

## PATSY STARTED IT AND NOW EVERYBODY WANTS TO DO IT

Mary Hurst, Rick Hurst and Joanie Clemons  
Potosi, Missouri

After attending the seminar, Learning and Teaching in Plain English, I was very excited and anxious to see what could be taught by this method. I chose Patsy, a 38-year old woman who is classified as moderately retarded. In Patsy's entire life, she had learned to sight read only two words successfully -- cat and dog. I was very concerned about setting Patsy's aim too high. I hesitated to set her aim at reading aloud ten words, which included cat and dog, at a rate of 50 words per minute.

On Patsy's first timing she successfully read only one word and misread seven words in 1 minute. I practiced these words with Patsy only about 5 minutes a day. At the end of only 8 days, Patsy reached her aim. She was so proud of herself that she called her sister and just read the words to her over the telephone again and again. It didn't matter who walked in the door, she would pull them over to the bulletin board in the dining room, which is where she kept her learning picture, and show them the progress she had made. Then she would run and get her word list and show them how she could read her words. The first day Patsy had reached her aim we were both crying, jumping around the room, and shouting at the top of our lungs. I never in my life would have thought Patsy could have come near this, but this experience gave me enough confidence to change Patsy's aim to adding 20 new words to her word list and her rate to 100 words per minute. I derived this rate from asking a fellow employee, who is of normal intelligence and a high school graduate, to read aloud for me for 1 minute. He read at a rate of 117 words per minute. Again, Patsy reached this aim without any real difficulty and in less than 2 weeks' time.

This teaching method was carried over to the other residents. It is a ritual around the house. Every night we gather in the living room to do the timings, mark on their learning pictures, and hand out prizes to the ones who have reached their aim that evening.

We made a game out of this method. We lay the flash cards on the floor in the shape of a circle, snake, or whatever design they feel like making. They argue about who goes first! Everybody wants to do it! It is amazing to see these residents so enthusiastic about learning. Everyone is happy now, because we are all having fun!

---

Mary Hurst is the Administrative Assistant, Rick Hurst is the Administrator, and Joanie Clemons is the teacher at the Moses Austin Group Home in Potosi, Missouri.

CALENDAR WEEKS

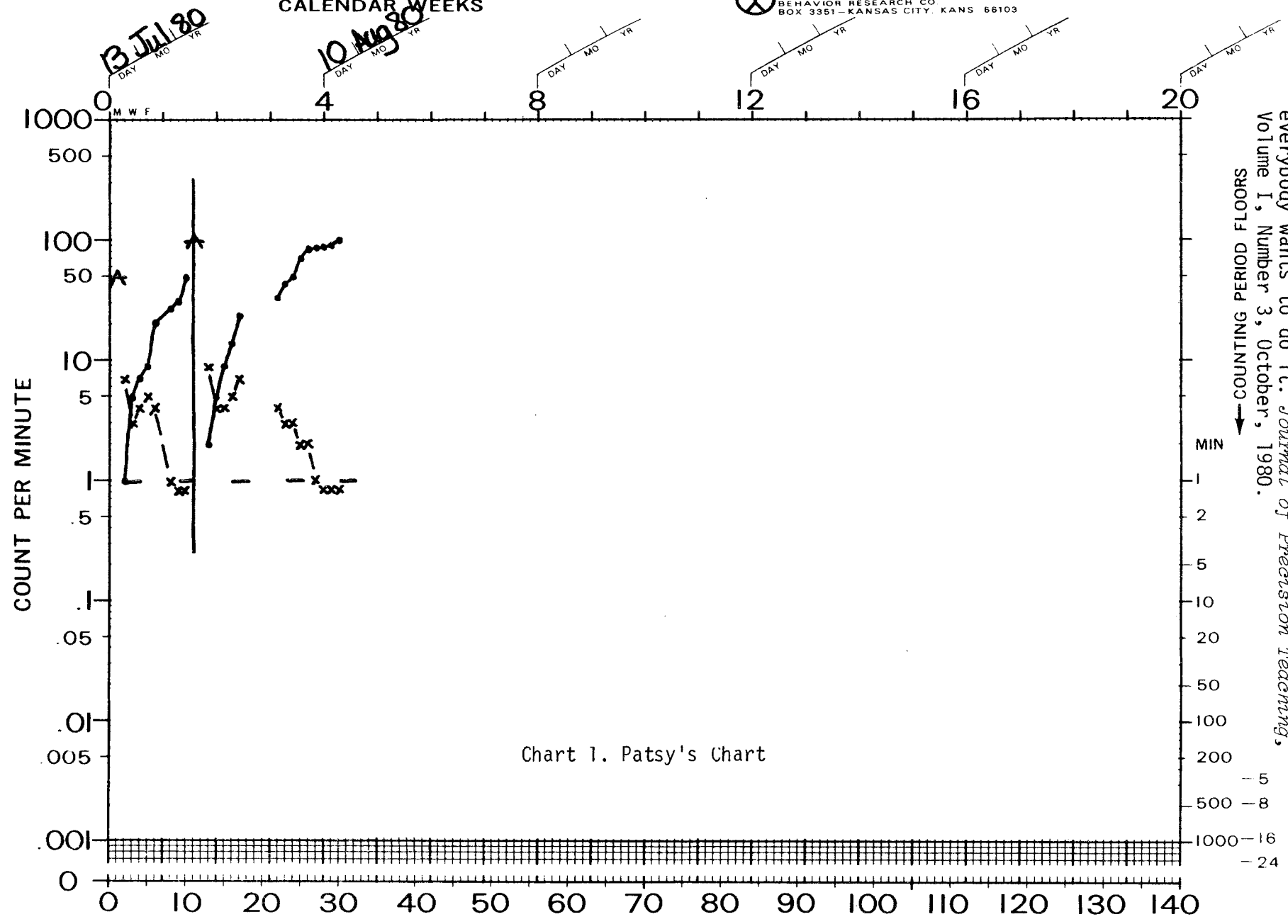


Chart 1. Patsy's Chart

Hurst, Mary, Hurst, Rick and Clemons, Joanie. Patsy started it and now everybody wants to do it. *Journal of Precision Teaching*, Volume I, Number 3, October, 1980.

31

B. Kyle	R. Hurst	M. Hurst	SUCCESSIVE CALENDAR DAYS		Patsy	38	see and say
SUPERVISOR	ADVISER	MANAGER			BEHAVIOR	AGE	COUNTED
Moses Austin	Group Home	Potosi, Missouri			M. Hurst		words
DEPOSITOR	AGENCY		TIMER	COUNTER	CHARTER		