

SOUND PROGRESS

PRECISION TEACHING

for

LITERACY

Handy Guide

Kent Psychology Service

This guide has been written to get you going with SOUND PROGRESS.

The theory and methods behind precision teaching take time to master if you have not come across them before. Therefore learning to use SOUND PROGRESS well is not a quick process. To begin with you will need to understand the phonemic approach to teaching reading and writing. This is teaching and learning based on individual sounds or phonemes. If you have not had training on this yourself a good place to start is the Progression in Phonics CD-ROM that is available from the DfES. (All schools with KS2 pupils were sent a copy in 1999).

Then you can begin to use Sound Progress. Most people have a go by simply sitting down and trying it out with a pupil. There are essentially seven different things that you will be doing within the programme. These are listed on the next page. Start by trying 1,2,3 and 4 with words like 'red' or 'stop'. 5 you will already be familiar with as it is asking the pupil to spell the word. 6 and 7 need more practise and there is more guidance further on in this guide.

Once you have tried these out you can start getting to grips with the programme itself. There are different sheets for recording different things while you are teaching and practising the skills, and over 40 groups of sounds to practice with. There are also analysis sheets that can be used for assessment and special codes to use for the different skills. There are even some nonsense words as well ! Don't try to get to grips with all of it at once. We suggest teaching skills 1 to 4 first to get the hang of it and then trying the other bits once you have mastered this. Things like the codes look complicated at first but you will soon get the hang of them.

THINGS TO WATCH!

- Make sure you spend some time teaching the skill, don't *just* do the probes. You can use DfEE materials (Progression in Phonics) or other PHONEME based programmes to support teaching. (See next page for other points on teaching the skills.)
- Avoid teaching any confusing ideas, even letter names can cause confusion so introduce these carefully. Mnemonics, rules and other strategies might be of *some* use for *some* children later on, but make sure that the basic skills are in place first !
- Watch the three day rule : if there is no progress or you see a 'blip' in the trend lines that lasts for more than three days don't persist with what you are doing - change it slightly.
 - Slice the task (reduce the teaching content) by, for example if reading only use five different words instead of ten but repeating those five so that there can still be an aim rate of say 20 per minute.
 - Reduce the number of items on the probe so that the aim rate is lowered.
- Once the child is fluent you will need to look carefully at how this is being generalised and applied in other areas.

- Think about whether they can do the task on their own without you there. See if they can show another pupil how to do it, can they work on the task with another pupil, can they apply it in their writing and reading when working with other adults or working on their own. Make this a specific target where you feel it is not happening quickly enough.
- What rewards or incentives might help in using the skills more widely in the classroom? Is there a need to support the child's motivation for reading and writing as well as teaching these underlying skills.
- How could you and others who work in the school prompt the pupil to use these tasks when reading a book? Each person who hears the pupil read will need to know the strategies he or she will be using to de-code the words and how to support them. Ask adults supporting writing to prompt the pupil to say the sounds in a word and ask "how could we write those sounds down"- plausible spelling alternatives will have to be acknowledged and encouraged and self checking, using dictionaries and proof reading will be important for older pupils. Those supporting reading will need to prompt the reader to de-code using the skills they have been taught, particularly blending.

Segmentation

1. Saying a word and asking the child for the individual sounds which make up the word.
2. Showing a word to a child and asking for the individual sounds that make up the word.

Blending

3. Saying the individual phonemes of a word and asking the child to say the word
4. Saying the phonemes for a word and asking the child to write it down.

Spelling.

5. Say the word and ask the child to write it down.

Auditory Processing

6. Asking a child to substitute a single sound in a word (swapping 'c' in 'cat' for a 'b' to make 'bat' for example).
7. Asking a child to delete a sound from a word (taking the 'c' in 'cat' away and saying 'at' for example).

- Plot the pupil's correct and incorrect responses each time the task is done.

- Analyse the progress the child makes using the guidance in the main pack or in consultation with your SENCO, other teachers or Pupil Services.

This system of teaching literacy has been developed because the special characteristics of precision teaching are immensely valuable in helping to ensure the effective teaching and learning of phonemic skills. All phonemic skills need to be learnt to a high level of accuracy and fluency.

1. The skills are practised at least daily, and usually about three times a day.
2. All items being practised are presented in the same way.
3. Items are randomly organised so that the pupil does not just learn the sequence. (In this pack there are different probes in each group that use the same set of phonemes to allow for this effect.)
4. Tasks are given for a very short timed period, usually one minute.
5. Rate measurement is used as children's progress is expressed as the number of correct and incorrect responses per minute.
6. Extremely small changes in performance can be observed.
7. We get information on a child's level of fluency as well as accuracy.
8. Results give an indication of increasing proficiency on the task being taught. The more fluent a child becomes, the greater the confidence with which we can say the child is approaching mastery.

THE SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUND PROGRESS

TEACHING PRINCIPLES.

- Start from the skills of the learner and match what you teach to what they need very precisely.
- Ensure a high level of accuracy and fluency, then skills can be applied quickly and effectively to real text.
- Teaching the 'nuts and bolts' of reading and spelling in this way should be highly efficient. You will be able to focus only on what is really needed which means that children have more time for developing other skills and talents.

A step by step guide to detailed recording for an individual child.

- Record the child's performance on the teaching record sheet each time the task is completed.

- After a few practise sessions decide whether a fluency chart is needed; Is progress slow too slow? Is this a new skill for the pupil? Are you looking at progress to share with someone else later?

If it is;

- Mark the pupil's initial correct and incorrect responses on the first column of the graph.
- Make a mark on the chart that represents a 90% correct aim rate. (So for example if the task is to segment 30 sounds the aim rate is set at 90% correct which is approximately 27.) Make this mark on the chart about 10 teaching sessions along the sheet and use this as your aim rate.
- *The point for the aim rate line can be judged once you have more experience of other pupils using the same probe or that child's own performance in the past. If you are unsure about what to set as a realistic aim rate ask a child who can do the task well to have a go and see how many they manage in the minute. Then take 90% of whatever this child achieves and use that figure.*

confusions might arise if you introduce letter names or other codes and ways to remember letters, these are not needed!

At the Higher Groups (10-45) level it will be crucial to develop the children's awareness of 'the most likely spelling alternative' for a phoneme. Spell checkers and dictionaries that are based on sound classifications can help here. The more written language a child is exposed to the easier they will find the decisions about which spelling alternative is the 'correct' one for a particular sound in a word – so encourage reading in all the usual ways.

Developing sound awareness, discrimination and accuracy at the Higher Groups (10-45) level can also be supported by using any technology that gives the pupil feedback on the sounds in words. At a simple level using a tape recorder can allow a pupil to pair particular sounds with the alternative spellings that might go with them, more complicated approaches (and indeed entire programmes) are available for computers using speech production software.

THE DIFFERENT WAYS TO USE THE PROBES IN THIS PACK

One of the most effective teaching strategies for ensuring high levels of fluency and accuracy is Precision Teaching.

Precision Teaching provides regular practise on very specific teaching targets using 'probes' to practise and monitor progress towards the target. Precision teaching uses short practise tasks that you complete regularly with the pupil. Probes have been used for many years to learn in many different skill areas and can take many forms from lists of words to pages of sums.

Probes monitor or probe the extent to which the pupil is accurate and fluent in that skill area. In Sound Progress the probes are lists of words. There are generally 12 words on each probe, which for three phoneme words gives 36 phonemes on a probe and for four phoneme words gives 48 phonemes. The phonemes are very often the important feature of the task rather than the words themselves, and for many teaching tasks the pupil does not even have to see the words, they will simply be listening to you say the words or say the phonemes in the words.

Sound Progress contains well over 100 probes. Each probe can actually be used in the 7 different ways listed above. So there is potentially a very large amount of content that could be covered.

Teaching must engage children⁶ motivating and encouraging them to learn and use their skills and knowledge. It is therefore important not to simply go through the materials, probe after probe, in a long and tedious sequence, and although there are six alternative methods of

using the probes it is not necessary to cover *all* of the probes using *all* of the methods.

Sound Progress is set out in a sequence that builds the skills gradually in a logical way. Despite this child finding literacy challenging will need to cover different parts of the programme to match the teaching to their own needs and progressing at their own learning pace. To help decide what to teach (and as is explained in the main handbook in more detail) the materials are also an important tool for supporting your assessments of a pupil's current skills. Once you are more familiar with the programme the best guide to what needs to be taught will be your professional judgement as a teacher.

The table on page 10 shows the ways in which the probes can be used.

Note that the entire top row of the table are skills that do not require any visual skills. The pupil does not need to look at a single word or letter shape to practise and learn these skills. Only at the next level

TEACHING THE SKILLS

When you complete a probe with a child, or when you practise with a group you will find yourself correcting errors, showing the children what to do yourself, explaining what they did right or wrong, encouraging, reviewing what you have done and getting them to demonstrate what you have explained. This teaching comes naturally, and might mean that a 1 minute probe then has an additional five or ten minutes teaching and

discussion with it. The important point is to plan in this teaching time, don't rely on it happening on an ad hoc basis.

Plan specific times that you can use to review how far you have come with the probes, to explain, demonstrate and practice new skills, to get pupils to teach each other what to do, and to use the new skills in real reading and spelling. These times could be part of the Literacy Hour word level work.

Use other teaching materials to support the skills you are developing with the probes. The DfEE Progression in Phonics is an excellent source of activities and lesson ideas with objectives linked to developing segmenting, blending and auditory processing.

Other published materials might be valuable to use, however, you should avoid confusing children by introducing other strategies for reading and spelling when they are at the Foundation Groups (1-9) level. Other

8) Continue to teach the skill, referring to phonemic based programmes such as the DfEE 'Progression in Phonics' teaching guide for additional teaching activities if needed.

9) Continue to use the probe in the : 16 way until the aim rate of 90% of the items have been completed successfully for three consecutive sessions or analysis of the data suggests that teaching needs to be changed. (90% is chosen rather than 100% because of the range of factors on any one day that might influence a child's performance such as background noise, how they are feeling that day and what

sort of a playtime they had ! 90% ensures a high degree of fluency and accuracy and also makes the target achievable.)

Auditory Processing is included in the table and there are separate record sheets for use with teaching these skills. This is covered in more detail in a later section of the handbook.

Reading is highlighted as it is a special case and does not appear as a category on the record sheets. The rationale for this is that reading the words on a probe will follow very easily once the first four skills have been covered and so would not require the same degree of detailed recording. A second reason is to emphasise that the probes are not lists of sight words to be learnt by heart, reading and spelling the words are the outcomes from teaching and practising the core phonemic skills. The third reason is that assessment of reading skills can be more usefully done hearing the child read a book or other piece of text that includes words of that particular level.

down are the skills of recognising letter shapes and writing letter shapes introduced.

The text in italics under each ¹⁵ gives the corresponding code that is used on the probe re forms. These codes can appear confusing and complex at first but we have found that when using the materials teachers and teaching assistants soon start to use the codes to describe what they are doing with a pupil.

Using the Probes - A Health Warning

8

The probes are not intended to be used as either word reading tests or flash cards. Using them in such ways would be teaching in a contrary fashion to the phonemic approach of sounds to letters. The introduction of another conflicting approach unnecessarily complicates the learning task and thus may well be counter

productive. In particular it may also be confusing for those children who have weak phonological skills that require considerable extra focus for all round literacy development

- 2) Decide which way the probe is to be used. (ow ph, w wr etc..) Again try the different ways out to see what the child has most difficulty with. The analysis record sheet 9 have several columns so you can try out the different skills with the same sounds without swapping sheets. If more than one skill is weak start teaching with the skill that is nearest the top of the table of skills.
- 3) Teach the skill.

- 4) Set up three or more practice sessions per day. At each session work through the probe from the top and complete as far as the child can in one minute.
- 5) Build in further teaching sessions as required. This can be done immediately after a probe has been used to look at any errors the pupil may have made while completing the practice task, however you do not have to have a teaching session with every practice session.
- 6) During the minute note the words or individual phonemes that are said (or written) correctly or incorrectly on the record form.
- 7) Note the number correct and incorrect overall for that minute on the probe's corresponding record form. These figures can then be plotted on a fluency chart if needed and can also be shared with the pupil to allow them make their own chart of their progress.

HOW TO USE THE PROBES WITH AN INDIVIDUAL

14

The following 9 stages cover the process for working with an individual pupil using the probes, record sheet and fluency chart. It would not be appropriate to be working at this detailed level with all children. This high level of planning and monitoring provides a very detailed programme for pupil which goes beyond the differentiation that might normally be available in a classroom and could be considered 'School Action' or

'School Action Plus' within the context to the Code of Practice on Special Educational Needs. (2001) This has also been described as 'Wave three teaching' in recent guidance for schools, where wave one is whole class teaching and wave two is focused groupwork.

We suggest when starting that you select one pupil to try this with and that later you would generally only need to be working in this detailed way with two or three in a class.

1) Identify the probe that the pupil needs to work on. You can start to do this by looking at the words they find hard to read and spell or by trying some of the words out with them. Also try one of the 'analysis' sheets to get an overview of where a child is. The analysis sheets are not timed (you can take more than a minute) and they show you where to start in the programme depending on the mistakes the child makes.

	Segmenting	Blending	Auditory Processing.
Pre-text phase.	<p>1. (Hear - say)</p> <p>Words (spoken by adult) to individual phonemes (spoken by pupil).</p> <p><i>Oral - Word to Phoneme</i> (ow ph)</p>	<p>2. (Hear - say)</p> <p>Individual phonemes (spoken by adult) to word (spoken by pupil) 13</p> <p><i>Oral - Phonemes to words</i> (ph w)</p>	<p>Separate record sheets are used for the skills of deletion and substitution of sounds within words.</p>

With text.	<p>3. (See - say)</p> <p>Words (visually presented) to individual phonemes (spoken by pupil).</p> <p><i>Visual - Word to Phoneme</i> (w ph)</p>	<p>4. (Hear - write)</p> <p>Individual phonemes (spoken by adult) to word (written by pupil).</p> <p><i>Phonemes to writing</i> (ph wr)</p>	
Whole word based skills.	<p>5. Reading.</p> <p>Word (visually presented) to word (spoken by pupil).</p>	<p>6. Spelling.</p> <p>Word (spoken by adult) to word (written by pupil).</p> <p><i>Word to writing</i> (w wr)</p>	

AUDITORY PROCESSING

10

For some pupils it will be necessary to supplement the basic teaching of segmenting and blending with practise in Auditory Processing. This may be especially valuable for any child who has had hearing difficulty, delayed speech and language skills or, for any other reason, may have a

less well developed awareness of sounds or a weaker ability to discriminate or manipulate the sounds in words.

Auditory processing, in this programme, consists of either substituting or deleting individual sounds in words. There are separate record forms for the Auditory Processing skills and the fluency charts can be used to plot progress over time as with the probes if desired.

Auditory Processing record sheets accompany the probes in groups 1 to 4 and for groups 7 and 8. They are always used without text and although linked to a probe can be taught using the record sheet on its own. The record forms give the target word, the sound to be deleted or substituted and the answer.

All of the **deletion** tasks can be completed by adapting the sentence;
*"Say * without the *".*

For **substitution** care must be taken when introducing and teaching the task. First the pupil must know which phoneme is being substituted (initial, medial or final).

11

Teach this by modelling the task for the pupil;

"If I take the word lap and change the last sound to a /g/ I will have lag"

"If I take the word net and change the first sound to a /p/ I will have pet"

"If I take the word bag and change the middle sound to a /e/ I will have beg"

When the pupil is clear which phoneme will be substituted it is possible to complete the task by saying; *" * with a * (at the beginning/at the end/ in the middle) instead gives ? "*

12