

The Underpinning Principles of Progress with Quest

Progress with Quest provides the teaching professional with the lesson plans and materials to deliver a structured literacy programme. The training video that accompanies Progress with Quest, demonstrates teaching and learning techniques that are essential if the programme delivery is to be effective.

A teaching professional will be able to deliver the programme having practised the routines and teaching techniques and having also worked through the worksheets and games themselves so that they have a thorough understanding of what is expected from their learners.

A good teaching professional will want to understand more than the surface programme. A good teaching professional will want to be confident that the programme is based on firm values and current research. A good teaching professional will be keen to gain an understanding of the principles that have underpinned the development of this programme and the employment of the specific routines and techniques.

The Rose Review (2006) stated:

High-quality, systematic phonic work as defined by the review should be taught discretely. The knowledge, skills and understanding that constitute high-quality phonic work should be taught as the prime approach in learning to decode (to read) and encode (to write/spell) print.

Progress with Quest is based on systematic phonic work, it is structured, cumulative and sequential and takes into consideration issues of memory weakness and lack of self-esteem which often affect someone who has been struggling to acquire literacy at the same pace as their peers. Teaching of decoding and encoding techniques is explicit, discrete and reflects the importance of acquiring an understanding of the concepts, structure and morphology of written language which in turn supports developing phonological awareness.

The order in which phoneme-grapheme correspondence is introduced enables a layered approach such that simple relationships are discovered and practised alongside a range of high frequency words. As the learner progresses through the programme, he gradually adds more reading and spelling alternatives and more complex high frequency words to his skill bank. He will also discover the structure of written language so that he understands the way in which words are developed and thus is able to apply reason when considering spelling patterns or reading alternatives.

Teaching 1:1 or in small groups enables the teaching professional to direct children to discover for themselves the relationships between the sounds they hear and the marks they see on the paper. This directed discovery method of introduction, together with reading card links, spelling card links and handwriting links, when regularly rehearsed, has been proven to establish solid connections that are retained in long-term memory.

Essential to the success of Progress with Quest is the employment of multi-sensory techniques. This means that throughout each activity the child, sees, hears, says and does, linking as many sensory modalities as possible in order to establish firm literacy foundations.

When introducing a new phoneme, the teaching professional will say three or four words, each of which contain one common phoneme.

The learner repeats each word so that he can listen to his own voice and isolate the common phoneme. Once the common phoneme has been established, the learner works out where in each word the phoneme appears. He has now established the phoneme and its position in words. The learner is now shown the printed words, he looks at each word as he listens to the teaching professional read them, echoes the words so that he again hears his own voice and identifies the grapheme, common to each word, that he links to the common phoneme. This printed grapheme that represents the phoneme is then linked to the cursive form, as the phoneme and grapheme name is stated out loud.

The grapheme is then given on a sound link card with a clue word and phoneme on the reverse and is used to rehearse the links in order to develop fluency. The end product is a firmly established sound/symbol correspondence so that when he sees the grapheme, he has automatic access to the phoneme that it represents and when he hears a phoneme his kinaesthetic memory enables him to draw the cursive letter form.

This active engagement in familiar routines by the learner enables him to develop an awareness of the structure of written language and of common letter and sound patterns so that he quickly learns to seek out for himself new connections.

Continuous assessment of progress is a core value when supporting literacy strugglers and the monitoring of progress is also vital element of Progress with Quest. The programme assesses and evaluates the security of the learner's development at regular intervals ensuring that focus is on the child, not on the programme.