

Training programme on strategies to improve memory

Brief description

The practical application of the Training Programme in Strategies to Improve Memory (PEEM) has been carried out in various centres for adults and the elderly in the municipality of Madrid. It has now been implemented in socio-educational and socio-health care centres for the elderly and people with functional diversity in the Autonomous Community of Madrid and other Autonomous Communities.

The objectives of the programme are:

- To train in the learning and practice of a wide range of strategies and techniques useful for improving performance in learning and memory tasks.
- To expose theoretical concepts about the functioning of memory, and the changes that take place during development or secondary to brain damage.
- To promote the generalisation of memory strategies and techniques to everyday life.
- Stimulate cognitive processes such as orientation, attention, language, perception, memory, reasoning, etc.
- Improve mood and self-perception of health, in short, people's quality of life.

The PEEM is based on the model of information processing, a process that is closely related to the other cognitive capacities, it is a skill, and therefore, it can be exercised and worked on, favouring its improvement ('cognitive plasticity').

How does it work?

Its design is based on more than 20 years of direct professional experience in neuropsychological assessment and intervention. It is also based on a constant, in-depth and wide-ranging review of the scientific literature. The programme is developed in 12 sessions, with a duration of one and a half hours each, and a frequency of one session per week. Once the programme has been completed, 3 follow-up sessions are carried out on a monthly basis. Therefore, the complete programme consists of 15 sessions. In these sessions, the theoretical concepts of how memory works are explained and a wide range of memory strategies and techniques are explained and practised, with exercises and material adapted to the characteristics, needs and interests of the target population. The appropriate number of participants is between 14 and 16 people. Each session consists of six parts.

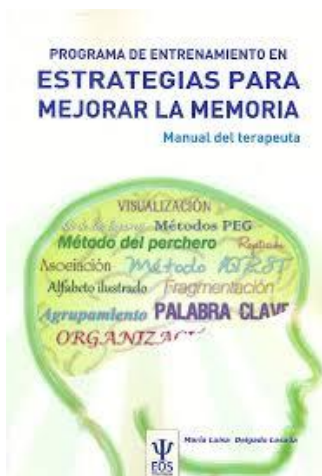


Figure 1.
Therapist's Manual



Figure 2.
Training notebook



What problem does it solve?

Among other assumptions, it is based on the evidence that people have poor information processing, do not use strategies that facilitate the encoding of information and, therefore, present a deficit in its retrieval. It has been shown that this situation improves if they are taught to use memory strategies and techniques. Cognitive performance improves, thanks to a deeper processing of information, leading to a better recall of information.

What future products will it develop?

- The PEEM teaches a wide range of strategies and techniques that promote learning and memory.
- The material is totally ecological, adapted to everyday life.
- The versatility of the proposed tasks and the basis on which they are based allow it to be easily adaptable to other groups and other needs.
- At present, its application to adults and the elderly has been amply demonstrated.
- Its effectiveness in improving cognitive abilities, mainly attention and memory, has been verified.

Competitive advantages compared to other research

The scientific studies carried out to determine the effectiveness of the programme show an improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group in the skills trained and assessed (attention, learning, memory, etc.). Even six months after the end of the programme, it was observed that the improvement obtained was maintained over time. Therefore, the programme is considered to be beneficial both in the short and medium term.

Where has it been developed?

The PEEM has been designed by teaching and research staff from the Department of Basic Psychology II (Cognitive Processes) of the Faculty of Psychology of the UCM. The research team has extensive professional experience in the field of Neuroscience, and specifically in the study of cognitive functions in normal and pathological ageing. It has developed a wide research experience that is demonstrated by its participation in several projects funded by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, the European Commission, the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness, the Carlos III Institute and CIEN Foundation and the IMSERSO.

And moreover...

In recent years, work is also being done in the field of ageing of people with intellectual disabilities, transferring the experience and knowledge acquired in the general population to this new reality that we are beginning to live in our society.

Researcher in charge

María Luisa Delgado Losada, mldelgad@ucm.es
Departamento: **Psicología Básica II (Procesos Cognitivos)**
Facultad: **Psicología**