



Peer Review Report Form

Manuscript Title:	Architecture of a Capable Mind: A Grade 12 Student's Lived Experience as a Pilot Participant in Memory Palace Training
Type of Article:	Original Article

FIRST ROUND

Editor

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The reviewers acknowledge the significance of your manuscript and recommend several revisions to further improve its clarity, coherence, organization, and overall scholarly quality. In addition, you are advised to thoroughly review and validate all references included in the manuscript. Please ensure that all cited sources are accurate, accessible, and retrievable through Google Scholar to uphold the credibility and reliability of the study. Additionally, make sure to include the DOI or website link for every reference whenever available to facilitate verification and accessibility of sources. Furthermore, only sources that are cited within the manuscript should appear in the References section, and all entries listed in the References section must also be cited in the text. For example, if 20 unique sources are cited in the manuscript, then only those 20 sources should be included in the References section. Please also note that repeated citations of the same source within the text are counted as a single reference entry; therefore, the total number of references may be lower than the total number of in-text citations.

Reviewer 1

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The manuscript is interesting and has a clear educational value because it presents a personal account of memory palace training from the perspective of a high-achieving Grade 12 student. However, its main weakness is that the claims sometimes go beyond what a single reflective experience can strongly support, especially when discussing wider application to Philippine senior high school pedagogy.

<u>Specific Comments and Recommendations</u>
The manuscript should clarify its methodological position. It reads partly as a reflective essay, partly as a case study, and partly as an argument for curricular integration. This matters because readers need to know how the personal observations were recorded, analyzed, and limited.
The discussion should be more careful in linking the student's experience to neuroscience and executive function literature. Some parts imply transfer effects or cognitive improvement, but



these were not directly measured. The author should distinguish personal perception from evidence-based conclusion.

The recommendation for integrating the method of loci into Philippine senior high school pedagogy is relevant, but it needs a more cautious framing. Since the paper is based on one participant, it may be better to present this as a basis for future research rather than as a strong educational recommendation.

The paper would benefit from a clearer statement of limitations. The student was already very high-performing, the training was guided by the PI, and there were no objective pre- and post-measures. These factors affect how much the findings can be generalized.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
☐	Accept the manuscript for publication.
☐	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
☐	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

Reviewer 2

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
I really enjoyed reading this manuscript. I highly commend the author for putting together a very articulate and deeply reflective piece. It is quite rare and refreshing to read a first-person account of cognitive strategies from the perspective of a high-achieving Grade 12 STEM student in the Philippines. The narrative flow is engaging, and the way you integrated cognitive neuroscience concepts like dual-coding and executive function into your personal experience is very impressive.
<u>Specific Comments and Recommendations</u>
Your Methodology section jumps straight into the chronological experience (Six Weeks Inside the Protocol). For a journal, you cannot just call it a first-person reflective account in the abstract and leave it at that. Kindly frame this formally. Is this an Autoethnography? A Single-Subject Phenomenological Case Study? You need to explicitly state your research design. Furthermore, you mentioned keeping notes during and after sessions. How were these notes analyzed? Did you use thematic analysis? Without explaining how you processed your diary entries into the themes in your Results/Discussion (like Metacognitive Resolution or Self-Efficacy), the methodology feels incomplete.
You admitted that you were reading published literature provided by the principal investigator (PI) throughout the process. Because you already knew what the method of loci was supposed to do to your brain (e.g., spatial retrieval, executive control), you were heavily primed to experience exactly what the literature dictated. You need a dedicated Limitations or Positionality paragraph. Be honest about this bias. The paper will be much stronger if you openly critique how reading the PI's provided literature might have shaped your phenomenological perception of the training.



In the Executive Flexibility section, you claimed that the six weeks of exercise strengthened the executive apparatus you bring to novel cognitive tasks more broadly. While I understand this is what you felt, far transfer is notoriously difficult to prove even with massive randomized controlled trials, let alone in a six-week self-report. Claiming actual strengthening of your executive apparatus is too definitive for your data source. Kindly tone down this language. Instead of claiming it did strengthen your executive apparatus, rephrase it to reflect your subjective experience - e.g., "I perceived an increased capacity for far transfer," or "My subjective experience aligns with the theoretical strengthening of executive functions."

Your grades were 98–99 before the intervention, and they remained 98–99 after. You eloquently argued that while the outputs were similar, the underlying cognitive architecture and effort were different. However, for a scientific journal, self-reported felt certainty and metacognitive sensitivity lack objective measurement. Clarify earlier in the introduction or methodology that this study does not attempt to measure objective cognitive gain, but strictly the phenomenological shift in academic self-efficacy and encoding habits. This manages the reviewer's expectations so they won't look for quantitative proof of your improvements.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

SECOND ROUND

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Editor</u>	<u>Reviewer 1</u>	<u>Reviewer 2</u>
Accept the manuscript for publication.	/	/	/
Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.			
Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.			