COMPUTERS

Bill Wolking, Steve Graf & John Eshleman

Active exploration and debate typifies the interface between Precision Teaching and microcomputer technology. One thing is clear, Precision Teachers are not going to make an automatic, knee-jerk jump to microcomputer technology. They want to make sure that the benefits gained are not outweighed by liabilities, particularly in terms of constraints on free operant movements. Many microcomputer programs present tasks at rates which place severe limitations on the student's ability to respond fluently. However, some program-computer combinations are capable of presenting problems at well above 300 per minute--ample for the full development of fluency and its side benefits for many academic skills.

More and more Precision Teachers showed an interest in, or use of, microcomputers at the 1983 Precision Teaching Winter Conference in Orlando. Og Linsey continued to promote the Apple II+ as the standard microcomputer for Precision Teachers. John Eshleman presented some stimulating work on a program capable of changing contingencies of reinforcement as a consequence of the student's performance and learning. Educational software which learns as a function of student performance is an important trend. Precision Teachers are probably the only ones with measurement technology sophisticated enough to support the development of functional self-modifying instructional software. Steve Graf and Jack Auman presented the latest version of their program to enable teachers to practice data-based decisions in a greatly condensed time framework. Bill Wolking demonstrated the use of "visi-eate type" programs for analyzing and summarizing information on large quantities of Precision Teaching data. Student teaching outcome data can be conveniently digested by supervisors and used to set new contingencies for student teachers with this program.

Charles Olander and Claudia McDade presented their latest work applying direct, continuous and frequency-based measurement technology to a university learning center. Chuck Merzick showed how to rig a hand-held microcomputer to be the brains of a system for automatic data collection on movement frequencies and patterns for the physically disabled. Chuck's work demonstrates one more way to get sophisticated and relevant data on important problems in natural settings.

A popular event at the PT Winter Conference was a "microcomputer program share session." Ray Beck has an Apple II+ program to generate curriculum slices using either words, sentences or math facts. This program is easy to use and should be of great help to teachers who need to generate original curriculum slices for their students and eliminate memorized first rows. (Ray Beck, Director, Great Falls Precision Teaching Project, Box 2428, Great Falls, Montana 59401) Nearly 600 references on PT covering the years between 1964 and 1982 are available on an Apple II+ disquete from John Eshleman. Books, journal and newsletter articles are included. Applewriter is used to print these files. (John Eshleman, Celerationware, 1064 VanVoorhis Rd, Morgantown, WV 26505) Michele Buss will share a TRS-80 (mod III) program that provides practice, timings and printed reports of progress in learning PT facts and names. About 330 terms and facts are included with the program. Add your own terms or use for other items. (Michele Buss, Special Education, Univ. of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611)

There were games galore at the program share session. One girl was having a good time with Verb Vipers, a Developmental Learning Materials publication. This and other programs in the series combine the fun and speed of arcade games with educational skills content. See Chaffin, Maxwell & Thompson ARD-ED Curriculum, Exceptional Children, 1983, 49(2), 173-79. More on this series in future columns.

Happy microcomputing! Keep sending your latest info on PT and microcomputing to: Bill Wolking,
Greetings to Precision Teachers in Rehabilitation!
We have just finished the Third Annual Precision Teaching Winter Conference in Orlando, Florida (March 9-12, 1983), and as always it was exciting and instructive to meet. In addition to the presentations that were labelled "rehabilitation," charted data from other contexts offered lessons for rehabilitation as well. The communication of the Standard Celeration Chart again vastly transcends the labels we use to divide people.

Coming up next is the Ninth Annual ABA convention, in Milwaukee. Let us see a lot of Precision Teaching presentations, symposia, and meetings at this ABA and even more at the next. Also, as long as you'll be in Milwaukee, why don't you come to Chicago a day before ABA and tour the Rehabilitation Institute? Call or write Chuck Merbitz if you could make a pre-ABA visit.

Finally, we want your suggestions, comments, and concepts for this column. You don't have to be formal—a postcard will do. Send material to either of us!

Carl Binder
Precision Teaching & Management Systems, Inc.
P.O. Box 169
Nanton, MA 02195

Charles Merbitz
Room 981
Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
345 East Superior
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 649-6397

ADMINISTRATIVE CHARTS

Skip Berquam, with lots of help from Tom Anderson, of Port Angeles, Washington, Gary Meyerson, of Poway, California, and Abigail Calkin, somewhere in Kansas

The Third Annual (Final?) Precision Teaching Winter Conference in Orlando is history, and in the coming months I predict you will see the phrase "...at the Winter Conference in Orlando..." appear in these pages between 6 and 12 times (x2 is normal range, right Owen?), judging by the number of references made after the first two Winter Conferences (yes, Miss Buslee, that was all one sentence [Miss Buslee was my high school English teacher (who wasn't 100% successful in teaching me composition and grammar)], which is a good indication that some worthwhile ideas were exchanged (I personally exchanged several of my own ideas), and that the Conference serves to promote communication. (I know, thank goodness for a period.) I wouldn't touch that line with a ten foot pole (not to mention a seven foot Czech). Thanks to Ron and everyone in Orange County for a job well done, and for your kind thoughts and regards. I should be back to work in a month or so.

During the Conference I had the opportunity to visit with several precision administrators, to discuss administrative data, and countable behaviors (yes, I suppose all behaviors are countable). The following composite list of behaviors is the result of sharing by a number of people. I have tried, rather unsuccessfully, to this point, to provide a structure or organization to the list. I'm sure that structure is a logical next step, and will be forthcoming. For now, I will merely relate the list we have to date.

1. Classrooms visited.
2. Student discipline contacts.
3. Parent contacts.
4. Teacher contacts.
5. Phone calls; number and duration.
6. Paperwork forms sent home.
7. Referrals for special help.
8. Parent conferences.
9. Number of teacher/administrator meetings.
10. Duration of meetings.
11. Administrative interruptions of classrooms.
12. Teacher absences.
13. Student absences.
15. Number of days with no discipline problems.
16. Hours/meetings for staff development.
17. Number/type of comments at staff meetings.
18. Parent/community visitors to school.
19. Volunteer hours.
20. Minutes per day spent on professional reading/writing.
21. Number of teachers charting.
22. Number of suggestions to try charting.
23. Number of non-mandated procedures or programs in use.
24. Positive/negative statements in teachers' workroom.
25. Lunch count, free lunch, cold lunch, etc.
26. Grade distributions.
27. Supply use, such as ditto paper, pencils, etc.
28. School bus riders, problems, distances.
29. Enrollments by grade, school, area, district.
30. Number of reports and memos.
31. Special activity participation; band, athletics, etc.
32. Testing data.
33. Budget data; accounting, projections.
34. Amount of copy paper (or other supplies)