

have to be held constant between the daily and the "every other minute" timings. The set of facts would have to be of comparable difficulty, and the number of days between the end of the first set of learning pictures and the beginning of the second set would have to be the same, to mention two.

Finally, to some individuals a study where one uses oneself as the subject seems to be of questionable scientific validity. I hope that the current case here helps to demonstrate the fallacy of such a notion. As Graf(1984, personal communication) has pointed out, the method of using oneself as subject in a behavioral study has a tradition going back to Ebbinghaus, who generated all his data on learning by using himself as the subject.

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#### TEACHING SIGNING TO CHILDREN WITH SEVERE HANDICAPS

Michele Mayer-Sherman  
Kennedy-Donovan Center

In teaching severely handicapped children, a great deal of emphasis is placed on developing alternative communication systems. In addition to assisting with communication, these systems help the children exert control over their environment in a socially acceptable manner. This article describes a strategy for teaching signing, an alternative communication system, to severely handicapped children and displays data for one such child.

Donna is a six year old student with a diagnosis of mental retardation. Initial informal observation and assessment yielded no consistent expressive communication skills. Signs were selected as her means of expression due to her intact motor skills. "Food" and "drink" were selected as the first signs for her to learn.

The overall goal for Donna was to independently express herself in appropriate situations. To this end, the following three-part strategy was used: (1) to teach Donna the signs for food and drink in naturally occurring situations, that is, during lunch and snack times; (2) to also teach Donna the signs during daily 15-second timings; and (3) to monitor daily progress during the 15-second timings until proficiency(30 signs per minute) is reached and then to monitor progress during lunch and snack times until proficiency(2 signs every 10 minutes) is maintained for several months. The first part of this strategy is similar to that suggested by Sailor and Guess(1983). The second part is designed to provide extra practice opportunities that will hopefully lead to proficiency(30 signs per minute). The third part was suggested by our experience with Precision Teaching.

Donna was taught the signs for food during a daily 15-second timing to proficiency using a series of prompts and prompt fading. Chart 1 displays her progress. She was also taught the sign for drink using the same

CALENDAR WEEKS

DAILY BEHAVIOR CHART (DCM-9EN)  
 6 CYCLE - 140 DAYS (20 WKS)  
 BEHAVIOR RESEARCH CO.  
 BOX 3351 - KANSAS CITY, KANS 66103

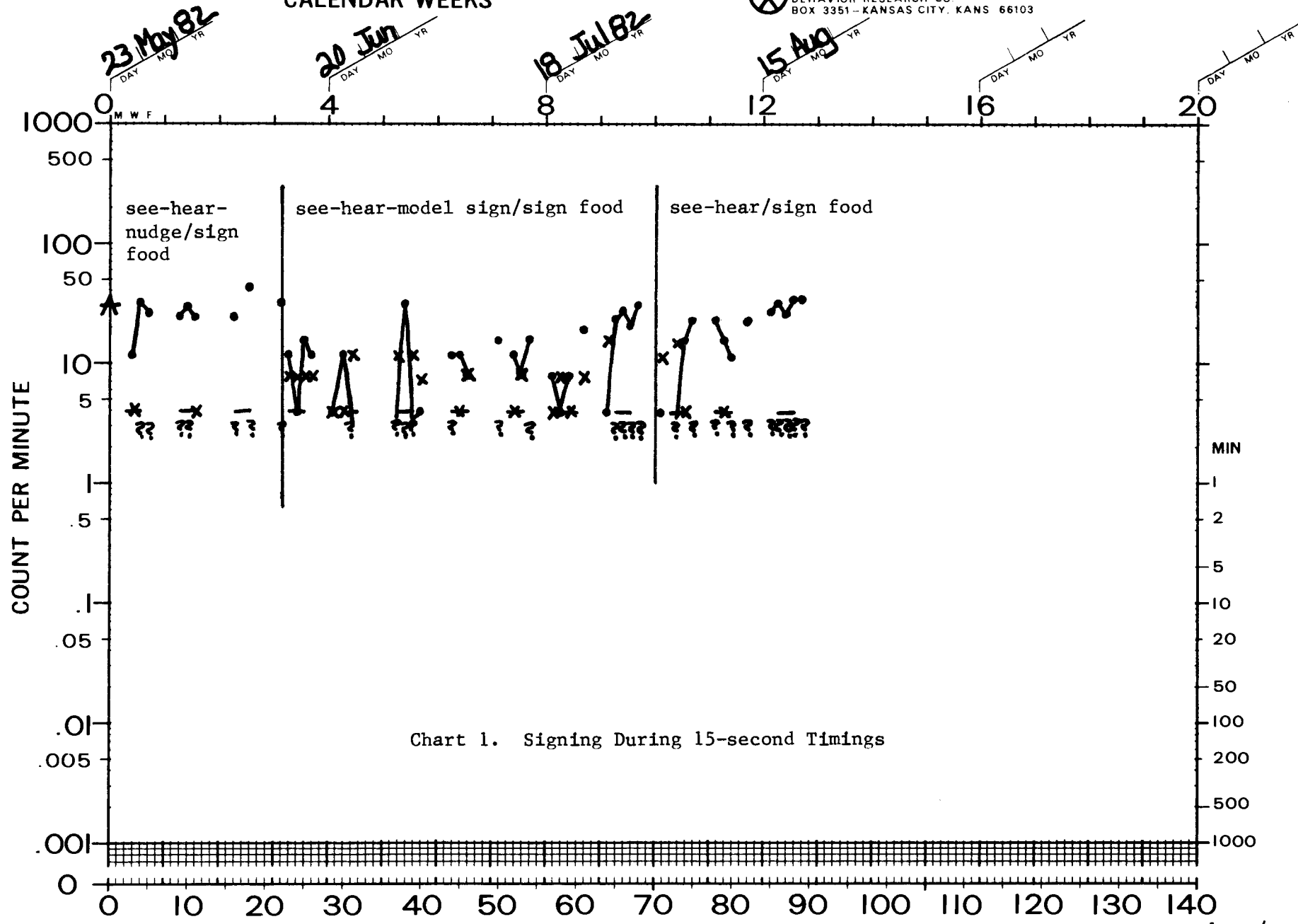


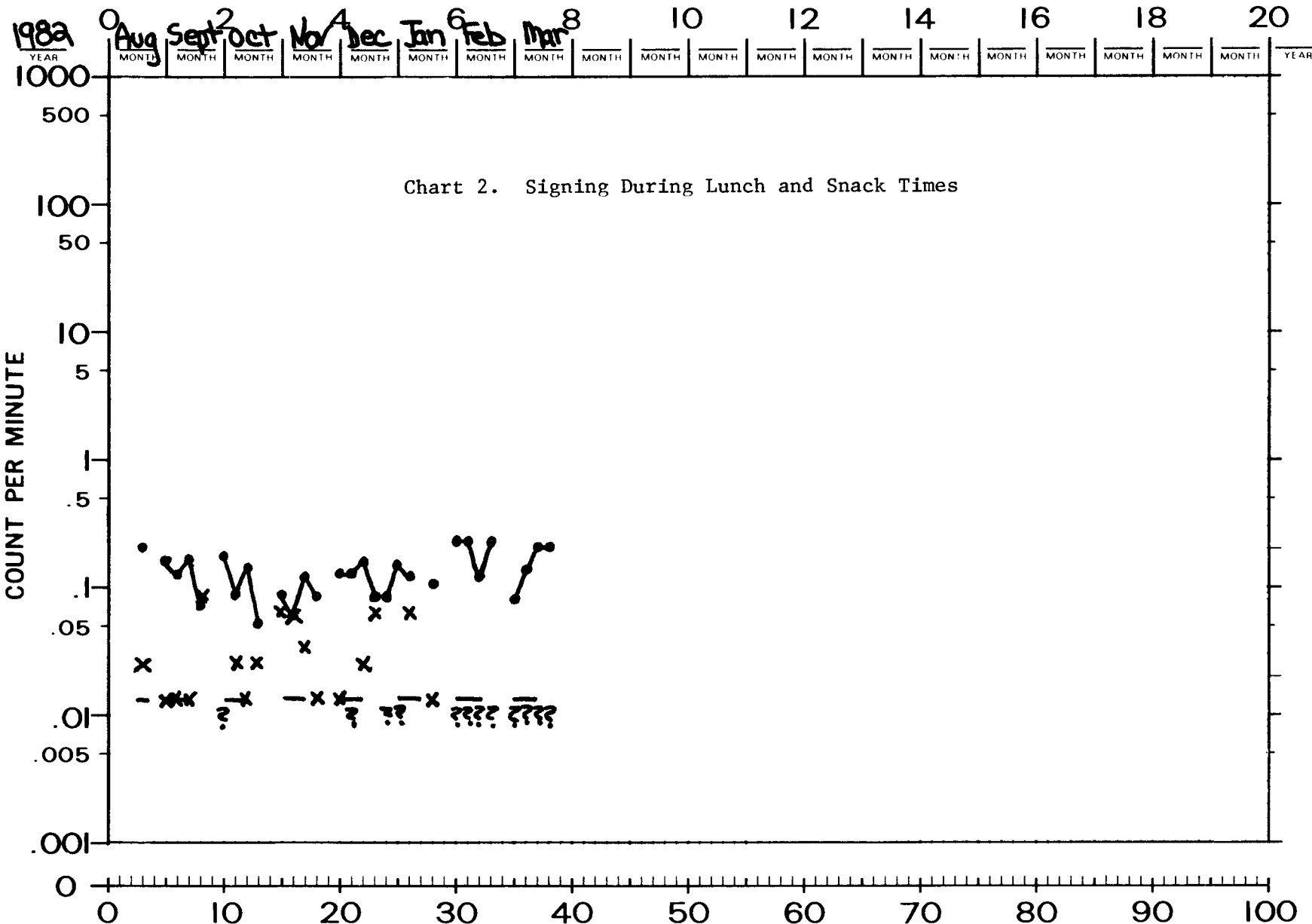
Chart 1. Signing During 15-second Timings

|                        |         |                  |       |                          |         |          |     |                        |
|------------------------|---------|------------------|-------|--------------------------|---------|----------|-----|------------------------|
| J. Kelly               |         | M. Mayer-Sherran |       | SUCCESSIVE CALENDAR DAYS |         | Donna    | b   | see-hear/<br>sign food |
| SUPERVISOR             | ADVISER | MANAGER          |       |                          |         | BEHAVIOR | AGE | LABEL                  |
| Kennedy-Donovan Center |         | Foxboro, MA      |       |                          |         | M. Cave  |     | COUNTED                |
| DEPOSITOR              | AGENCY  |                  | TIMER | COUNTER                  | CHARTER |          |     |                        |

CALENDAR MONTHS



WEEKLY BEHAVIOR CHART (WCM-2EN)  
 6 CYCLES — 100 WEEKS (20 MONTHS)  
 BEHAVIOR RESEARCH CO.  
 BOX 3351 — KANSAS CITY, KANS. 66103



|  |  |                               |  |                        |  |
|--|--|-------------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| J. Kelly    M. Mayer-Sherman<br>SUPERVISOR    ADVISER    MANAGER |  | Donna    6<br>BEHAVIOR    AGE |  | see-hear/<br>sign food |  |
| Kennedy-Donovan Center    Foxboro, MA<br>DEPOSITOR    AGENCY     |  | M. Cave<br>CHARTER            |  | COUNTED                |  |
| _____<br>TIMER   |  | _____<br>COUNTER              |  | _____                  |  |

procedure. During this same period of time, she was being taught both of these signs during lunch and snack times. Once proficiency was reached during the 15-second timings, progress was monitored during lunch and snack times. Chart 2 displays Donna's progress for the sign for food. Some generalization for both signs occurred and proficiency was reached and maintained.

Similar success has been achieved in teaching signing to other students utilizing this strategy. The students enjoy using their new skill and the freedom it brings them.

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Sailor, W., and Guess, D. (1983). **Severely handicapped students: an instructional design.** Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

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## About PT

#### NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Patrick McGreevy

Welcome to Volume V, Number 2. I would like to thank the following people at Louisiana State University for assisting with the publication of JPT: Ted Devlin, Coordinator of Special Education, Alden Moe, Chairman of Curriculum and Instruction, and Charles Smith, Dean of the College of Education. Their assistance is greatly appreciated.

If you have suggestions for improvements in JPT, let us know. If you would like to react to an article or a column, send us a letter. If you have information on new curricula, technology, or teaching strategies, send it along and we will include it in the next issue.

#### AROUND THE STANDARD CELEBRATION CHART

Patrick McGreevy

The Journal of Precision Teaching was founded in 1980 to serve two major purposes: (1) to publish research conducted using frequency, the Standard Celebration Chart, and the measurement and teaching strategies of Precision Teaching; (2) to promote and preserve standard behavior measurement; and (3) to share technical and practical information among Precision Teachers. In 1980, these three purposes were not being fulfilled by any other publication. Other journals were reluctant to publish Chart-based articles and many Precision Teachers were unwilling to continue submitting manuscripts.

In the last few years, however, several journals have published articles describing Precision Teaching strategies and/or containing multiply-divide charts that resemble the Standard Celebration Chart. This new development has encouraged many Precision Teachers to submit Chart-based manuscripts to these and other journals. The Journal of Precision Teaching and your editor enthusiastically support this initiative.

Since its inception in 1980, the Journal of Precision Teaching has had an 8 1/2" x 11" format and has printed the Standard Celebration Chart in its original size. The reasons for this adherence to a standard format and a standard chart are outlined in the second article in this issue.

Since most other journals have a format that is too small to accommodate the Standard Celebration Chart, the multiply-divide charts contained in articles in these journals have been either reduced, or truncated and enlarged Charts. In the first instance, the Chart has been reduced to less than its normal size. In the second instance, the Chart has been truncated or cut along each scale so that from 1-3 cycles and 1-10 weeks remain. Then, this truncated chart has been enlarged to fill a journal page. In the interest of preserving standard behavior measurement, your editor would like to suggest two alternative options for preparing