Questions and Answers

Can you use StepsWeb alongside Sounds Write or Multilit?

Absolutely. However, if using StepsWeb alongside a resource which has its own structured literacy progression, you may wish to use individual wordlists, rather than the literacy Course itself. StepsWeb includes individual wordlists which reinforce every phonic pattern or spelling rule and there is a search function which enables you to easily find and assign the list you want. In this way, you can directly reinforce what is being taught in Sounds Write or Multilit rather than following a slightly different progression, which you'd be doing if you use the Course. Incidentally, the full Scope & Sequence of the Course is on our Support Site: Course Scope and Sequence. This will help you judge which option would be best for your learners. You'll see that it is very consistent with both Sounds Write and Multilit!

It is also very quick and easy to create your own wordlists, if you specifically want certain words rather than the list provided for that spelling pattern. This will enable a huge range of online activities and printable reinforcement and the list will be available to you permanently.

By the way, there is a free trial available: www.stepsweb.com. It's technically 14 days, but let us know you've signed up and we'll extend it for you at no cost. We can also provide Zoom training on how to use StepsWeb to support your own teaching or other materials. There is no cost for this.

Where would you start with an 11-year-old who has missed all the basics of reading?

When a new user signs into StepsWeb for the first time, they will do a diagnostic Placement/Spelling Test. This is a standardized spelling test which will give you a spelling age. However, it will also analyse that learner's literacy knowledge and place them on the right Level of our structured Course.

StepsWeb is designed to be non age-specific. In other words, older learners can work at a relatively low level of literacy without being patronised by childish images or activities.

How do I help learners who are already past the age of 9 and are having difficulty with reading and comprehension?

See the answer above. A learner who is working through the StepsWeb Course at the right Level will automatically be developing comprehension and vocabulary, as well as reading and spelling skills. Diagnostic information will be available to you on exactly what his needs are at each point and the programme automatically analyses each learner's errors and creates individualized reinforcement.

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92%
Overall accuracy

89% Reading / Spelling Accuracy
77% Comprehension / Language
97% Phonic Knowledge / Skills
100% Phonological Awareness

When a child has visual perceptual issues, what activities do you use to develop those visual skills?

We've compiled a list of recommended activities and resources, which is downloadable from the webinar page. This includes lots of specific suggestions, both within StepsWeb and from outside sources. From experience, we've found that www.jigzone.com is particularly useful because it's fun for kids who are enthusiastic about digital activities, but hands-on activities are important too. For younger children, even activities such as colouring in are useful.

Bear in mind that the Visual Recognition Test on StepsWeb will measure the speed of visual recognition of words in ms. This will tell you when your learner starts to utilize the Visual Word Form Area for orthographic mapping. StepsWeb also includes activities such as Blocks, Snap, Word Search and others specifically for the visual perceptual aspects .

Would the use of flashcards help with words so they become fluent with those words?

Absolutely! Although some people see flashcards as being hopelessly old-fashioned and repetitive, you can create simple, fun games which provide a bit of variety. This can include visual memory, matching, comprehension and vocabulary.

For this reason, we've made it possible to print flashcards out for every wordlist on StepsWeb, including lists you've created yourself. The other printable game resource you can create on StepsWeb is the Stargame. See this link for a fuller explanation: Stargame Intro.

Using the Stargame cards has the same advantages as flashcards, but enables a wider range of enjoyable, group games. In fact, the Stargame is our most popular hands-on game!

Do you have any more resources on a multi-tiered approach to literacy?

StepsWeb and its supporting workbooks, printable worksheets and gameset resources cover every level of literacy. There is a structured Course, which goes from the very beginning stages (introducing letter sounds) to advanced extension levels for older learners.

However, you can also tap into extensive Wordlists, Supporting Activities and Games sections with literally thousands of words covering every spelling pattern and rule, plus word study and topics. If you can't find exactly what you want, it's quick and easy to create your own lists, with your own words, recordings, sentences, definitions and even images.

The teaching approach incorporates a huge variety of activities developing all of the core skills needed for reading and spelling, with a particular focus on developing the processing and perceptual skills needed for literacy.

Will you be looking at the processing and perceptual skills from the point of view of 3-5 year olds?

We hadn't planned to, but we are collating and uploading a range of resource banks and would certainly include information and reference material covering this age-range. We'll keep you posted via our newsletter when resources become available. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us directly with any specific queries.

StepsWeb can be used with 5-year olds as important reinforcement of letter/word/pattern sounds which have been introduced using the workbooks and hands-on materials. Activities reinforce these processing and perceptual skills in a literacy context.

What can I do for children who substitute words and word endings?

I would want to know more about how those children are processing information and what specific difficulties they are experiencing. In the absence of a full Ed Psych report, I'd suggest using our range of screening tests, which are designed for classroom/home use. They're available on our Support Site if you have a StepsWeb login: Screening Tests Introduction. If you don't have a login, but would like a copy of the tests, just drop me an email (ros@stepsweb.com) and I'll send you a copy at no cost.

As a general point, however, I would emphasize that the StepsWeb progression is designed to develop a far greater awareness of word structure and using the correct form of words in the right context. It will also develop both phonological awareness and visual perception, which should also help resolve this issue.

If this is an issue with writing words, rather than with reading, I would also recommend using our 3,3,3 method, which is incredibly effective with learners with processing/perceptual difficulties. If you're using our workbooks/online programme, I can send you instructions on using these worksheets, which you'll find at the back of each workbook.

Some of the downloadable resources mentioned here can only be accessed if you have a StepsWeb login. If you don't already, you are welcome to sign up for the free trial, which will give you access. If you need longer than 14 days, please email us and we can extend it for you.

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