2.8 Improving Eyewitness Testimony: The Cognitive Interview: Test Pack

AQA 7182 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Describe the 'report everything' component of Fisher and Geiselman's (1992) cognitive interview in the context of improving eyewitness recall of a street robbery.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Outline one methodological limitation of research supporting the cognitive interview, and explain how this limitation reduces confidence in claims that CI will always improve eyewitness accuracy in real-world settings.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Milne and Bull compared individual components of the cognitive interview. Outline their finding about which single technique(s) are most effective, and explain one limitation of interpreting these results for real-world police interviewing.

(Total for Question 3 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.8 Improving Eyewitness Testimony: The Cognitive Interview: Test Pack

Question 1

states that witnesses are encouraged to report every detail they can remember, even trivial or peripheral details oe **B1**

explains briefly that trivial details may act as retrieval cues and lead to more accurate recall of additional information oe **B1**

Answer: Witnesses are encouraged to report every detail, even things that seem trivial, because small items can cue other memories and increase the amount of correct information recalled.

Question 2

identifies a methodological limitation, e.g. many studies are laboratory experiments with low ecological validity, small samples, or student participants oe **M1**

explains why this is a problem, e.g. artificial conditions and motivated/unrepresentative participants may produce larger CI effects than would occur with stressed real witnesses oe **A1**

links this to reduced confidence in generalisation, e.g. field conditions vary widely and training levels differ, so lab gains may not translate into routine policing oe **M1**

concludes that further field research and replication with diverse samples is needed before assuming CI will always improve accuracy in practice oe **A1**

Answer: Example answer: A common limitation is reliance on laboratory studies with student samples and staged events, which reduces ecological validity. Artificial tasks and motivated participants may exaggerate CI benefits compared with real, distressed witnesses; therefore claims that CI will always improve accuracy in policing are weakened and require field replications and diverse samples.

Question 3

outlines Milne and Bull's finding: that a combination of 'report everything' and 'context reinstatement' produced the best recall, though individually they were most effective compared with other single components oe **M1**

clarifies that other components produced smaller gains when used alone, supporting using combined CI techniques rather than single techniques in isolation oe **A1**

identifies a limitation of applying these lab-based comparisons to policing, e.g. controlled experimental conditions differ from stressful, noisy real scenes oe **M1**

explains why this limitation matters, e.g. results may overestimate effectiveness when interviewers are untrained or when witnesses are distressed, reducing external validity oe **A1**

offers an additional caveat, e.g. laboratory participants may be motivated differently and procedures are often non-leading, unlike some field situations oe **B1**

concludes that Milne and Bull support combined CI use but extrapolation to routine police practice requires caution and further field validation oe **A1**

Answer: Example answer: Milne and Bull found that 'report everything' and 'context reinstatement' were the most effective single techniques and worked best in combination. However, their comparisons were often carried out in controlled settings, so the findings may not generalise to stressed witnesses or to interviewers without specialist training. Therefore while the study supports combined CI components, care is needed when applying the results to routine police interviews.

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