



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR  
2006 PROJECT SUMMARY**

<b>Name(s)</b> Sarah L. Mickelson	<b>Project Number</b> <b>J0322</b>
<b>Project Title</b> <b>Picture, Picture, on the Wall, Who Is the Guilty One of All-Eyewitness Identification?</b>	
<b>Abstract</b> <b>Objectives/Goals</b> The objective of my project was to determine if the method of identification used in a photo line up, simultaneous method (viewed all at once) vs. the sequential method (viewed one at a time), affects the accuracy of the eyewitness identification. <b>Methods/Materials</b> 3 versions of photo line ups were prepared: (1) Non-biased (line up members look similar to perpetrator); (2) Biased (perpetrator is only line up member wearing yellow shirt and blue cap the same as in video clip of purse snatching); (3) Non-biased (line up members look similar) - perpetrator not present. The 3 versions were presented in 2 ways: simultaneous and sequential. 60 eyewitnesses viewed a video of a mock purse snatching and were asked to identify the perpetrator after viewing the photo line ups (10 each version shown simultaneous; 10 each version shown sequential) by filling out a questionnaire. <b>Results</b> Photo Line Up Non Biased Perpetrator Present - Simultaneous: The perpetrator, #7, was chosen 40% of the time. Sequential: #7, was chosen 20% of the time. Photo Line Up Biased Perpetrator Present-Simultaneous: #7, was chosen 70% of the time. Sequential: #7, was chosen 60% of the time. Photo Line Up Non Biased Perpetrator Not Present-Simultaneous: [Perpetrator] Not Present (the correct response) was chosen 20% of the time. Sequential: [Perpetrator] Not Present was chosen 70% of the time. <b>Conclusions/Discussion</b> The purpose of this project was to determine whether the simultaneous vs. the sequential method affects the accuracy of eyewitness identification in a photo line up. My findings showed that when the perpetrator is not present in the line up, the sequential method provided substantially more accurate responses than the simultaneous method-70% vs. 20%. However, when the perpetrator was present in the line up, the simultaneous method provided slightly more accurate responses-40% vs. 20%-but with both methods (perpetrator present) 60 to 80% still chose the wrong person, an innocent person. For the biased line up, the method of presentation appeared to make no difference because the majority of the eyewitnesses in either case chose #7 the perpetrator (70% simultaneous; 60% sequential). This shows how a lineup can be set up to influence the eyewitness to guarantee the result.	
<b>Summary Statement</b> Project is about how the methods of identification (simultaneous vs. sequential) used in a photo line affect the accuracy of the eyewitness identification.	
<b>Help Received</b> Mother assisted as needed; Science teacher, Mrs. Williams, helped with many important details.	