

## Using Profane Language versus Using Alternative Words\*

Abby Lovett  
*University of Oregon*

I chose to work with my roommate Sara on the "Teach Another Project." We decided to count her use of swear words versus alternative words in order to cut down on her swearing.

I decided to count her swearing to begin with, during about 100 minutes while we got ready for dinner, did homework or watched TV with idle conversation, anywhere between 6:00 pm and 9:00 pm. I used the bracelet bead counter, and if I forgot it, I used a pen and made slashes on my hand. Sara showed some improvement by merely counting and charting. Alternative words increased at  $\times 2$  and swear words decreased at  $1.3$ . The first intervention was reminding her of an alternative word to use instead of the swear word she used, then asking her to rephrase what she said using the alternative word. This had an undesired impact on swear words which increased at  $\times 1.8$  although alternative word usage improved with a  $\times 3$  acceleration.

The second intervention involved Sara counting and charting her own words. The alternative word usage improved at  $\times 1.2$  which was a turn down from the previous phase. However, the swear words showed a marked improvement decelerating by  $1.7$ .

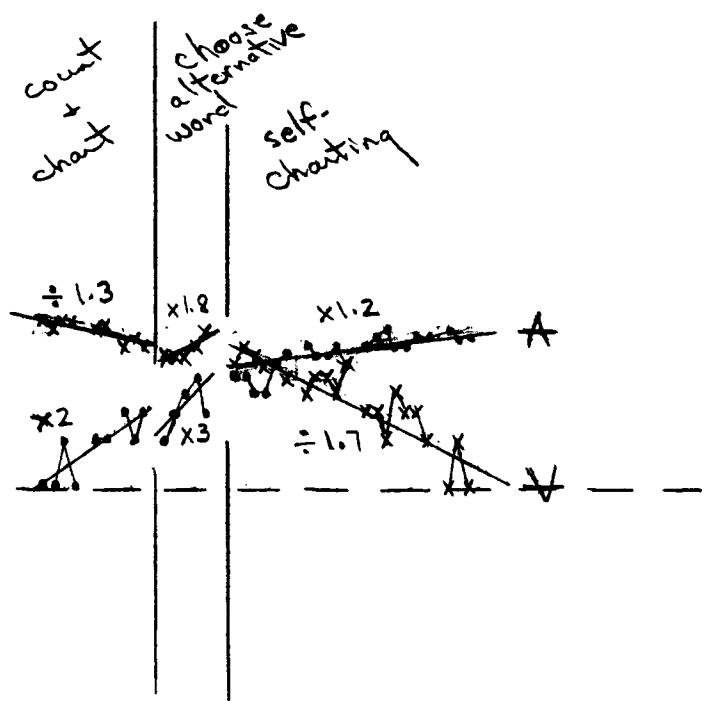
Sara made her goal of only 1 curse word every 100 minutes, and I've noticed her, since the project ended, using alternative words, or nothing at all when expressing frustration or discouragement about something.

\*This project was completed as a class project in an undergraduate winter term 2002 course at the University of Oregon entitled Evaluation for Decision Making, taught by Clay Starlin.

13 Jan. 02  
20 27 3

10 Feb. 02  
17 24 3

10 Mar 02  
17 24



CLAY  
STARLIN

Abby  
Lovett

Sara

Sara

alternative words  
vs. swear words  
said

Univ. of Oregon Edst 313