Cindy Street and Her Second Graders Relate to Rapid Practice and Charts

Malcom D. Neely, Cindy Street, and Pupils

Second-grade pupils and their teacher accepted rapid reading practice and Standard Celeration Chart viewing as processes to improve reading mastery. The 24 pupils (12 identified as at-risk learners) and teacher share their initial apprehensions, and final realizations and attitudes about those processes. Descriptive feeling and statement counts, as well as testimonial samples from the pupils, showed their enthusiastic acceptance. Increased practicing and desire to practice, improved initial reading and practiced reading from September to June, lesson celerations, and a divide-by four reduction in identified at-risk pupils showed pupil gains for the year.

At the beginning of the 1991-1992 school year, Camelot Elementary School staff made our second grade a focus of concern for Chapter 1 reading services. We identified 19 at-risk pupils among a total of 54 second graders. A grade-level split absorbed six of the 54. Two teachers shared the remaining 48. My teaching assistant assisted one teacher, and I assisted the other.

The teacher, Cindy Street, received 12 of the at-risk pupils in her class of 24. Even though Cindy and I respected one another's skills, we had not worked together closely. I considered how to introduce Precision Teaching to her and to her pupils. As first-graders, the pupils received six, one-minute reading timings on five periodic reading progress checks. Just recently they received another reading check as second-graders--all test experiences! Cindy acknowledged our pupils' reading progress data viewed on our Standard Monthly Summary Charts1 as useful. Still, she was cautious about daily charted practices.

Lesson to Introduce Measurement
On September 19 and before Chapter 1 services began, Cindy allowed me to lead a comprehension lesson. An objective for the lesson was the review of story setting. Part of my agenda was to show measurement using other than the written word--hear/think--a task not yet well established by Cindy's pupils.

The concept, setting, proved quite "rusty" for the class. Setting was first reestablished and then embellished. I then read the first five paragraphs of Anderson's The Little Mermaid while the children listened. They had a piece of white drawing paper in front of them. They were to think about what they would draw to show the setting of the passage (i.e., think/draw). After the first reading, the pupils drew and colored for ten minutes while I reread the passage. Figures 1 and 2 show two pupils' drawings. Comparison of the two drawings shows young artistic realism and impressionism, but that is another story.

Collecting the Data
Each pupil then counted the number of items s/he drew that pertained to the setting. They tallied their counts on Post-its and left their Post-its stuck on their drawings. I counted each drawing and charted to see agreement. Chart 1 compares the children's self-counts with my counts.

The Chart shows a 52 idea ceiling (5.2 drawn ideas per minute for ten minutes), a 10 minute counting floor, and a 45 minute lesson floor. The Chart shows frequency profiles of the pupil counts and my counts, equivalent quartiles, and range ends that differ. The median test shows any difference as minimal. Fisher's exact and Chi square showed no statistical significance.

Comparison of individual pupil counts and mine finds two pupils counted twice the ideas I counted and one nearly twice (x1.8). One pupil counted 3.5 times fewer. The rest counted within a factor of 1.4 of my counts. Also, one...

1 Monthly Summary Charts are available from Behavior Research Co., Box 3351, Kansas City, Kansas, 66151.
pupil drew four ideas not described in the Little Mermaid passage, and five each drew one.

Results
The experience and the data showed need for a little monitoring and counseling, but showed adequate trust all around. The experience showed comprehension measurement with no exchange of words. The experience also showed freedom of expression and pupils having fun. Cindy, her pupils, and I team taught, practiced, and charted the rest of the year.

Procedure

Practice Reading Procedure
Cindy introduced each story and developed each unit. She followed suggestions from the sight based, "Whole Language" design of Silver Burdett Ginn's World of Reading Teacher Manual. She did this every school day from 9:30 to 10:45. She also used teaching techniques collected by Theory Into Practice advocates (Hunter, 1982). Her teaching techniques included active learner participation during instruction and cooperative learning for guided and independent practicing.

We added rapid practice after morning recess from 11:00 to 11:45, four days each week. We added rapid practice to aim for higher mastery fluency, because pedagogical guided practicing and basal reader independent practicing have slower frequencies. These slower frequencies are what White and Haring (1976) called acquisition and initial fluency building stages.

On Monday and Tuesday a volunteer parent, Cindy, and I each listened to a third of Cindy's second grade pupils individually read two, one-minute practices aloud. They read phrase-words and sentence-words (i.e., See/Say) from the week's featured story. All pupils followed each reading. The adults charted each performance on the pupil's daily Standard Learning Charts, contained in individual binders, and returned them to their owners to view their dots and x's.

On Wednesday and Thursday the pupils read and listened to each other while Cindy and I monitored. Besides see/say, the pupils asked questions [G. L. Martin, personal communication, December, 1973] about the featured story. The questions were to think/say ask questions such as "where, when, who, which, what, why, or how". Errors included questions requiring a yes or no answer, repeated questions, and questions with no basis to the current story. After each timing, the listeners told us their partners' counts. We charted while the pupils watched.

Chart Talk
Cindy and I talked with her pupils about what their Charts were showing. We drew learning pictures on the white board. We talked about celebrating low initial correct responses. We talked about celebrating the improving of correct and error learning courses. We talked about the fluency aim ranges drawn on their Charts. We talked about extra practice for threatened aims. We also talked about staying loose and having fun—after all, we were only practicing!

Celebrate
Cindy and I walked about the room looking at Charts. We celebrated steep learning pictures. We celebrated meeting fluency aims. We reminded all to consider the extra practice when their learning pictures showed them a need. We encouraged practicing at home with their daily phrase and sentence sheets. We gave them extra time to practice from their sheets and from their texts. Some pupils practiced with cross-age peers during the school day. We stayed loose, and we had fun.

Testimonial
In June, Cindy and her pupils agreed to share their feelings about rapid practicing and charting. We assisted the pupils in the classroom. Cindy wrote her own.

2. As did the pupils' first-grade teachers the year before.
3. Standard Celeration Chart; Standard Behavior Chart; Standard Multiply-Divide Chart; Standard Equal Ratio Chart; and Six-Cycle, [Semilogarithmic] Chart are synonyms.
4. Also on Wednesdays and Thursdays we practiced spelling and other writing projects. Pupils with self-managing skills can do more.
Pupils

We presented the writing with three-part sentence starters, developing each one before continuing to the next.

The first part starter began with, "When we first began our one minute timings, I thought/felt . . ." The class practiced all year on developing 'First . . .', 'Then later . . .', and 'Finally . . .' while developing stories. We used this style to write this first part. We introduced one-minute 'brain storming' (i.e., think/write). Cindy's pupils then wrote their feelings beside the sequences for the one-minute 'storm'. After the storm, we listed the feelings on the white board for all to use as they close. The list below contains the pupils' 21 generated feelings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First:</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>nervous</th>
<th>scared</th>
<th>uncomfortable need help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Later:</td>
<td>easier</td>
<td>felt OK</td>
<td>better</td>
<td>OK to try</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finally:</td>
<td>successful</td>
<td>happy</td>
<td>happier</td>
<td>wishy-washy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OK doing</td>
<td>easier</td>
<td>not hard</td>
<td>got help</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second-part starter offered two choices: "The Chart showed me . . ." or "When I saw my dots, x's, and learning pictures I, . . ." Cindy's pupils generated 12 statements in the one minute; see below:

Likes:
- top score
- dots (and my x's)
- I learned
- learning gains
- I liked reading the stories fast
- when my errors got low
- when my dots got high
- My charts showed my improving
- They helped me (better) understand the stories we were reading
- They were fast
- they were easy
- you could see my jump-ups

Dislikes:
- x's on my story, 'Animal Facts & Fiction'
- Sometimes the stories were boring; I would like different stories
- when they (the charts) showed my bad scores
- It (the Chart) took up room from my writing space

The third-part starter offered two feeling stimuli: "I liked and disliked my timed practices and Charts because . . ." Cindy's pupils offered 13 like statements and 5 dislike statements, as follows:

Likes:
- I needed to improve
- the practices were challenging
- the practices were OK
- what I needed to improve
- I could feel good
- my scores
- I was a good student
- I was actually improving
- I needed more practice
- a lot of errors
- my dots were going up and my x's were going down

Dislikes:
- x's
- on my story, 'Animal Facts & Fiction'
- Sometimes the stories were boring; I would like different stories
- when they (the charts) showed my bad scores
- It (the Chart) took up room from my writing space

The pupils drafted their opinions in the three separate stages. They then copied their drafts to manuscript paper. Circumstances prevented timing the writing process. No timing prevented showing frequency measurement of our pupils' written compositions. We lost second-grader per minute words written, words spelled correctly, words spelled incorrectly, ideas written, feelings expressed, punctuation marked, or any number of parts of speech used. What we obtained was well-expressed, experienced opinions about rapid practicing and Chart viewing from 24 pupils. Figures 3 through 7 show five pupils' opinions.

Enthusiastic second grade pupils saw advantages of repeated, rapid practice, and of self-monitored Charts. The only critical remarks dealt with "boring" stories and that we placed the Charts in the way of comfortable writing.
When we first started our one minute practices, I thought it would be hard. And I was very nervous. But then I saw it would be O.K. and I felt better. Finally I was happy it was easy and I felt good.

The chart showed me that I needed to improve at first. I thought that the practices would be challenging. But then after a few weeks I saw that the practicing was okay and finally I saw that I was doing better and that I was actually improving. I saw that the chart showed my scores my cores are better.

I liked my dots and X's and I felt good about myself. From that day on to this day I felt good and I did better.

Kjel

When we first began our one minute practices I felt just fine. It was hard. Later I felt better then that. It got easier and easier. Now I love it.

The chart showed me my scores. I needed to improve. Later my scores got better. It was easy. Finally I loved my scores. I felt good about myself. It showed me my dots were going up and my X's were going down. It helped me with other things like spelling. I liked to look at my chart because it was good.

I did like my chart all the time because it's okay to try. It was fun and hard. But I still liked it. It's okay if you are not the fastest. You can make mistakes.
When we first began our one minute practices I felt shy. Then later I felt better. Then finally I felt good. When I saw my dots, X's, and learning picture I need more help. I saw my scores. That was great! I was doing better at my scores. I was feeling good at my scores. My scores are great. I liked it. It was fun.

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Joanna  
6-5-92

When we first began our one minute practices I felt nervous and scared I needed help. I felt better it was O.K. It was not hard I was happy. The chart showed me that I needed to improve. And it showed me what I needed to improve. It showed me that I was actually improving. My chart showed me lots of things.
6-5-92

When we first began our one minute practices, I felt like a hardback opening up and I was a hardback to read but then I felt courage in my heart and then I got 3D and 2.

I needed help getting scores and then dots were going down and empowering the dots were going up the chart was going hi vs where going low dots where going in to 200s and 100s

and then we grew used to it and now I'm one of the third best readers and in the the 200s
Cindy

At the beginning of the 1991 - 1992 school year, I faced the challenge of teaching 24 students, 12 identified as "at-risk", to read at grade level. My background is the "Whole Language" approach to teaching. I know, however, that not all children learn to read the same way. Malcolm approached me with the idea of rapid practice timings and charting. It was not easy for Malcolm to convince me that this was a viable teaching method. Still, I agreed to try. Malcolm initially did most of the instruction and charting. As the weeks went by and I became more confident with this method of teaching, I became more involved. I began to help with the daily charting. It was exciting to see the errors going down and the frequencies going up. The children also became more confident and secure in their abilities.

In January, Malcolm and I realized the children were ready for more responsibility. We let the students pair up and count for each other. This added additional motivation for the students to practice. During this entire school year, the students needed only verbal praise and viewing of their own Charts to maintain their high level of productive excitement. No stickers, candy, or other concrete awards were necessary.

As the year progressed and the students gained reading skills, I saw rapid practicing and charting as valued teaching strategies. These strategies promote individual growth by each student, and still permit whole group instruction. Charting, alone, is valuable. Charting allows for quick and easy evaluating for parent progress reports or decision making for pupil services.

Rapid timings and charting are now a strand in my teaching strategies. I practiced the method, saw the results, and observed highly motivated students.

Results

Desirae's two Charts showing her year's progress epitomize the class Charts (see Chart 2 and 3). A small acceleration (x1.03) in initial correct word reading rates across 230 calendar days characterizes most pupils' progress. This small acceleration resulted in a 2.5 reading rate multiplier from the project's beginning to the end of the year. Cindy's pupils read before practice 2.5 times faster in June than in September. The Chart position of the initial correct word reading rates mattered little. Pupils reading words for the first time at low frequencies got faster reading words for the first time. Fast readers got initially faster, too. A small acceleration (x1.03) and resulting 2.5 multiplier of final correct words read across 232 calendar days also characterizes most pupils' progress. Cindy's pupils read with practice 2.5 times faster in June than in September.

Most Charts showed steep learning lines for stories practiced. Most story lessons consisted of only four practice days. The four practice days were curriculum driven - not Chart driven. There is a fear of not covering all the stories. A story a week is an implied rule. But the Charts influenced additional practice. Most of the pupil written opinions told us so. All pupils said they practiced at home. Specific celerations suggested when they did not.

By the year's end, 19 of Cindy's 24 pupils were practice reading between 140 and 340 correct words per minute (cwpm) including seven of Cindy's 12 at-risk pupils. The other five once achieved 140 cwpm when six practice days extended across a week-end. After a year of Whole-Language Reading Instruction and Precision Teaching "team teaching," only three of Cindy's twelve at-risk pupils again qualified for remedial assistance this forth-coming (1992-1993) school year. Cindy saw her pupils not only enjoy rapid practicing and Chart viewing, but profit from them, as well. Cindy and I enjoyed and profitted, too.

References

Haughton, E. Personal visitation to Elizabeth's classroom in Eugene, OR., 1971.

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