MEMORY PALACE/METHOD OF LOCI: Memorization Technique

During your academic career at Pitt, you will often be required to memorize a vast amount of information. There are several memorization techniques, but the Loci technique, known to us as Memory Palace has proven to be one of the most successful methods to learn a vast amount of information in a short matter of time.

The Memory Palace technique is a memorization strategy, based on visualizations of familiar spatial environments to recall information. “Loci” is the Latin term which means “places” or “locations”. The technique involves envisioning a location or physical space that you are extremely familiar with. In this location you attach the terms and factoids you are memorizing to various locations/spots within that place. As you use memories based on space that is familiar to you, your brain which have already remembered the specific space, enables the terms and facts you associate with the space to be easily recalled.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR MEMORY PALACE

Determine places where you have lived, visited, or attended school, and are extremely familiar with. It does not have to be your apartment, dorm, or home, it can even be a restaurant you may visit or work in, or it can be your favorite park, your grandparents’ home or it can even be a movie with scenes that you know by heart. Think of places that you know so well you can walk/move with closed eyes through these spaces, and by following the same route or path, name exactly what you see. These places are great possibilities to become your memory palaces.

a. Write down a few different places which will become your memory palaces, so you have a collection for different information groups or courses.
b. Draw a floor plan for each place.
c. Create a linear journey that does not have a dead end.
STEP 2: LIST DISTINCTIVE OBJECTS/FEATURES/STATIONS/POINTS

In the order of your linear journey, number specific locations meaning points/objects/stations/furniture to help you remember the journey as you plan out your memory palace. Each feature will be a “memory slot” where you will store a single piece of information. For this technique to be successful, it is important to have the location or space and route completely embedded in your memory.

a) Make sure the direction and order of the journey and numbered items are in chronological and logical order, for example the path you would normally take from your front door to your bed. Pay attention to the features along your walk.

b) Mark each location in your palace (feature/point/station) with a number on your floor plan.

STEP 3: ASSOCIATE MEMORY SLOTS WITH INFORMATION

Depending on what the information is that you are memorizing or the volume you are memorizing, you may decide to think about dividing your memory slots into micro and macro areas (micro subdivisions of the macro)

Associate each term or bit of information that you need to memorize with each memory slot. Find something in the information and that memory slot that creates a connection, whether visually, or a sensory memory, chronologically, or any other way that speaks to you.

STEP 4: TAKE A MEMORY WALK THROUGH YOUR PALACE

Start from the same entry point and follow the same route, the memorized items will appear in your mind as you look at the memory spots that you selected. Pay attention to these features and replay the scenes. By moving through these spaces, or palaces in your mind, you will be able to remember the information that you have associated with the different memory spots along the route.

HAVE FUN ON YOUR MEMORY JOURNEY!

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