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Introduction

About This Book

The activities provided in this booklet are created to enrich psychology classes. They provide hands-on activities and demonstrations that engage students in the active study of psychology through experimentation.

This volume introduces the cognition concepts of thinking and learning. These activities allow students to take on the role of both experimenter and subject while learning about cognition. Students will engage in activities that provide demonstrations of the thinking and conditioning process; both of which are essential to the study of psychology.

These psychology activities were created during the development of an experimental psychology course for a high school classroom. The suggestions provided in textbooks and other supplemental material did not offer the hands-on, experimental approach sought by the course instructor. As the class was to be taught in a school utilizing block scheduling (ninety and seventy-five minute classes), lessons that kept students active and interested while demonstrating the key components of psychology were developed. The classroom lessons and materials were used and refined over a two-year period during which four sections of the new psychology course were taught.

The essential goals for each activity were to make them easy to use, to involve and engage the students, and to clarify key psychology concepts.

The topics covered in this booklet, and other *Psychology Activities* volumes, parallel general Psychology textbooks and should be used as a supplemental aid. The activities and demonstrations clarify basic psychology concepts and allow students to see the effect or impact of a concept first hand.

All lessons were created with the teacher and student in mind. The purpose for each lesson is clearly stated and a specific list of materials required for each lesson is provided. Procedures are written in a step-by-step format to allow for easy implementation into a block or typical schedule format. The discussion questions provide closure to the activity and can be done as a class or as individual work to check for student understanding. Hints or tips are offered throughout the booklet to assist teachers in adapting lessons to fit their needs or the ability level of students. The Glossary, which concludes each booklet, defines psychology and experiment terms used throughout the lessons. Student handouts include all necessary instructions and directions as well as material to assist in data collection. Finally, the material is organized in such a way that incorporating the lessons into an existing curriculum is easy and enjoyable.

Current research indicates that students who are actively engaged in the learning process retain information better than those who are passive participants in the

classroom. *Psychology Activities* was created with this concept in mind. The hands on approach to Psychology that this booklet offers will spark and maintain student interest. Being involved as subjects and experimenters allows students to become an active part of their own learning. Participation in these activities also provides students with an episodic memory of a classroom experience, strengthening the concepts being taught and therefore improving learning. Most importantly, when students are actively engaged, they have more fun. These activities make the study of psychology an enjoyable experience for everyone!

About the Author

Kathleen M. Glusick graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Madison with a Bachelor’s degree in Broad Field Social Studies and a minor in Psychology. She completed her Master’s of Education through Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She taught World Cultures, Citizenship, Sociology, and Experimental Psychology during her high school teaching career. After completing her thesis, *The Impact of Brain-Compatible Physical Structures on Classroom Learning*, Peanut Publishing was created to enhance involvement in the classroom by providing teachers with student centered activities.

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Thinking: Incomplete Word Sets

Purpose:

- Demonstrate how thinking is influenced by patterns
- Introduce sample tool for use in future experiments

Materials:

- Set List A and Set List B (p. 2)
- Procedure Instructions (below)
- Debriefing & Analysis (p. 3)

Procedure:

- Randomly divide students into Groups A and B.
- Hand out set list, face down and instruct students not to turn their sheets until instructed to do so.
- Explain what students should do once they are told to begin:
 - ∞ There will be lists of words on your paper. There is one letter missing from the last word in the list. You are to fill in a letter to complete the word.
 - ∞ Do not look at other papers.
 - ∞ Turn your sheet back over when complete.
- Instruct students to begin.
- When all students are done, ask what letter someone from Group A filled in the first incomplete word with. Go back and forth through all the answers.
- Go through Debriefing and Analysis (p. 3).

Thinking: Set List A

Name: _____

Base

Mild

Water

Ball

Medium

Flower

B_t

H_t

S_n

Zero

Mittens

Food

Nothing

Boots

Eat

_one

_oat

_eal

Thinking: Set List B

Name: _____

Gamble

Base

Mother

Wager

Ball

Father

B_t

H_t

S_n

Finished

Oar

Cards

Complete

Paddle

Deck

_one

_oat

_eal

Debriefing and Analysis

- Explain to students that each condition had different word prompts prior to the incomplete word. These prompts got them thinking in “sets” and therefore they chose different letters to complete the last word.
- Discuss the following questions with students:
 - ✎ If it happened, why did someone not follow the set?
 - ✎ How does this demonstration relate to occurrences in real life?
 - ✎ How can set thinking affect behavior?
 - ✎ What is the relationship between set thinking and stereotyping?