

your patience and your support. I have experienced a great many difficulties in moving the Journal. However, most of these difficulties have been resolved and JPT is once again on an even keel.

I have one very specific and sincere request: send us your manuscripts and chart shares. Many of us have attended presentations at regional and national conferences where data are presented to support various conclusions. Most of the time, these data and conclusions never appear in a published article or book. As a group, PTers need to publish more--not just in JPT, but in other journals as well. Maybe we can pick up some hints from Tom Lovitt's article and chart our writing behavior!

Remember, if you see a Chart-based article in another journal, let us know so we can "spread the word."

I would like to thank the consulting editors, designated Precision Teachers and others who have recently reviewed manuscripts. The reviews have been precise, to the point, and very helpful.

The National Precision Teaching Conference in Park City, Utah went very well. Congratulations to Susan Ryberg, Steve Kukic, Cy Freston, Bruce Griffin, Joan Sebastian and the many others that made this conference an overwhelming success.

There was discussion in Park City concerning the formation of a national association of Precision Teaching. Pros and cons were presented. Although there was some support for such an association, it was decided that one would not be formed at this time. Some of those in attendance felt that we can more efficiently spread the word of PT by participating in other national organizations. Others felt that it might be advisable someday to apply for sub-group status within the Association for Behavior Analysis (ABA). Still others expressed the opinion that local and state PT organizations might be more useful at this time. These organizations could sponsor smaller PT conferences.

Well, with some people, a simple suggestion is all it takes. The Davis

County School District in Farmington, Utah will hold their own PT Conference on June 13. It is being organized by Mary Butler, P.T. Consultant, and Ruth Kunkel, Coordinator of Special Education Inservice Programs. We wish you the best of luck, Davis County! Let the readers of JPT know how it goes!

COMPUTING

Bill Wolking

The last column introduced and described Aimstar, an Apple II program for Precision Teachers. This time I can pass along some experiences with Aimstar and then finish the column with some information about Macintosh, the new Apple personal computer. Seven students doing practicums with me have now used the program for almost three months. Everyone started with high enthusiasm for the program. They saw their charted data on the screen, the potential of the computer application of decision rules and took off. However, it is difficult to continue, because of the time required to input the data. Recovery from errors is also time consuming. The program is very sensitive to dates and we have experienced some problems in this area. At this point, none of the teachers have elected to continue using Aimstar. The ratio of benefits (manipulable video screen charts, quick calculation of last 6 celeration lines, and computer application of decision rules) to costs (time entering data, time tracking and correcting errors, nonparticipation of learner in charting and decisions) is not good. This isn't too surprising. Discussions over the past several years about the possible contributions of microcomputer programs like Aimstar have generally led to the conclusion that they would probably detract from, rather than enhance, day-to-day Precision Teaching. Lindsley has probably been among the most consistent in saying that it would be very difficult to improve Precision Teaching with computer assistance or management programs.

When we started, I thought the computer application of decision rules would be a useful program function.

It would insure that they are done quickly and accurately and so might heighten the frequency with which decision rules were actually used. It hasn't worked out that way. This section of the program is fussy. It sometimes required a large investment of teacher time before this function gave us a printed output. Our teachers have not felt that the results have contributed to the effectiveness of their teaching. No hard data to back this up, however.

Personally, I plan to continue to explore Aimstar. We haven't used it enough or interacted with the authors enough to be able to draw firm or final conclusions. However, at this point, I don't think very many classroom Precision Teachers will find the costs-benefits ratio attractive enough to continue using Aimstar for very long. Researchers and trainers, however, may find it helpful for special jobs, or find ways to improve the program.

We feel that a program of this type will only be functional, under conditions in which learners take their timings on a microcomputer and their frequencies are automatically stored in a file that may be directly opened by a Precision Teaching program which would chart the latest data point and immediately display the Chart for the student. The current version of Aimstar tends to pull you back toward a group oriented and after-the-fact analysis of the data. It makes Precision Teaching less dynamic and tends to exclude the learner from vital immediate participation in the teaching and learning decision process.

A few days ago a new version(1.1) of Aimstar arrived from the publisher. No letter or documentation was included, so it is difficult to know how the new version differs from the old. I played with it for a while, but no differences were apparent. Hopefully, error recovery has been improved. If any of you have used Aimstar, please share your experiences with us.

Since the last column, microcomputing has been set on its ear by the introduction of the Macintosh on January 24, 1984. Apple has put out a

product which has the earmarks of a classic. This micro is different! It breaks tradition with the Apple II family, the IBM PC family and everything else out there. It's not appropriate in this column to take the space to describe the technical features of this machine. Buy an issue of MacWorld magazine or better yet, stop in at your local Apple dealer and try out the Macintosh. Don't worry if you are computer phobic. Ten minutes on this machine will leave you loving it and feeling like a computer whiz. I have observed eight year olds learn how to use the Mac by intuition in just 10 or 15 minutes.

The point to make here is that we have crossed a watershed. Computing is now easier, more personal, more reactive and productive and less expensive(per function available) than ever before. The impact on education is difficult to imagine. The Macintosh makes you feel that the most optimistic opinions of the impact are not exaggerated. Already a cult has developed among professional programmers. It's now considered a professional insult to ask a programmer to write for any machine other than the Macintosh-Lisa, 32 bit family of computers. New language are already being readied for market that are based on icons and mouse-pointing, in place of traditional Fortran/Basic symbols and formats. According to several articles it won't be long before you can write computer programs by manipulating icons with a mouse.

The Macintosh graphics program (MacPaint) and word processor (MacWrite) make it possible to include accurate representations of Standard Celeration Charts full of data in educational reports, letters, and notes. The chart may be drawn to correct proportions and then reduced in size to fit the space demands of the document in which you are inserting it.

Send contributions for the column to Bill Wolking, G315 Norman Hall Addition, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. Happy Computing!