2.7 Eyewitness Testimony: The Effect of Anxiety on Recall: 10-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Describe briefly how levels of arousal affect attention and memory, using appropriate memory terminology in a forensic context.

(Total for Question 1 is 3 marks)

2 State one practical application for police or legal procedures arising from research into anxiety and eyewitness testimony.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Outline the procedure and main finding of Johnson and Scott's 1976 laboratory study on the effect of a weapon on eyewitness accuracy.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.7 Eyewitness Testimony: The Effect of Anxiety on Recall: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

states that increased arousal narrows attention, often concentrating processing on central details and reducing peripheral encoding oe — **B1**

states that moderate arousal can enhance encoding and consolidation, improving later recall oe — **B1**

uses memory terms such as encoding, attention, consolidation or retrieval in the explanation oe — **B1**

Answer: Higher arousal tends to narrow attention so central details are encoded better while peripheral details may be missed; moderate arousal can enhance encoding and consolidation leading to stronger recall, described using terms like encoding and retrieval.

Question 2

states a genuine application, e.g. cautioning juries about the limitations of high-arousal eyewitness testimony, or training officers to consider arousal when assessing witness reliability oe — **B1**

links the application to research, e.g. using inverted-U ideas to avoid over-reliance on very highly stressed eyewitness accounts oe — **B1**

Answer: Police might train interviewers and juries to consider the witness's arousal level when evaluating testimony, recognising that very high arousal can impair accuracy while moderate arousal may enhance it.

Question 3

outlines the procedure: participants observed a man in a waiting room carrying either a pen and grease on his hands or a bloody knife after an apparent argument, then later attempted to identify him from photos oe — **M1**

correctly identifies the two conditions: low-anxiety pen condition and high-anxiety knife condition oe — **M1**

states the main finding: identification accuracy was lower in the knife condition than the pen condition oe — **A1**

links the result to the idea that attention was drawn to the weapon, impairing facial identification oe — **A1**

Answer: In Johnson and Scott (1976) participants saw a man holding either a pen or a bloody knife after an argument; later photo ID was poorer in the bloody knife condition, interpreted as attention being drawn to the weapon and reducing face recall.

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