

## Using *Teaching Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* to Teach Letter Sounds

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The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of *Teaching Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* (Englemann et al., 1983) and contingent access to movie videos in the home. The number of corrects and error responses was the performance measure. The child was a 4-year-old male preschool child. The effectiveness of the lessons in *Teaching Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* was the focus of the intervention phase. The overall outcomes indicated a large increase in correct response and a decrease in errors when high levels of attention were required during the lessons. The benefits, as well as the difficulties, for persons implementing *Teaching Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* and consequences are discussed.

Illiteracy is a significant problem in today's society. Lack of prereading and reading skills is a problem that will inhibit normal functioning in one's everyday life and often impacts a person's socio-economic status (Hart & Risley, 1995; Howard, McLaughlin, & Vacha, in press; Sadovnik, 1991). Providing children with a great deal of literary and social experiences can improve the probability that students will be successful during and after schooling (Hart & Risley, 1995, Howard et al., in press). The lack of emphasis placed on reading skills, in the early years of school, can contribute to significant academic difficulties. This in turn places our society at risk economically and socially (Hart & Risley, 1995; Slavin, 1989b, 1991; Slavin, Madden, Dolan, Wasik, Ross, & Smith, 1994).

There have been many reading programs and approaches developed to help improve reading skills. Many school districts have adopted whole language approaches. Whole language approaches involve emphasizing learning reading in a similar manner to spoken language (Goodman, 1986, 1989). Recent evaluations using the whole language approach with students have been disappointing (Lieberman & Lieberman, 1990; Stahl & Miller, 1989).

In contrast, skill based reading instruction, where skills are taught directly with data-based and effective teaching procedures, have been shown to be an effective approach to improve the literacy

of all children and adults (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1990). This approach has been labeled Direct Instruction (Becker, 1977). Direct Instruction emphasizes frequent teacher-student interaction guided by carefully sequenced lessons utilizing modern learning principles and advanced programming strategies (Englemann & Carnine, 1982). The two major rules of Direct Instruction are to "teach more in less time", and to "control the details of what happens" (Engelmann, Becker, Carnine, & Gersten, 1988). Direct instruction employs an increase in opportunity to respond. The pupil is active in the learning and evaluation process. Evaluations of Direct Instruction and skill based approaches with children at-risk for failure in reading, have been extremely positive (Becker, 1977; Gersten, 1985; Gersten, Carnine, & Woodward, 1987; Gersten & Keating, 1987; Gersten, Keating, & Becker, 1988; Lloyd, Cullinan, Heins, & Epstein, 1980).

Pairing the data-based and effective strategies of Precision Teaching with its emphasis on fluency and daily measurement with Direct Instruction has proved useful to practitioners and others who work with young children (Lindsley, 1990; Johnson & Layng, 1994; Sweeney, Omness, Janusz, & Cooper, 1992).

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the book, *Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* (Englemann, Haddox, & Brunner, 1983) on acquisition and

maintenance of prereading and reading skills using Direct Instruction and Precision Teaching methodologies.

## Method

### *Participant and Setting*

The participant of this study was a four-year-old female, a bright girl who showed interest in learning to read. The experiment took place in the Gonzaga University Preschool which enrolls 10 students for 60 minutes per day, four times a week. The study took place in two different settings. Data were gathered in the preschool class for approximately 15-20 minutes. Teaching and data collection also took place in another classroom at Gonzaga University after the preschool class was dismissed. Others present during the study were the 10 other preschool students, other teachers, university students, and a Gonzaga University professor. When data were taken outside the preschool, persons present were the child, the experimenter, and parent. The study took place on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons for approximately 20 minute sessions. The study was held over eight weeks with one week off for Thanksgiving. The study was also carried out outside the preschool every other Monday during the same eight week period.

### *Dependent Variables and Measurement*

#### *Procedures*

The dependent variable was the number of sounds pronounced correctly prior to Direct Instruction. The sounds that the child was tested on were the nine sounds taught in the first 16 lessons. The sounds that the child would learn during the lessons were also assessed. These sounds were assessed during baseline and Direct Instruction. Each sound was written on a 3 x 5 inch index card and presented to the participant. Correct responses were recorded if the child pronounced the sounds in the way that was modeled. An error was recorded when the child's pronunciation was different from the model provided by the teacher following the scripted lesson. An error was also scored if the child did not respond.

### *Experimental Design and Conditions*

An AB single case replication design (Kazdin, 1982) was used to assess the effectiveness of Direct Instruction.

Baseline. Baseline consisted of presenting the child with nine sounds that would be introduced in the first 16 lessons and the selected words that accompanied these lessons. Each sound or word was presented to the participant. During baseline, the child's corrects and errors were recorded.

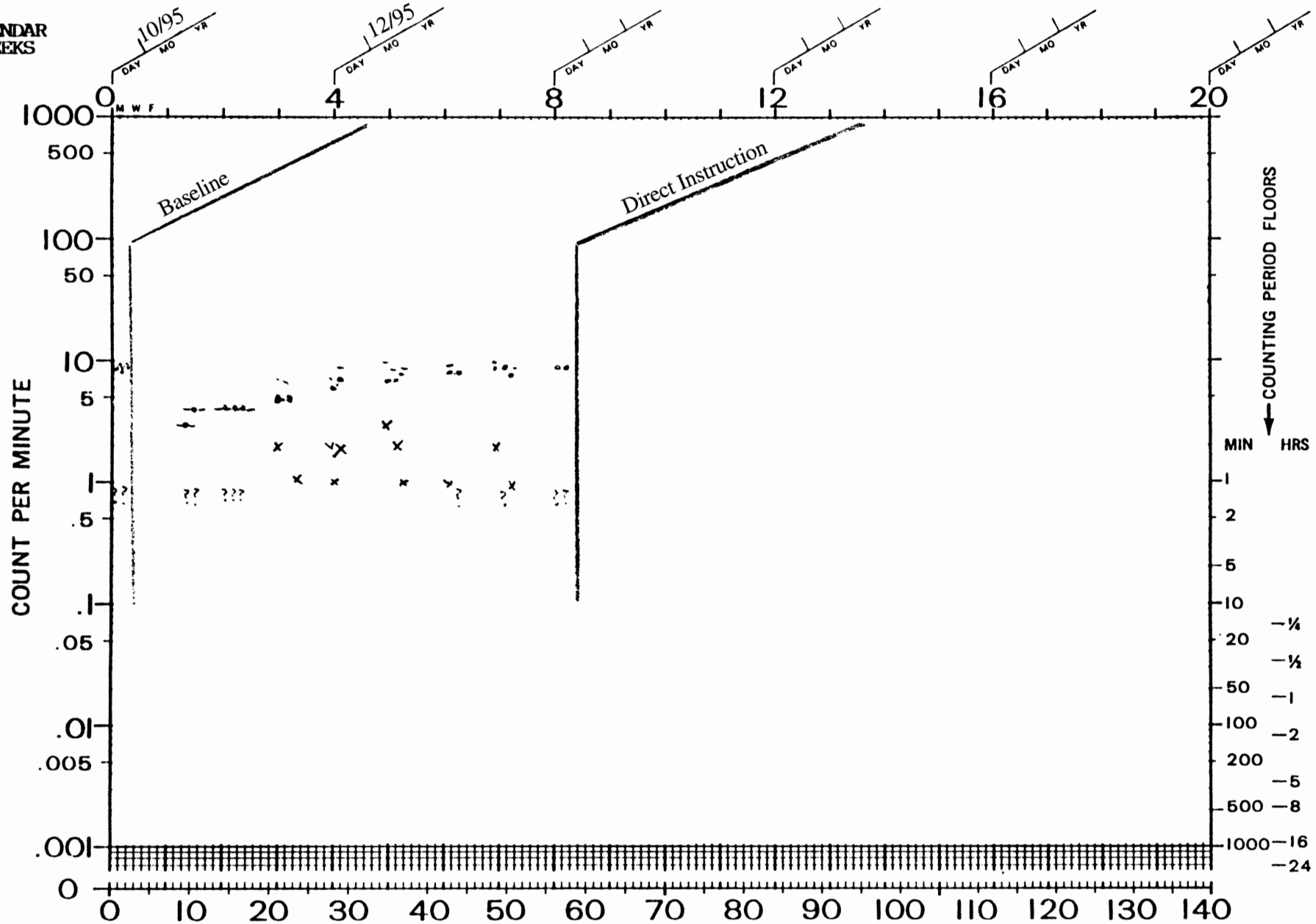
Direct Instruction. Direct Instruction was then carried out for the remaining six weeks of the study. It consisted of using the first 16 lessons from *Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* (Englemann et al., 1983). This program is a carefully planned and presented method for reading acquisition. Each session is approximately 20 minutes of fast-paced instruction. In the early lessons some important prerequisite skills were introduced. The program stresses reading from left to right and associating letter sounds with symbols. The names of the letters were not taught at all in this program. Sounds are presented one by one until the child has learned enough sounds to make a word. All previously learned sounds are reviewed in the following lessons. Review is an important part of this method, as the child builds on the sounds that she has previously learned. This program also employs rhyming which is related to sequencing sounds of the word. A detailed description of the procedures can be found in the text, *Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* (Englemann et al., 1983).

## Results and Discussion

During baseline (See Figure 1), the number of correctly pronounced sounds was 0.0 with 9.0 errors. With the implementation of Direct Instruction, there was an immediate increase in the number of sounds pronounced accurately. The number of correct letter sounds and words ranged from 3 to 9, with an overall mean of 6.62. The number of errors was low, mean of 1.0, range 0 to 3 sounds.

CALENDAR WEEKS

30



McLaughlin	McLaughlin	McLaughlin	SUCCESSIVE CALENDAR DAYS				Child	4	None	See/Say Sounds
SUPERVISOR	ADVISER	MANAGER					BEHAVIOR	AGE	LABEL	COUNTED
McLaughlin	Gonzaga University		Drago	Drago	McLaughlin/Drago					
DEPOSITOR	AGENCY		TIMER	COUNTER	CHARTER					

The data showed that Direct Instruction was an effective method for teaching the letter sounds in the first 16 Lessons.

During Baseline and when the study was first started, the participant had a tendency to say the letter names rather than the sounds. The child was familiar with the names for some letters, particularly those that were in her name. When she was asked the sounds of the letters on the flashcards, she would answer with the letter name. The parent of the child was frustrated because she felt she had worked hard to teach the concept of the letter sounds. After just two weeks of Direct Instruction the child was retaining the letter sounds of five letters, M, S, A, E, and T. In addition, she was writing the letters and enjoying the rhyming activities. This sense of accomplishment was very rewarding to the child. As she began to recognize more and more letter sounds and words, she became more excited about the reading program and teacher lead instruction. It was noted by other teachers in the preschool that when the child would write her name during group time, she would also say the letter sounds that were in her name.

When the instruction took place during preschool class, the child was occasionally distracted. The constant activity in the room made it hard to focus the child's attention. Also, the child worked better when sitting at a table rather than at a small stool that was low to the ground. These are minor issues, but ones that should be addressed when working with children.

This case study indicates that Direct Instruction using *Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* was effective in acquisition of letter sounds. The performance levels improved, and correct frequency were higher. The error frequency also decreased during intervention. It appears that using Direct Instruction with preschool children and providing them with the necessary prereading and reading skills can do much to improve the child's attitudes and behaviors towards school. The use of daily measurement and the Standard Celeration Chart allowed for data-based decisions to be made regarding the child's progress. Another benefit of using *Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* (Engelmann et al., 1983) is that the teaching procedures are clearly detailed and

scripted, and the text is widely available to the public.

Providing children with the necessary prerequisite skills and mastery of letter sound/symbol relationships has been suggested as a way to reduce school failure in America's schools (Gersten et al., 1987, 1988; Howard et al., in press; Lloyd et al., 1988; Slavin, 1989b, 1991, 1994; Sadovnik, 1991). Rather than jumping on the unproven whole language bandwagon, teachers should embrace the Direct Instruction and Precision Teaching practices that have proven effective for children at risk for difficulty in school (Becker, 1977; McLaughlin, Williams, Howard, & Reyes, 1995; Sweeney et al., 1992). The present case report confirms the effectiveness of Direct Instruction and Precision Teaching with a single child. Also, Direct Instruction and Precision Teaching procedures can improve the performance of children at-risk for school failure by giving them sufficient educational capital and skills (Howard et al., in press). This is especially important since these children and their parents typically lack appropriate levels of social and cultural capital to be successful in school (Coleman, 1989; Lareau, 1987; Vacha & McLaughlin, 1992, 1993). Additional research with different types of children over longer periods of time appears warranted.

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