

About PT

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Patrick McGreevy

Welcome to Volume IV, Number 2. This issue contains information on a variety of pinpoints (events that are counted and charted). A special welcome goes out to our new subscribers, as well as, a special thanks to our continuing subscribers who remembered to renew their subscriptions early.

We need subscribers, manuscripts and Chart-sharing articles. Please send your material; one of our reviewers will help you get it in publishable "shape." We would appreciate it if you would introduce the **Journal** to a friend (especially a new Precision Teacher). If you do not have subscription blanks, just drop us a note telling us what volumes you want along with a check.

Two new columns will appear in the next issue. One will address day-to-day issues of classroom teachers and one will instruct new Precision Teachers on various aspects of the Chart and Precision Teaching. How about some new subscribers for the next issue?!

CURRICULUM

Marie Eaton

One of the most frequent complaints about Precision Teaching is that it "takes too much time." It is true that Precision Teaching does take extra time, if you continue to run your classroom exactly as you always have and add PT to the list of things to be done each day. Efficient Precision Teachers learn quite quickly, however, that with a little organizational change, the time requirements for PT are lessened and in addition, their pupils become more independent learners. Sheila Fox and I have collected a list of organizational ideas from our own experience, from teachers we have observed and from the teacher trainers in Great Falls. We compiled them in the following categories: materials, timings, correction, charting and decision making. If you have other ideas that we have not mentioned, please send them along and I'll include them in a future column.

I. ORGANIZE MATERIALS

A. Prepare the probe materials or practice sheets.

Define the skill to be measured and find or prepare, then arrange the worksheet(s). Sometimes this will mean organizing a sequenced set of worksheets (see to write digits through a sequence of advancing skills) and other times it will only mean defining the sequence (think to count numbers in order 1-50, 1-100, 100-200).

Make sure you:

1. Probe what you are teaching.
2. Probe tool skills to ensure fastest possible growth.
3. Use alternate forms or different starting place to minimize a memorized order of responses.
4. Probe at **largest** curriculum step at which the student can adequately learn.
5. Provide sufficient opportunities to respond (the aim X1.5 is a good guideline).

B. Choose an organizational system for written worksheets. Options include:

1. Keep all probes in file folders arranged in sequence in a specific location in the classroom and are passed out by the teacher or students, as necessary;
2. Probes placed in folders kept at the pupil's desk and sorted daily/weekly;
3. Probes placed in labeled pigeon holes where pupils may go and pick up their own.

II. ORGANIZE TIMINGS

A. As a group

1. Everybody takes a sample at the same time when the teacher says "begin," but the worksheets in front of the children vary with individual needs;
2. Use the "exponential" system. Teacher times first child, then sends first child to time second while teacher times third, etc.
3. Use a prerecorded tape, beeper or music sample to signal the beginning and end of timing.

B. As individuals

1. Children may go to the tape recorder at a learning station and take a sample from a pre-recorded series of 1' samples as they complete other

- assignments through the day;
- 2. Each child has a partner and is responsible for being sure that all samples are completed before the day's end;
- 3. Child raises flag on desk to indicate readiness for timing, then goes on with other work. Teacher times when able.
- 4. Use volunteers or peer tutors to time.

C. In general

- 1. Take short timings. For most academic work one minute is adequate.

III. ORGANIZE CORRECTION

A. Self-correct

- 1. Answers on back of practice sheet
- 2. Correction key at a correction center

B. Others correct

- 1. Assign correction partners
- 2. Use volunteers, aides, older pupils

IV. ORGANIZE CHARTING

A. Self Charting

Have pupils chart their own counts and have them checked by the teacher or a "chart monitor";

B. Other Charting

- 1. Assign charting "partners";
- 2. Use tutors from an older class to time, count and chart. (If this procedure is followed, tutors should be trained before they begin, preferably with a criterion test as the deciding element that allows a tutor to begin work.)
- 3. Use retired people or adult volunteers as chart monitors.

V. ORGANIZE DECISION MAKING

A. Self Decisions

Train pupils to alert you when "learning pictures" indicate trouble;

B. Others Decide

- 1. Scan each chart daily and "red flag" those that require a six day trend or decision;
- 2. Have chart monitors alert the

teacher to impending changes by placing questionable charts in a special basket; or tagging with a red flag;

- 3. Establish a routine of checking charts on specific days.

COMPUTERS

John Eshleman, Steve Graf, and Bill Wolking

This year's Winter Precision Teaching Conference saw continued evidence that the combination of microcomputers and Precision Teaching is a nicely meshed relationship. To wit:

Bill Wolking presented how he uses Visi-Calc to organize data pertaining to how much learning student teachers produce. This software can be classified in the area of computer-managed instruction (CMI). His software allows for effective monitoring of student-teacher productivity. Various measures of teaching efficiency and effectiveness—a series of measures with names like "Ogs" and "Lops"—are computed by Visi-Calc. All in all, it was an effective demonstration of the application of already existing software.

In the area of "computer assisted instruction," or "computerized instruction" as John Eshleman prefers (because the machine is actually doing the teaching, not merely "assisting" in it) Bill Wolking and Michele Buss made a presentation. They showed a microcomputer program on the TRS-80 Model III that teaches Precision Teaching technical terms. Their software, moreover, stores learning histories. This latter aspect is a step towards cybernetic computerized instruction—or "self-corrective software."

Also in the area of computerized instruction the Zero Brothers (Zack and Zeke) were back for a second year in a row. Steve Graf (Zeke) and Jack Auman (Zack) presented an updated and advanced version of their Precision Decisions program. This program—for the Apple II+ computer—teaches data-based decision making from data generated by the Apple (although, once a decision has been made the generated data reflect that there has been a decision made by the user). Importantly, the program brings one to select looking at both correct and error frequencies and to look at a week's worth of data before making a decision. Also importantly, instead of waiting an actual week before making a decision—by which time charting behavior may have extinguished—the decision making responses are compressed into a short period of time.

John Eshleman presented the strategies and