

Collective Memory

Gavin Clowes

- Do you want students to remember visual imagery in a fun way?
- Would you like your students to cooperate as they recreate maps, pictures, or diagrams?
- Would you like to enhance students' visual literacy?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then **Collective Memory** is a structure for you! **Collective Memory** promotes the development of visual literacy, memory, and cooperation. Here's how it works.

“Visual literacy is really seeing as opposed to just looking.”

Collective Memory Steps

Student teams work to reproduce a visual image such as a map. The catch is, only one teammate at a time can view the image for a brief period.

Setup: The teacher prepares a visual image (*map, picture, diagram, photograph, model, poster, or any visual image*). Each team receives a sheet of paper and color markers.

1. Teammates Strategize

The teacher informs the class that each team's goal is to reproduce a visual image, and that each student will only get a brief opportunity to see the image. Teams are given 2 minutes to strategize how they plan to successfully recreate the image.

2. First Student Views Image

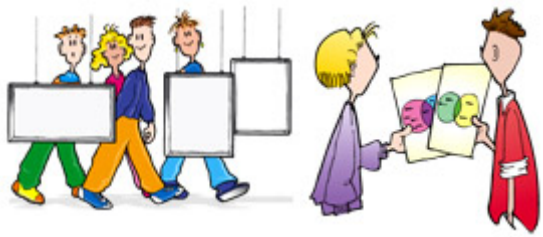
Teams send one student to the front of the class to view the image for 10 seconds.

3. Students Share with Teammates

Students return to their teams and start to reproduce the original in their unique color, explaining it to teammates as they begin. They also strategize what the next teammate should look for during the next visit.

4. Repeat Process

After a short period, the next teammate looks at the original for 10 seconds. He or she returns to the team and contributes to the team's recreation. After each turn, teams strategize for the next viewing. Depending on the complexity of the item and students' grade level, there can be several rounds of viewing.



5. Teams Compare Recreations to Original

When teams finish recreating the image, the teacher reveals the image. Teammates compare their recreation to the original and discuss how well they did and how they could improve for next time.

Variations and Extensions

Individual Memory. After processing and recreating the visual image as a team, individuals recreate the image independently. This creates greater Individual Accountability as well as leading to individual assessment/grade if necessary.

Teams Compare. Before the final step of revealing the original, teams can compare and discuss their recreations for a brief period. They are given the opportunity to make revisions.

Carousel Feedback. Before the final reveal, teams can rotate to other teams' recreations to provide appreciations and feedback to other teams. Teams are given the opportunity to make revisions.

Differentiation

Simplifying the Task...

- Choose a very simple image
- Give students more time to view the original
- Allow students to make more visits
- Provide students clues what to look for
- Provide students a plan

Making the Task more Difficult...

- Select a complicated image
- Allow fewer visits
- Decrease viewing time
- Create a time pressure

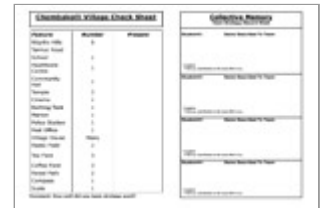
A Sample Lesson

As an introduction to a unit on India, I had my students reproduce a map of Chembakolli Village. As you can see from their efforts the exercise was very useful. The most difficult aspect was getting the students to stop work at the end of the lesson.



Click on any photo to enlarge

I used recording sheets on which the students recorded which aspects they worked on etc. I allowed the students to visit three times each. Although the original image was quite complicated this proved to be ample.



*Click icon to
download
Recording Sheet
PDF*

The lesson proved to be ideal for introducing the topic India. Students were engaged throughout the exercise discussing similarities and differences with their own life styles/ housing. Two students who have Statements for Emotional/ Behavioral Difficulties were fully engaged throughout the lesson. They were cooperative with other students which is a marked improvement on their usual behavior in a traditional class format. The class couldn't wait for the next lesson!

Basic Principles (PIES)

P

Positive Interdependence

The contribution of one student is a gain for teammates. Students are on the same side with a shared goal of recreating the image. There is also a friendly competition (negative interdependence) across teams as teams compete to create the best recreation.

I

Individual Accountability

Students are accountable to teammates for sharing their strategy, looking carefully during their viewing period, and for explaining clearly to others. Individual accountability can be enhanced with color-coded marker so the teacher can easily see each student's contribution.

E

Equal Participation

Each student has an equal number of turns looking at the hidden item, and students describe the hidden item about equally. Some students may do more of the actual design than others. To make participation more equal, **RoundTable** could be used so each student takes a turn making contributions. Students can also be assigned one essential color, so every student must contribute.

S

Simultaneous Interaction

Students are actively engaged for a great percent of the class time because of the simultaneous nature of the structure. Students are either engaged in

explaining or in responding to instructions.

Ideas for My Class



Science

- Digestive system
- Water cycle
- Skeleton
- Brain anatomy
- Diagram



Social Studies

- State map
- Neighborhood map
- USA map
- Timeline
- Political map
- Model
- Advertisement
- Photograph
- Table



Math

- Equation using Base 10 manipulatives
- Tessellation
- Graph of an equation
- Pie chart
- Shape Arrangement



Language Arts

- Paragraph
- Sentence
- Poem
- Parts of a letter



Foreign Language/ESL

Illustrated and labeled posters of:

- Family
- Kitchen
- Body parts
- Sports
- Colors



Music

- Bar of notation
- Orchestra layout plan



Technology

- Website site map
- Flow chart



Domains

Teambuilding

Students cooperate to accomplish a challenging team project.

Mastery

The structure is great for mastering any visual content.

Thinking Skills

This structure is strong for a variety of thinking skills:

- Recalling. Students recall what they saw.
- Summarizing. Students summarize their findings to teammates.
- Analyzing. Students carefully analyze the original and their recreation, locating and collecting relevant information pertaining to part/whole relationships.
- Evaluating. Students judge the value of their own and others work or ideas in order to improve.
- Synthesizing. Students put separate pieces of information together to make a complete picture.
- Reasoning. Students need to make informed judgments and decisions and can be required to give reasons for their actions and explain what they think.

Communication Skills

Students communicate to teammates their strategy for cooperating and what they saw after each visit.

Information Sharing

Students must use oral language and drawn images to share vital information with teammates.

Social Skills

Social skills embedded in this structure include:

- Encouragement and support
- Planning together
- Reaching consensus
- Building on others ideas, elaborating

- Clarifying ideas
- Praising
- Making sure everyone understands
- Offering help/coaching
- Taking turns
- Tolerance
- Working together

Management Tips

- Stagger viewing times to eliminate dead time.
- The student who last viewed the image can remain standing so the teacher can tell who's sharing with the team and students can tell who's next to go.
- Do the final reveal on the overhead projector or using an interactive whiteboard.

Reflection and Planning

Have students reflect on their use of the structure and describe their thinking, planning, and ideas for improvement. This helps focus students on what exactly they learned. Here are sample responses from my India set.

How did you work together?

"Once we knew what it was, we gave people different things to look for. We decided to look at each quadrant at a time to make the task more manageable. Because you told us the item was challenging we sent our best drawer first, she gave us an idea of the whole thing straight away, it was a bit like looking at the lid of a jigsaw to get an idea of what we were trying to make."

What did the first person do, was this different from the next to go?

"The first person from our team gave us a good idea of the whole thing so that we knew what we had to do from then on. etc."

What was hard about the 10 seconds?

"I felt responsible for my team so I concentrated more than usual. It felt like a game, more fun than just looking at the map, so I enjoyed it more and tried harder than usual."

Did your original plan work or did you change it?

"Because of the amount of detail we changed our plan many times, not sure that we did that well but if we did it again we would certainly work together better, no arguing! The

more we did the better we got."

Notes: *This structure is a cooperative learning adaptation of the geography strategy Maps from Memory (original source unknown).*

Gavin Clowes is a Certified Kagan Trainer, certified for teaching Kagan courses in the UK.