



Personal Progressive Scheme

Introduction

The elaboration of a personal progressive scheme is the last step in the design of a Youth Programme. As with an iceberg, the personal progressive scheme is the visible part of something vastly bigger. In this case, the invisible part is the large amount of information gathered and the number of decisions that were taken in the preceding steps in the process of creating and updating your NSO's Youth Programme.

Concept

What is a personal progressive scheme?

A personal progressive scheme is a tool through which we guide and motivate young people to advance in the achievement of educational competencies and, consequently, in their personal development process.

The progressive scheme facilitates the delivery of the purpose of Scouting. Through the progressive scheme, young people can develop across the educational competencies and thus become active global citizens.

This personal progression is autonomous, facilitated by adults, who empower, encourage, and support young people appropriately to set their own challenges, exercise freedom of choice, and engage in self-reflection.¹

Purposes of the personal progressive scheme

1. Present the competencies to each of the different age sections in an appropriate manner

The progressive scheme is an invitation to young people to fully develop as people. Its purpose is to communicate the section educational competencies in a comprehensible way for each of the age sections that are part of your NSO's Youth Programme.

For this reason, the personal progressive scheme must be built with the recipients in mind. You should not present the competencies to children aged 7 in the same way as to young people aged 17. In all cases, it is important to ensure that the scheme is understandable and adapted to the needs, interests, and abilities of the young people to whom it is addressed.

¹ The Essential Characteristics of Scouting. WOSM 2019



2. Motivate young people to achieve the competencies foreseen for their age section

The progressive scheme is also a way to motivate young people to achieve the educational competencies foreseen for each of the age sections, encouraging in each young person the desire to develop themselves further..

Your goal should be to develop in each young person: "Ambition and hope, and the sense of achievement which will carry them on to greater ventures"²

As motivation is one of the key issues in the educational process, we have dedicated a specific section to it in this chapter.

3. Facilitate the personalisation of educational competencies

The progressive scheme must be conceived in such a way that the educational competencies can be adapted to the conditions, capacities, needs, and interests of young people.

Once the competencies have been explained, young people should be able to understand and claim ownership to achieve them, but what counts the most is participating in the activities and in group life. The competencies are not forgotten but they are pushed to the background and will be revisited at the beginning and end of the programme cycle.

This could be one of the biggest challenges your NSO faces when reviewing or designing your Youth Programme: maintaining a natural personal progression for young people while they are making friends and having exciting activities.

4. Facilitate the self-assessment process

In the educational proposal of Scouting, each young person is the first and main evaluator of their own learning. This self-evaluation is supported by peers and adults. The personal progressive scheme is the main reference that a young person has to analyse their progress and recognise their learning.

This process of self-evaluation is valuable in itself, since it is the main educational means for young people to acquire the ability to analyse their own learning, recognise how much progress has been made in some areas, and propose new goals to be achieved. In the words of the French pedagogue Philippe Meirieu:

"And we see here emerge the true meaning of any evaluation that pretends to be genuinely educational: to allow those who have learned "to know that they know" and to continue with their own learning."³

² The Scouter, October 1923

³ Regain Pedagogy From common places to key concepts. Paidós. Buenos Aires, Meirieu, Philippe (2016)

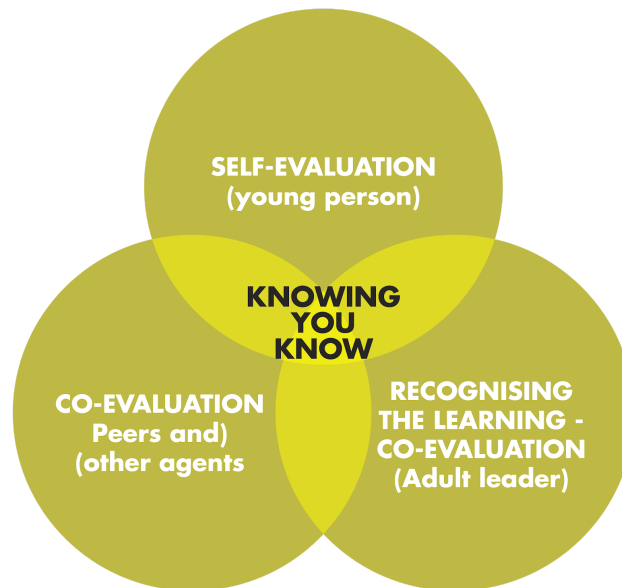


Fig.1

5. Recognise the progress of young people in their learning

Young people need to perceive that their progress is recognised by adults as well as by their peers. Recognition is an indispensable procedure to reinforce self-confidence and self-esteem and to encourage them to continue developing.

The Youth Programme in Scouting has traditionally recognised the learning and development of young people in the form of badges as well as ceremonies (considered a social act that celebrates the advancement of young people).

These are only two of the formal ways in which we recognise the achievement of personal progression. Other, often less formal, ways include increased responsibility, more challenging tasks, new roles, etc. These are usually not a recognition of an isolated learning outcome (as is often the case with badges), but are rather a recognition of overall progression and the acquisition of competencies.

However, we should not convert the progressive scheme into a frantic race to obtain as many badges as possible, a kind of carrot that is pursued and turns out to be more valuable and rewarding than the learning itself. In essence, a young person could spend many years progressing just by participating in all the learning opportunities a Youth Programme may provide, rather than setting out to obtain specific badges, and still have a similar or the same learning experience to those who have concentrated on getting those badges.

As Baden-Powell states in the *Aids to Scoutmastership*: "(Scouting is not) a school where superficial results are obtained by a distribution of medals and badges of merit."

At the time of designing the personal progressive scheme for each of the age sections, consider especially the type of recognition appropriate to each of the age sections, linking, in addition, the denomination of the stages, the design of the badges, and the ceremonies to the symbolic framework of each of the age sections.



Characteristics of a personal progressive scheme

1. Based on educational competencies

When we talk about personal development, this does not imply a desire to train perfect little individualists. The kind of person that Scouting promotes is someone who is both autonomous and cares for others. The quality of a community and its potential for development can be measured by the quality of its individuals.

The early attempts to build a personal progressive scheme resulted in lists of activities of increasing difficulty, classified into different areas or categories such as manual skills, expression, observation, first aid, life in nature, etc. In each category, young people had to pass standardised tests to demonstrate that they had acquired the necessary knowledge or skills.

One of the advantages of this pragmatic approach is that it provided the adults responsible for the units with a catalogue of activities and programme ideas. But that usually meant that the activities were not based on the young people's proposals, but on the knowledge and skills needed to pass the tests and advance in the badge's progressive scheme.

The system for evaluating personal progression was simple and understandable for adults and young people alike. The system also provided young people with simple, concrete information about what they should do to advance their progression, for example, what they should do to formulate their Scout Promise or reach a stage of progression.

However, this system also had its drawbacks.

- It led to considering the activity as an end in itself, overlooking the achievement or lack of it, of the underlying educational competencies.
- It stereotyped the educational practices of Scouting, reducing them to a catalogue of repetitive activities that did not take into account the interests of young people.
- It was an identical system for everyone, very difficult to adapt to individual characteristics and possibilities.

For this reason, we now insist on differentiating, on the one hand, the educational intention (expressed in the educational competencies) and, on the other hand, the learning opportunities through which we achieve those competencies.

While the competencies clearly explain the educational intention of our actions, the learning opportunities are the means by which these educational competencies are developed.

Together with activities and projects, the development of practical skills will form part of the Youth Programme of any age section, skills to enable greater adventures through increased practical knowledge, such as camping, pioneering, first aid, sailing, etc. These practical skills not only enable young people to participate in more learning opportunities, but the learning process itself can contribute to the acquisition of relevant educational competencies.



In this way, while in the Youth Programme we have defined a limited number of educational competencies, there is an unlimited number of opportunities that we use to achieve them.

2. Simple to implement

The personal progressive scheme must not only be comprehensible for the children and young people to whom it is addressed, it must also be simple to implement.

We can design a fantastic personal progressive scheme from an educational point of view, but if its implementation is complex, if it requires a lot of dedication, expensive educational materials, or a large number of volunteers in each age section, it will not be used.

If we want to reach out to more young people with the educational proposal of the Scout Movement, we must take on the challenge of designing a personal progressive scheme that, without abandoning the educational value of the tool, is simple to implement in the different realities in which it needs to be applied.

If this approach is a new one for your NSO, trainers and leaders will need specific training to understand the concept in order to better assist the young people in their progression. Facilitating personal progression means paying careful attention to a young person's capacity, interests, and motivation, and requires the leader's support. It may be beneficial to implement the new approach gradually, providing training for each step, so that adults at the grassroots level are not overwhelmed by the scale of changes to their volunteering role.

3. Personalised

"Why worry about individual training?" they ask. Because it is the only way by which you can educate. You can instruct any number of boys, a thousand at a time if you have a loud voice and attractive methods of disciplinary means. But that is not training — it is not education.⁴

The young person is the centre of our educational action. Each young person is a unique being, with a biography, needs, interests, and their own development rhythms. Only by knowing each young person can they be supported in their integral development, highlighting their potentialities and minimising their limitations. "This approach enables young people to progress in their own development, in their own way, and at their own pace..."⁵

The purpose of the personal progressive scheme is not to model young people according to a stereotyped or standardised growth model, but to help them develop their full potential and to be autonomous, supportive, responsible, and committed. The educational competencies set a direction for the young person's development, but choosing the path to take, the direction in which to go, and the pace at which to walk that path, must be the choice of each young person themselves. The (age section) educational competencies provide guidance but are not requirements that must be fulfilled.

⁴ Aids to Scoutmastership, Baden-Powell, 1920

⁵ The Essential Characteristic of Scouting, WOSM 2019



For Scouting, the true aim of our education is for young people to learn from the inside out, instead of adults instilling knowledge from the outside in.⁶ For this, it is necessary, among other things, to have a flexible and personalised progressive scheme that provokes in each young person the desire to investigate, to overcome, to put themselves to the test and, through this, to bring out their potential.

We need to consider that each young person has different experiences and levels of development.

4. Based on a positive look on each one

“There is five per cent of good even in the worst character. The sport is to find it, and then to develop it on to an 80 or 90 per cent basis. This is education instead of instruction of the young mind”.⁷

Scouting is open to everyone and especially to those who need it most. That is because Scouting has a positive view of young people. It does not focus on the limitations of young people but on their potential.

Adult leaders are present in young people's lives to commit themselves to their personal development, supporting them in their personal goals and achievements, supporting them so that they progressively become responsible for their own development.

The personal progression scheme must be conceived to offer “each young person the opportunity to identify their personal needs and the resources needed to improve their own competencies according to their own circumstances and abilities”.⁸

5. Based on each one's strengths and abilities

In *Aids to Scoutmastership*, Baden-Powell emphasised that the badge system “is an instrument which – if applied with understanding and sympathy – is designed to give hope and ambition... It is for this reason that the standard of proficiency is purposely left undefined. Our standard for Badge earning is not the attainment of a certain level of quality of knowledge or skill, but the amount of effort the boy has put into acquiring such knowledge or skill.”⁹

Any individual is not only capable of development, but has a right to do so. In a society which often ensures that everyone who turns up gets a prize, Scouting seeks to encourage young people to take a responsible attitude towards meaningful achievement. The personal progressive scheme invites them to ‘do their best’: to recognise their own strengths and abilities and push themselves to do more, and to recognise their own vulnerabilities, where they need the support of their peers to grow.

As a consequence the progressive scheme needs to take account of the knowledge and

⁶ Both in the idea of Baden-Powell, as in that of the educator Paulo Freire, the young person is not a sort of vessel in which the knowledge of the educator is deposited (banking education) but an active subject of his own learning.

⁷ *Aids to Scoutmastership*, Baden-Powell, 1920

⁸ *The Essential Characteristic of Scouting*, WOSM 2019

⁹ *Aids to Scoutmastership*, Baden-Powell, 1920



skills already accumulated, and the point at which a young person's progression begins in Scouting.

6. Adapted to each of the age sections

While the progressive scheme must be personalised for each young person, this personalisation is prepared by adapting the progressive scheme to each of the age sections.

The value of a progressive system based on final and intermediate competencies is that it offers the opportunity to have one continuous system adapted to each age section in turn.

Where the young person is on their journey through the progressive scheme can be seen on the grid of educational competencies, which lays out the development path proposed through the stages of development, to reach the final competencies.

How it is implemented in each age section must take into account the characteristics, needs, and interests of the different age sections.

It is essential that the personal progressive scheme be comprehensible to the children and young people to whom it is addressed; for this, it must be formulated in a language close to theirs and pose feasible challenges that serve to motivate the desire to progress in each young person.

The progressive scheme should offer a comprehensive connection between the age sections, while presenting a specific symbolic framework for each one. A one-programme concept based on a complementary and sequential progressive scheme will provide familiarity to young people and the opportunity to see a clear line of progression instead of a restarting system each time a young person starts in a new section.

7. Culturally adapted

Having the progressive scheme as the visual "tip of the iceberg", your NSO has the opportunity to show how Scouting is open to all and takes into account the cultural contexts of your country. Taking into consideration the cultural heritage of your country, the personal progressive scheme may include indigenous languages or contexts that can even be reflected on the symbols used to recognise young people's achievements. How can the progressive scheme make young people feel included and take ownership for their own development?

The challenge of motivating progress in personal progression

The definition of section educational competencies is not enough to motivate personal progression. There are other factors that move the young person to progress. We have already talked about the value of recognition as a means of encouraging progress; we will now analyse the role model and the interaction in the peer group.

In a little-known text by Jean Piaget on moral education - *Moral Education at School*, part of a series of nine unpublished texts produced between 1928 and 1944 in which-



among which he praises the Scout Movement - the Swiss psychologist identifies two factors that motivate the young person to progress:

1. **Unilateral respect:** the respect shown by younger children to older children or the influence of an adult on a young person.
2. **Mutual respect:** the reciprocal influence that two people of equal status exercise on each other.

Jean Piaget says:

"Baden-Powell understood very well, not only that the example is everything in education, but also the relationships from person to person constitute the true source of the moral imperatives.

In addition, and it is not the least of his achievements, he also understood that moral duty represents only one stage in the development of consciousness, and that one-sided respect has to be mitigated from the beginning by mutual respect, until the time when the latter takes definitive control over the first. This is why the ideal of the Scout leader is not to be a commander but a coach:

The leader does not have to be a school teacher or a troop officer, nor a pastor, nor a monitor, he has to be simply "young at heart", he has to have in himself the spirit of a young man; It is necessary to put yourself on the same plane as those you will be dealing with".¹⁰

In this motivation dynamic, we can identify two main factors: the adult leader and the peer group.

The adult leader as a supportive role model

We refer to the influence or example of the older person. When the adult leader or the team leader explains the personal progression to a younger member, they hear it because they adopt an attitude of "unilateral respect" as Jean Piaget mentions.

This respect is based on the fact that the responsible adult or the most experienced young person is a living example of what they are proposing. The personal progressive scheme is presented through dialogue, through a personal and close relationship, and the person presenting it is taken as a model.

Although many Scout educators are reluctant to show themselves as a testimony or example, to build their autonomy young people need to go through identification with different models, and in this process the Scout educator also plays an important role.

Scouting offers the potential for a partnership of enthusiasm and experience between young people and adults, based on mutual respect, trust, and acceptance of each other as people. The adult provides educational, emotional, informational, and appraisal support to young people in their own development. Educational support involves the

¹⁰ L'Education Morale a l'Ecole. De l'education du citoyen a l'education internationale. Payot. Geneva, Piaget, Jean (1997)



provision of tangible aid and services that directly assist the self-educational development of young people.¹¹

Therefore, personal progression cannot take place without the support of an adult leader, which may take three forms:

1. Observing each young person to detect changes and new competencies as they appear. Motivating leaders to observe young people and giving them the skills to do so, should be one of the main objectives in leaders's training.
2. Organising collective evaluations within each team as well as the whole group, in order to evaluate both the activities and also the level of participation and the new competencies demonstrated by each young person.
3. Informally discussing experiences with each young person, in order to help them to become aware of what they have already achieved and new challenges ahead. This intervention by adults should be aimed at developing the young person's autonomy, in other words the ability to assess themselves and make decisions concerning their own development.

The peer group

In order not to confine the young person in a dependent relationship, it is necessary to balance "unilateral respect" with "mutual respect". This occurs in the relationship with the peer group.

Piaget, in another part of the quoted text, describes an educational experience of self-government:

"Developing by themselves their own laws that will regulate school discipline, choosing themselves their own government to be in charge of implementing those laws and constituting themselves the judicial power having as a function to sanction crimes, children acquire the possibility of learning through from experience what is obedience to the rule, belonging to a social group and individual responsibility".¹²

This experience of self-government that occurred in some experimental schools we know as the "team system" and it has been practised by Scouting since its inception.

The peer group, a space where the relationships of individuals are based on reciprocity and cooperation, is another important factor to motivate the personal progress of young people. This happens from the effort of each individual to adequately perform the responsibilities entrusted to them, the support of other young people to overcome obstacles, the mutual criticism that reinforces the objectivity of the judgments and allows each young person to discover themselves, and the reciprocal opinions in the self-evaluation processes of personal progression.

¹¹ The Essential Characteristic of Scouting, WOSM 2019

¹² *L'Education Morale a l'Ecole. De l'education du citoyen a l'education internationale.* Payot. Geneva, Piaget, Jean (1997)



In this sense, the team council may play an important role when assessing personal progression (it reinforces the youth involvement but can be overwhelmed for the Cub Scout age section). The adult leader continues to be responsible for the educational overview to ensure that all decisions are fair and to embrace a positive, strengths-based approach.

How to develop a personal progressive scheme

Planning the scheme

The personal progressive scheme has to be clear, easy for everybody to understand, particularly young people, and easy to implement. It may be based on these complementary elements:

- Progress stages
- Proficiency badges
- World programmes

Progress stages

The first task is to define the successive stages which young people will need to go through in order to reach the educational competencies within each age section. You should address the number and designation of these stages when designing your NSO's progressive scheme noting that they may be different for each age section.

These progress stages will allow your NSO to have intermediate steps of recognition of young people's personal development while providing a source of motivation and pride.

Each progress stage can be linked with a certain group of educational competencies or be associated with the areas of personal growth and connected with the symbolic framework of the age section in a visual manner (if recognition is based on badges).

Usually the Promise is independent of the progress stages, because it is not linked to progress in achieving competencies but rather to a "personal and voluntary commitment to a set of shared values, which is the foundation of everything a Scout does and a Scout wants to be".¹³ They often start after a young person makes their Promise at the end of an introductory period.

If using badges to identify the different stages, these should be given as soon as the young person has joined the respective stage. This calls for a small ceremony at which the central theme is acknowledgement of the progress made. This should be a simple, brief, and personal celebration restricted to the Unit members.

Another aspect to consider is how young people access the progress stages:

¹³ The Scout Method, WOSM, 2019



- a) They can have a direct entry to any of the stages based on their development, i.e., a combination of their age and the different experiences and levels of development are the prerequisites to access any of the progress stages.
- b) They can have a linear entry progression, i.e., they always start on the first stage and progress from one stage to another, regardless of their age and a personal assessment of their development.
- c) A mixed option can be adopted to ensure a more personalised approach (especially for those young people that join Scouting at a different age from the beginning of an age section).

Proficiency badges and highest awards

The second element is what has traditionally been known as proficiency badges. Baden-Powell placed a great deal of importance on the badge system. It encourages young people to explore their own interests and personal strengths and it can help them to choose a career by enabling them to experiment with and discover genuine professions such as mechanic, reporter, ecologist, computer programmer, accountant, etc., according to their capacities at each age.

The two elements of the personal progressive scheme should be planned so that they reinforce each other: reaching an educational objective can motivate a young person to specialise in certain fields; gaining a proficiency badge can help a young person to work towards a new competency.

Some NSOs have also highest awards for each age section for top achievement in Scouting and in some countries they carried significant prestige and value beyond Scouting.

World programmes

The Better World Framework is a set of coordinated programmes, campaigns, calls to action, and events designed to develop the competencies of young people to become global active citizens by taking action around issues related to sustainable development.

The World Programmes are learning opportunities especially designed to support your NSO's education for sustainable development in its Youth Programme. This integrated approach inspires young people to take action to improve their communities at the same time they develop themselves by the actions taken for the community.

A full list and detailed explanation of all World Programmes can be found in <https://www.scout.org/better-world-framework>