**The cognitive interview**
As a result of psychological research into the fallibility of eye witness accounts, more recent focus has been on how to improve accuracy, especially in forensic settings. One very successful example of this is the cognitive interview schedule by Geiselman et al (1985, 1992), designed to be used by police investigators. The original technique incorporates four distinct components:

1. Report everything – even small, seemingly irrelevant details.
2. Mental reinstatement of original context – imagine the scene including details such as the weather, the lighting, any distinctive smells or sounds (environmental context) and how the witness was feeling at the time (emotional context).
3. Changing the order – start at the end and work backwards, then at the most memorable aspect.
4. Change perspectives – describe the incident from the perspective of someone else e.g., from the other side of the street or from an upper window.

The first two elements aim to provide consistency between the incident itself and the recreated situation by way of memory cues in order to yield more detail and more accuracy.
The second two elements are based on findings that information can be retrieved through a number of different routes, therefore varying these routes will lead to more productivity.
Geiselman et al Tested the effectiveness of the cognitive interview by comparing it with standard police interviewing techniques.
89 participants were shown videos of violent crimes. Approximately 48 hours later, they were interviewed by American law enforcement officers using either the standard police interview or the cognitive interview. Each interview was recorded and analysed for accuracy of recall in terms of: Number of correct items recalled, Number of errors, Incorrect items (mistakes – red coat instead of brown coat), Confabulated items (not actually shown in video)
On average, participants recalled considerably more in the cognitive interview than in the standard interview, although error rates were similar.
Fisher et al (1989) Trained a group of Florida detectives in the use of the cognitive interview and then assessed their performance when interviewing genuine witnesses to crimes.
When their performance was compared to pre-training levels, it was found that information gain was as much as 47%.

**The Enhanced Cognitive Interview** (Fisher & Geiselman 1992)
The later version of the cognitive interview brought in greater attempts to create rapport between the witness and interviewer and to clarify to the witness that the interviewer has no prior knowledge of the event. It also includes additional cognitive techniques for probing a witness’ mental image of an event.
However, this requires more intense training but research (eg Memon et al 1994) has found that experienced detectives only receive approximately 4 hours of training in the use of the cognitive interview, which has been shown to be ineffective.
Furthermore, not all police forces use the cognitive interview correctly. Kebbell & Wagstaff ( 1996) found that Merseyside police tend to use the original procedure, but Thames Valley do not use the ‘changing perspectives’ element. Other forces only use ‘reinstate context’ and ‘report everything’. Kebbell & Wagstaff interviewed police officers and found that the full COGNITIVE INTERVIEW was considered too time consuming and therefore, for less serious crimes it was rarely used.

Stein & Memon (2006) Tested the Cognitive Interview in Brazil, where the standard model for interviewing is interrogative and the use of torture is widespread. Participants were women recruited from the cleaning staff of a large university. They watched a video of an abduction. Compared to the standard interview, the cognitive interview increased the amount of correct information provided, especially forensically rich information, such as detailed descriptions of the man holding a gun. This is important because it would allow the police to determine which of the abductors was armed.