Memory Strategies

ASSOCIATION STRATEGIES

Look, Snap, Connect

- Look: Actively observe what you want to learn. Use all five senses.
- Snap: Visualize/Create mental snapshots of memories.
- Connect: Link your mental snapshots together to help your recall.

Make Mnemonics (tricks to remember information)

- Create an acronym: Take the first letter of each word and create a word with all of these first letters (Ex: Colors of the rainbow (ROYGBIV)
- Create a rhyme (Ex: Spelling – “I before E, except after C”)
- Create a sentence from an acronym (aka an acrostic) (Ex: Piaget’s Stages of Development – Sensorimotor, Pre-Operational, Concrete-Operational, Formal-Operational = Smart People Cook Fish)

Think In Pictures, Colours, Shapes

- Create mental images of what you learn in class
- Organize your notes and ideas using shapes:
  - Create a pyramid to represent hierarchical ideas
  - Make a flow chart to show a sequence
- Use interactive technology like Quizlet, Sticky Study and Flashcards Lite

REHEARSAL

Reciting

- Remember that 60% of what you read is lost after the 1st hour - unless you review the material.
- Recite in your own words while you read through each paragraph or section. Rephrasing or paraphrasing shows that you really know the information.

Teaching

- When reviewing for an exam, talk to someone (e.g. use a study group), or yourself, about the topic you’ve been studying. When you are able to explain the information clearly and intelligently, you have really learned it.

Sleep on it!

- We do a lot of thinking while we sleep. Freshly learned material is better remembered after sleep - while we sleep our minds are busy sorting, filing, and deleting information.
ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

Learn from General to Specific

- When reading or studying, first skim the text to get the gist. If you get the big picture, it is easier to remember the detail because you see how the detail connects to the whole.

Distributed practice

- Study in short sessions - cramming is an ineffective way to help you remember since memory is added by rehearsal (e.g. reviewing, elaborating), which takes time.

Ordering

- Decide on an order of importance and organize the material into an outline. When reading, keep in mind the larger pattern of the book or journal article as you progress so you can relate details to the larger pattern.

Selection

- Concentrate on the most significant information. Some courses require you to focus on the big picture (e.g. themes, concepts, patterns) while others require attention and memorization of detail.

References:


Learning Strategies, Student Academic Success Services, Queen's University, Kingston, ON
http://sass.queensu.ca/learningstrategies