

EFFECTIVE MEMORY STRATEGIES

To remember information for any period of time, we need to make it meaningful. There are many tricks and strategies we can use to make information more meaningful and personal to us, aiding in both short- and long-term retention.

ASSOCIATION STRATEGIES

GENERATE EXAMPLES

By creating examples, you can apply what you have learned and turn the intangibles into tangibles. Often the most powerful examples are those that relate to your own personal experience as you will tend to remember personal examples. This technique can be applied in application-based courses such as Kinesiology, Biology, Sociology, Physics, etc.

Subject	Example
Kinesiology	Relate your ability to kick a ball to the physical forces
Biology	Relate photosynthesis to the healthy plant on your balcony where there is plenty of sunshine
Sociology	Relate symbolic interaction to values that you learned from your parents
Geography	Relate the Canadian Shield to your trip to Algonquin Park
Chemistry	Relate acids to cleaning products
Physics	Relate acceleration to driving your car

APPLY VISUAL IMAGERY

Visual images are usually easy to remember, so try to create an image that captures the new concept you are learning. This is particularly beneficial for visual learners.



Example: Operant Learning which means a type of learning in which the consequences of an organism's behaviour determine whether it will be repeated in the future. You can visualize your dog bounding up to you for his "positive reinforcement" (dog biscuit).

CREATE MNEMONICS

Mnemonics are memory devices that connect arbitrary information with familiar information. They can involve colour, shapes, images, or anything that can be linked to the information you have to remember. The idea of using mnemonics is to encode difficult-to-remember information in a way that is much easier to remember; however, it does not contain meaningful associations.

RHYMES

Rhymes are catchy and allow us to remember information that would be difficult to remember as plain

ACADEMIC

prose. People who enjoy playing with language may find this helpful for memorizing challenging information. Meanwhile, auditory learners may find this beneficial.

e.g. - Cyanate I “ate”; Cyanide I “die”

e.g. - In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

ACRONYMS

Acronyms are special words in which each letter represents something of importance to remember. Acronyms can also be used to remember things that are in an order which is difficult to remember.

e.g. **SMART** goal: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, **T**imely

FIRST LETTERS (ACROSTICS)

For some types of categorical items that are difficult to remember, the first letter of each item can be used to create a sentence which has meaning.

e.g. **My** **V**ery **E**xciting **M**other **J**ust **S**ent **U**s **N**ine **P**izzas (**M**ercury, **V**enus, **E**arth, **M**ars, **S**aturn, **U**ranus, **N**eptune, **P**luto)

LOCI

The Latin word locus, which is the singular form of loci, means a place or a location. This mnemonic can hence be called the method of location, which involves the association between information and places. Visual learners and tactile learners may enjoy this mnemonic.

Before executing this mnemonic, you need to identify a logical movement through the places. The places must be familiar and distinct to you. Once this is done, you can place the items at each point of your movement to form an order that aligns with that on your list. Creativity is encouraged in this method.

e.g. Here is your daily routine after school: On your way home, you first check for mail in your mailbox, and then you open your front door. Once you are in the house, you usually go to your kitchen and open your fridge to get a glass of orange juice.

Now you are asked to memorize the order of items that are not related as the following:

- The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee (February 6, 2012)
- French Elections (April 22, 2012)
- London Olympics (July 27-Aug 12, 2012)
- US election (Nov. 6, 2012)

You can imagine that you receive a postcard with *Queen Elizabeth* on it in your mailbox. Beside your front door, there is a mini statue of *Eiffel Tower* (French Elections). When you get to the

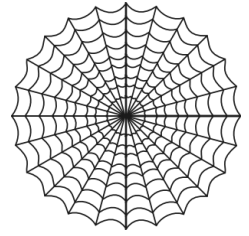
kitchen, the *London Olympics* are on TV. You then open your fridge to get a glass of orange juice that is made from *Florida oranges* (US).

SEEK OUT CONNECTIONS BETWEEN IDEAS

Making connections between ideas can reinforce what you have learned before and what you are learning. This is essential to create long-term memory. In any course, it is possible to make connections among ideas presented in class and information from the text, lab or tutorial. Information from different courses can also be related. **The more connections there are in the memory system, the stronger it will be. It will therefore stick longer and be more meaningful.**



VULNERABLE



SOLID

REVIEW AND/OR REHEARSAL STRATEGIES

RECITE KEY IDEAS

Using headings or titles as cues, try to recall the specific details under each heading you have learned. Flash cards can also be used to test yourself in respect to key concepts and definition to reinforce your memory. It's important to use your own words, as this will show you have understood and process the material, and not simply memorized without understanding.

PREDICT QUESTIONS

Predicting questions forces you to consider what key concepts are in the specific courses based on what you have learned. It helps you to capture the big picture of the courses and prioritise your study and memory work. You can do so in a variety of ways:

- Generate questions around specific details from your lecture notes and texts.
- Check out questions that are posted in your texts or study guide.
- Look through homework problems that you did and think how you could adapt them for the test.
- Review learning objectives listed on the course outlines and each chapter and think how these objectives could be addressed in exam questions.
- Share questions with others.

REVIEW OLD EXAMS

Old exams provide you with opportunities to rehearse writing real exams. To make the best out of old exams, it is recommended to treat them as mock exams. In other words, exam conditions, exam duration and relevant rules should be applied when practising old exams. Avoid falling into the trap of looking up the answers right after trying one question if you encounter difficulty retrieving certain information from long-term memory. Allow yourself to skip that question and work on it later. This could also happen in a real exam setting. Therefore, it is essential to develop the skills to handle this kind of scenario.

REFERENCES

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