchronously through the use of breakout rooms
    - Can ask students to do this on their own as an assignment with a group of 5-7 friends/classmates and reflect on their experiences
- Can assess mastery of the content by grading the reflection questions

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