

The Effects of Contingent Consequences with Direct Instruction Reading with a Preschool Child in the Home

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The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of *Teaching Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* (Engelmann et al., 1983), (referenced in this article as *Teaching Your Child*) with and without a parent selected consequence (watching a child video each day) for attending during reading lessons in the home. The number of corrects and errors made during the lesson were measured. The participant was a 4-year-old preschool male. Materials and teaching were conducted by the parent across the first 10 lessons. During the first three lessons of *Teaching Your Child*, baseline data were gathered. After baseline, *Teaching Your Child* was implemented. Due to small increases in correct rate, access to a child's video was used as a consequence for increased attending to the reading by the child during the reading lessons conducted by the mother. The overall outcomes indicated an increase in correct response and a decrease in errors when a child's home movie was made contingent on attending during lessons. The benefits, as well as the difficulties, for parents and others implementing *Teaching Your Child* with and without specific consequences, are discussed.

Providing young children access to language and letter symbols places them at an advantage when they enter school and even in later life (Hart & Risley, 1995; Howard, McLaughlin, & Vacha, in press; Sadovnik, 1991). It has been postulated that the lack of emphasis placed on reading skills in the early years of school, can make children suffer academically (Hart & Risley, 1995; Madden, Dolan, Wasik, Ross, & Smith, 1994) and later economically (Darby, 1996; Gersten & Keating, 1987). Parents and other caregivers, regardless of their socioeconomic background, want their children to be successful in school and life. Using language-based instruction in the home, may do much to assist parents in their wishes for their children's success in school.

Skill-based reading instruction, where skills are taught directly with data-based and effective teaching procedures, has been found to assist children and youth in language and reading (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1990). One such approach has been labeled Direct Instruction (Becker, 1977). Direct Instruction emphasizes a high rate teacher-student interaction, guided by carefully sequenced lessons utilizing modern learning principles and advanced programming strategies (Engelmann & Carnine, 1982). Two tenants of Direct Instruction continue to be "teach more in less time," and to "control the details of

what happens" (Engelmann, Becker, Carnine, & Gersten, 1988).

The developers of Direct Instruction have created a set of materials to assist parents and other caregivers to teach young children the skills to be needed when they enter school, *Teaching Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* (Engelmann, Haddox, & Brunner, 1983). The child is active in the learning and teaching process. The text and program stress reading from left to right and matching letter sounds with symbols. Sounds are presented one by one until the child has been taught enough sounds to make a word. All previous sounds that were presented are reviewed in the next lessons. Review remains a critical component of this method, since the child builds on the sounds that he/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* (Engelmann et al., 1983).

Paring another data-based and effective strategy, Precision Teaching (Lindsley, 1990; Johnson & Layng, 1994), with its emphasis on fluency and daily assessment in reading (Sweeney, Omness, Janusz, & Cooper, 1992), with contingency

management in the home (Witt, Hannafin, & Martens, 1983), along with Direct Instruction (Carnine et al., 1990) should be of interest. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the book *Teach Your Child* (Engelmann et al., 1983), with and without consequences in the home on acquisition of prereading skills of a preschool child.

Method

Participant and Setting

The participant of this study, a four-year-old male, was verbal but unable to read letter names or sounds. Instruction and data collection took place in the child's home. The child's mother, enrolled in a local university teacher training program, was the first author and had the primary responsibility for data instruction, data collection and analysis.

Dependent Variables and Measurement Procedures

The dependent variable was the number of sounds pronounced during the 20-minute reading lesson. Correct responses were recorded if the child pronounced the word or sounds in the manner that was modeled. An error was recorded when the child's pronunciation was different from the model provided by the parent, following the scripted lesson, or if the child stated he did not know the answer.

Experimental Design and Conditions

An ABC single case replication design (Kazdin, 1982) was used to assess the effectiveness of *Teaching Your Child* (Engelmann et al, 1983) and the addition of allowing the child to view home videos based on his attending during lessons as the independent variable.

Baseline. Baseline consisted of presenting the child with the material from the section review for each of the first 3 lessons of *Teaching Your Child*. Each sound or word was presented to the participant with no feedback provided. Correct and error rate were taken.

Teaching your child to read in 100 easy lessons. Direct Instruction with the first 5 lessons from

Teach Your Child (Engelmann et al, 1983) was employed. First, the child was shown a specific sound, the parent then modeled the sound, and then the child and parent said the sound together. The child was then required to say the sound in isolation. Finally, the child would practice tracing and writing the sound. After the end of each lesson, the child was asked to produce and pronounce the sound presented from the materials in the sound review section of the materials. Each session lasted approximately 20 minutes. A detailed description of the procedures is in the text, *Teach Your Child* (Engelmann et al, 1983).

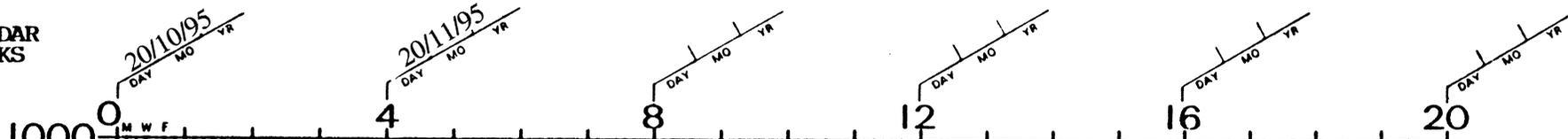
Teaching your child to read in 100 easy lessons + contingency. During this condition, the child was rewarded after completing his lessons by being permitted to watch a movie in the home. The child enjoyed watching movies on video; some of his favorite videos Disney classics and cartoons.

Results and Discussion

During Baseline (Chart 1), the number of corrects was low, 0.0. With the implementation of *Teaching Your Child to Read* (Engelmann et al, 1983), there was a small increase in the number of corrects (range 1 to 2; $\bar{M} = 1$), while errors remained low (1 to 2.0; $\bar{M} = 1.6$). When viewing a favorite child's home video was made contingent being attentive during the lessons, corrects increased (range 4 to 8; $\bar{M} = 5.4$), and errors remained low 0 to 1; $\bar{M} = 0.6$). A Friedman Analysis of Variance (Siegel, 1956) approached significance for corrects ($\chi^2 = 5.636$; $p = .0597$), but not for errors ($\chi^2 = 5.0$; $p = .1825$).

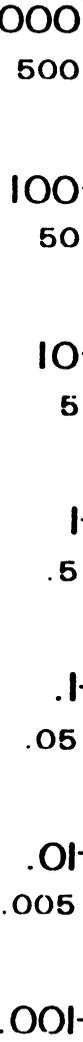
The data showed that using *Teaching Your Child to Read*, when paired with an effective consequence, was effective method for acquiring skills needed for reading. During Baseline and when the study first began, the participant had a tendency not pay attention and guess. The child was familiar with the names for some letters, particularly those that were in her name.

CALENDAR WEEKS

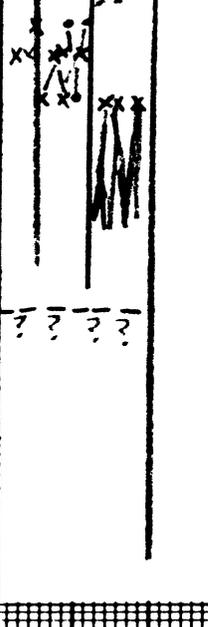


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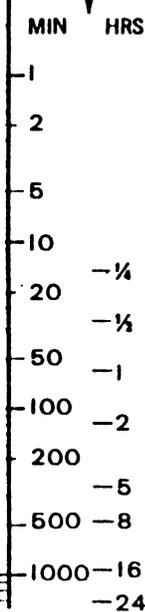
COUNT PER MINUTE



Baseline
 Teach Your Child to Read
 in 100 Easy Lessons
 Teach Your Child to Read
 in 100 Easy Lessons + Contingency



COUNTING PERIOD FLOORS



SUCCESSIVE CALENDAR DAYS

McLaughlin	McLaughlin	McLaughlin		Preschool	4	See/Say Sounds
SUPERVISOR	ADVISER	MANAGER		BEHAVER	AGE	LABEL
	Gonzaga University			Stenseth		COUNTED
DEPOSITOR	AGENCY	TIMER	COUNTER	CHARTER		

This case study indicates that Direct Instruction using *Teach Your Child* was effective in acquisition of reading skills. However, pairing Direct Instruction with the effective use of contingencies was the more effective strategy. 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 assessment of progress and the Standard Celeration Chart allowed for data-based decisions to be made regarding the child's progress. A very important aspect of using *Teach Your Child* was that the teaching procedures are clearly detailed and scripted, and the text is widely available to the public.

The program was very easy for the parent to carry out in the home. The procedures were not expensive, and many parents already have videos for children in the home. Additional research may wish to evaluate whether or not the materials taught using the Direct Instruction materials would maintain over time. The parents enjoyed using the reading materials and were pleased with the outcomes, especially after the contingency for attending was added.

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