

The process for using Precision Teaching

Precision Teaching was developed in the 70s to target teaching and learning of key skills and focuses on measuring fluency. It can be useful for children for whom other methods of teaching have failed and they need a more explicit and targeted approach. Contrary to its name, it is not teaching - it is measuring or monitoring of learning that takes place at another time. It is also not a class or group intervention - it can only be done on a 1-1 and has to be done as a regular commitment, at least once a day.






It can be used for a simple stimulus-response learning. Skill acquisition, fluency and maintenance can be targeted. Improving generalisation or adaptation cannot be improved using this technique. When choosing who to use this method with, consider the external factors such as attendance and the time of year. Allow for supervision/teaching time and probe time.


Using the process of Precision Teaching for unknown sounds:

1. Find out which sounds the child already knows. There may be some fluctuations but get down to a reliable core. Use the 'Letters and Sounds' phoneme/grapheme checklist or a 'Sounds Write' checklist. Then decide on the next learning step, e.g. 6 more sounds from the Phase 3 list.
2. Create a set of flash cards with a sound on the front and a picture and a word on the back with the sound underlined. 'Read Write Inc' have nice sets of these. However, making them with the child will make them more memorable.
3. Make up a notebook with a marking grid to keep scores in and a target chart to record reward points. The child will need to see this.

An example:

Name John Smith Date Started 1/10/2016

Targets				
Sound out, don't guess when reading				
Improve sounds score				
Do some auditory processing work				

 = small reward/merits/stickers etc.

Probe								
	Dates							
Current Sounds	02/10	05/10	10/10	11/10	15/10	17/10	20/10	25/10
a	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
m	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
oy	x	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓
sh	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
qu	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ph	x	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓
Scores	1/6	2/6	2/6	3/6	4/6	6/6	6/6	6/6

- Points are given for 1 point improvement in sounds probe.
- Points are given for doing some phoneme manipulation/auditory processing work. (They find it hard so reward them each time they do it).

4. Allocate at least one 5 minute session a day. Use:
 - a. Three of the week's sessions to supervise the over-learning (teach the method first - see below) of the new sounds.
 - b. The other two sessions are probe sessions.

5. Overlearning:
 - a. On the first session with new sounds, use the sound cards to build words, choose a word for the back and draw the pictures.
 - b. On the second session teach the child how to over-learn:
 - i. Hold the cards in a pack.
 - ii. Look at the cards one at a time and try to say the sound.
 - iii. Look back and check with the picture/word.
 - iv. Put it on the table if correct, put it to the back of the pile if not.
 - v. Keep going until all the cards are on the table.
 - c. Don't let them play with the cards, don't do it all for them or leave them unsupervised. These children often need to learn how to learn and these are precious moments.
 - d. On over-learning days, just work with the sounds they don't remember yet. Build words or play spelling games.
6. The Probe:
 - a. On the first probe day, explain to the child that you are checking how many they can remember each time. Tell them you are only expecting them to get one right each time and you are not looking for 100% straight away. Remind them that they knew none of these sounds, so a score of 1 is a one step improvement. Explain the ground rules about taking the first answer they give and speed of the response.
 - b. Date the grid. Show the child the sound on the marking grid and ask them to say it. The answers need to be quick and automatic or it's wrong. Add up the scores and record the total. Include the child in this.
 - c. If the child has improved by 1, give a reward point on the reward tally chart (5 points = small reward).
7. What if?
 - a. If you do the probe and there is no improvement, make light of it. Make a mental note to work on one particular sound before the next probe, maybe at a different time of day. The child's mistakes always inform your teaching planning.
 - b. If they are really failing over a couple of weeks, cut the test in half and leave out three of the sounds until there is progress.
 - c. When they can do all six, do a couple of probes where they have not had any over-learning sessions. These sounds need to be in the long-term memory.
 - d. Build in revision time on a regular basis so all recently learnt sets of sounds are revisited, maybe in a 'Superprobe'!
8. Transference of skills into class:
 - a. Make sure that the target sounds are included in other aspects of the school day.
 - b. Practise reading phonic books which feature these sounds.
 - c. If one of the sounds comes up in a spelling, refer to it: "That's one of your sounds, isn't it?"
 - d. Do a visual display of the sounds and pictures on the child's cards and put it up near their seat in the classroom. Don't do the probe in the same place.
9. Does it work?
 - a. To be successful, precision teaching requires limiting to a small amount of new material and repetition of the same material until thoroughly learnt.
 - b. There are a few children who do not respond to this technique. If it fails, consider whether the child has had a lot of absence, or staff have not been able to commit the time in a consistent way. Give it at least a term.
 - c. It may not be the most exciting or innovative intervention, but it works!