

Activity: How Observant Are We?

Materials Needed: A nondigital watch borrowed from a class member

Directions: Ask someone in the group if you may borrow his or her watch for a moment. (*Caution:* Make certain it is a nondigital type.) Tell that person (after the watch's receipt) that you would like to test his or her powers of observation, and ask the entire group to silently "play along" with the individual whose watch you are using. Tell the individual to assume that the watch was lost and you found it. Before you return it, you want to make certain the watch can be identified by its owner. Some sample questions include: "What's the brand name?" "What color is the face?" "Anything else printed on the face?" "Roman or Arabic numerals?" "All 12?" "Does the watch have the date and/or day on it?" "Second hand?"

If the group is silently responding as the volunteer attempts to vocally answer the questions, the point is more easily made (i.e., most people cannot totally and accurately describe their own timepieces even if they look at them dozens of times a day).

Follow-Up  
Discussion:

1. Besides me, who else flunked this test? Why?
2. Why aren't we more observant? (Time pressure, lack of concern, taking things for granted, etc.)
3. Have you seen incidents when people have overlooked commonplace things and problems or a lack of productivity has resulted?

**Time Required:  
5 Minutes**