

# Regina's Reading Program and Progress

Kate Ascah  
The Pennsylvania State University

*Regina was a 5-year-old kindergarten student identified as being at-risk in reading during her suburban, central Pennsylvania school district's kindergarten screening. According to her teacher, she was of average intelligence but behind most of her peers in beginning reading skills. She enjoyed pretend play and crafts; however, during gathering times for instruction she would often stretch out on her back on the carpet, saying that she was tired, and would slump down in her chair during language arts centers.*

---

Regina had difficulty with many beginning reading skills. She struggled with telescoping words, could not segment words, and did not know most of the letter sounds and phonemes. Although already part of a small group that received daily instruction from her elementary school's Instructional Support Teacher from the Reading Mastery program, Regina was selected to receive additional reading instruction due to her significant deficits in foundational skills. The focus of intervention for Regina was providing instruction and practice in telescoping, segmenting, letter sounds, and eventually sounding out words, so that she could catch up to her peers and begin to read.

## *Methods*

Prior to intervention, assessment data were collected in order to figure out with what skills to begin instruction. The instructor informally assessed hear-say segmenting, hear-say blending, see-say letter sounds, see-say blending, and see-say sight words. Fluency aims appear in Table 1. Regina was not fluent in any of the assessed skill areas, as she only correctly blended three words in a minute for hear-say blending, could not segment words, only knew the letter sounds for m and s, and could not perform any see-say tasks (Kubina, 2002). Given assessment results, her instruction began with phonemic awareness (telescoping and blending) and see-say letter sounds.

The instructor worked with Regina Monday-Thursday mornings for 8 weeks with occasional missed sessions due to in-service days or classroom events (fire drill and special morning activity).

These sessions included instruction and practice in blending and segmenting and letter sounds, with sounding out regular VC and CVC words added in the fifth week of instruction. Lessons took place in the hall behind a large folding divider so as to block out distractions. They began as soon as Regina had taken off her coat and put away her backpack. Instructional sessions lasted between 5 and 10 minutes, depending on the time that Regina arrived at school and her classroom schedule.

Lessons began with instruction and practice in letter sounds, then segmenting and blending, with sounding out words during weeks 5-8. Each skill area had a model, lead, and test phase following the formats of Direct Instruction Reading (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, & Tarver, 2004). See Figure 1 for a sample lesson plan. Starting in the second week of instruction, Regina did practice trials, in keeping with the practices of Precision Teaching with an eight-letter sound sheet to build fluency after each lesson (Lindsley, 1990). Regina was read the following instructions before the first trial each day:

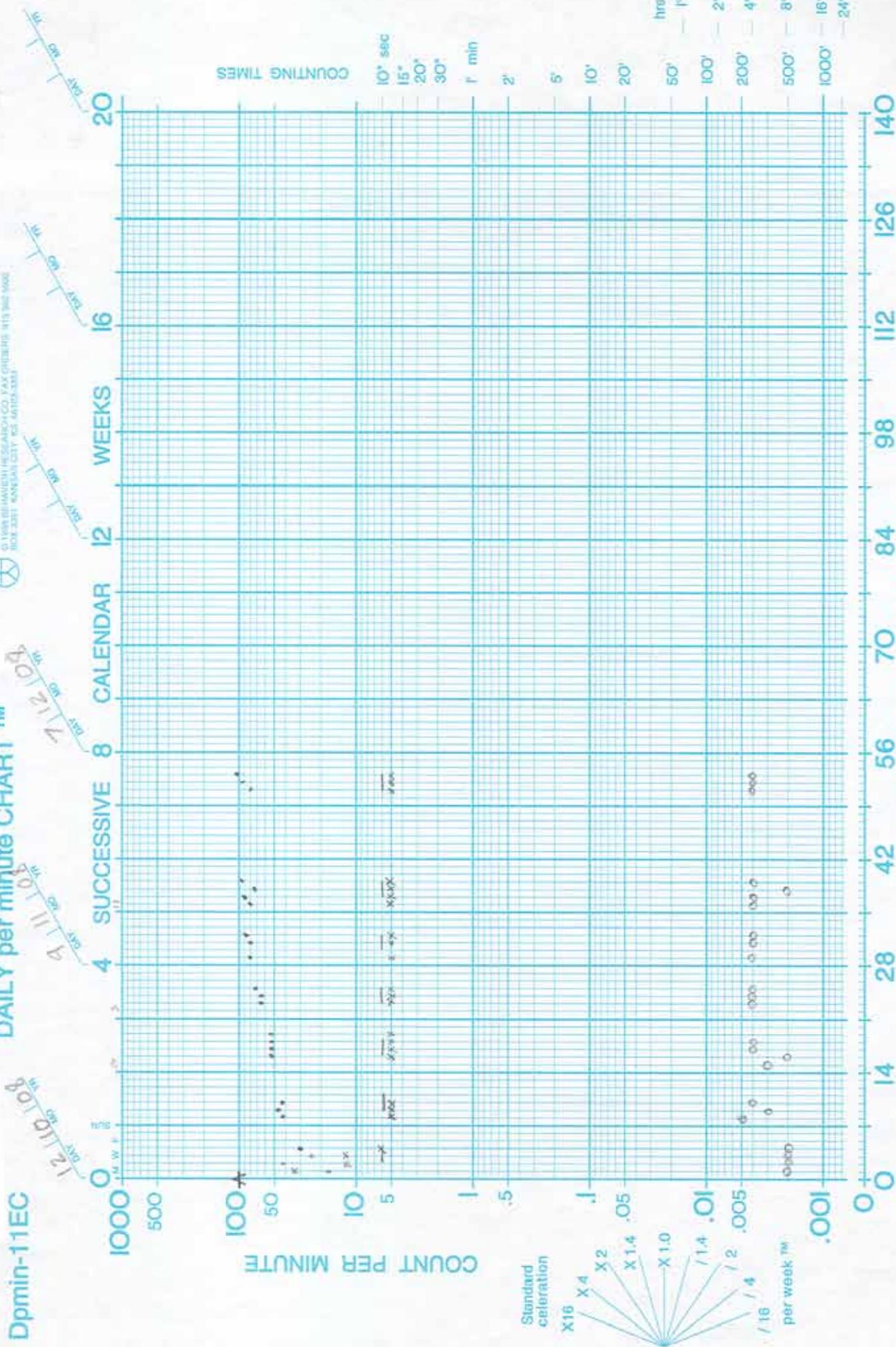
When I say "begin," point to each letter and say its sound. Try to do as many as you can. Move your finger across the paper as you point and say each sound. Try to say as many sounds as you can. Don't worry if you do not finish this sheet, just try your best. Are there any questions? Please begin.

Trials lasted 10 seconds, starting when the instructor said "begin" and ending with the beeping of a digital kitchen timer that had been set for the aforementioned time. The letter sound sheet used

Dpmin-11EC

DAILY per minute CHART™

1885 Y per minute frequency Spectroscopic Graph - 40mm x 110cm  
 1000 Y per minute frequency Spectroscopic Graph - 40mm x 110cm  
 BOX 33811 KANSAS CITY, MO 64118-3381



SUPERVISOR \_\_\_\_\_ ADVISER \_\_\_\_\_ ROOM \_\_\_\_\_  
 ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_ DIVISION Kindergarten ROOM \_\_\_\_\_  
 K. Ascah \_\_\_\_\_ K. Ascah \_\_\_\_\_ K. Ascah \_\_\_\_\_  
 TIMER \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTER \_\_\_\_\_ CHARTER \_\_\_\_\_  
 PERFORMER Regina  
 5 See-Say letter sounds - COUNTED 8 sound sheet

## CHART SHARE: REGINA'S READING PROGRAM

**Figure 1. A sample lesson plan.**

<b>Instructional Strand</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
Letter Sounds	In-service Day-No School	Reading format 7.3	Reading format 7.3	Reading format 7.3
		<i>Model:</i> <b>t</b>	<i>Model:</i> <b>n</b>	<i>Model:</i> <b>n</b>
		Reading format 7.4	Reading format 7.4	Reading format 7.4
		<i>Prompt:</i> <b>t, th, f, d, r</b>	<i>Prompt:</i> <b>n, t, th, f</b>	<i>Prompt:</i> <b>n, th, t, f</b>
		<i>Check:</i> (Point to the letter and have student identify the letter sound): <b>t</b>	<i>Check:</i> <b>n</b>	<i>Check:</i> <b>n</b>
Phonemic Awareness		Reading format 6.3	Reading format 6.3	Reading format 6.3
		<i>Model:</i> sit	<i>Model:</i> man	<i>Model:</i> near
		<i>Prompt:</i> mit seem that	<i>Prompt:</i> rim feet than	<i>Prompt:</i> sit neat fat
		<i>Check:</i> fit	<i>Check:</i> fin	<i>Check:</i> fear
Sounding out regular words		Reading format 8.1	Reading format 8.1	Reading format 8.1
		<i>Model:</i> this	<i>Model:</i> sit	<i>Model:</i> ran
		<i>Prompt:</i> this feed fat	<i>Prompt:</i> sit sad this	<i>Prompt:</i> ran sit me
		<i>Check:</i> this	<i>Check:</i> sit	<i>Check:</i> ran

had rows of the letters a, m, s, ē, r, d, f, and i in random order, with more rows on a page than Regina could read in the 10-second time period. During the first week, Regina completed two trials each day, then four trials each day for the remaining weeks with deviations every so often due to time constraints (Figure 2). As Regina read, the instructor marked her errors, recorded the last sound read, and totaled her correct and incorrect responses. If she made an error or hesitated with a sound, the instructor would point to the letter, ask for the sound, then say the correct sound if Regina did not know before beginning the next trial. Her best trial was charted each day on a Daily Standard Celeration Chart.

Regina was motivated to work through the use of a reward system. At the beginning of each session, the instructor (and eventually Regina in

the later weeks) reviewed the expectations for the lesson. They were as follows:

1. Sit up in your seat.
2. Be quiet unless called on.
3. Pay attention.
4. Try your hardest.

At the conclusion of the lesson, Regina was given a sticker to put on her reading sheet if she had met the expectations. When she had earned all the stickers of one type, she was able to move on to a new type of her choosing (seals, seahorses, monsters, etc.).

### *Results*

The see-say letter sound chart (Figure 2) shows

Regina's increased fluency with letter sounds. During the first week of the practice trials, Regina's correct letter sounds per minute (CLSPM) increased at a celeration of  $\times 4$ , going from 18 CLSPM the first day to a high of 42 CLSPM on the second day, then down to 24 on day 3 and ending at 30 on the fourth day. In this week, her errors decreased by a celeration of  $\div 16$ . After the first week, Regina's errors dropped to zero and held there for all of the days thereafter. Between the first and second week there was a frequency change of  $\times 1.6$ , as Regina's CLSPM jumped to 42 on the first day of the second week. Her progress was limited during the rest of the week; however, between the second and third weeks she made gains again with a frequency change of 1.3. The next two weeks showed gradual improvement with celerations of  $\times 1.2$ , starting with 60 CLSPM and ending with 90 CLSPM. Regina's performance was variable in the seventh week, with 84, 90, 78, and 96 CLSPM across the week. Following a week break for Thanksgiving, Regina started at 84 CLSPM, then increased by 6 each day to end with making the criterion of 100 (Kubina, 2002) on the final day of instruction. Viewed as a whole, over the course of 7 weeks of practice with the eight-letter sound sheet, Regina's corrects increased at a celeration of  $\times 1.8$ .

### Discussion

Regina was a 5-year-old kindergarten student who had difficulty with critical early reading skills. As she struggled to telescope, segment, and identify letter sounds, many of her fellow classmates were writing the sounds they heard in words during journal writing time, and reading simple words and sentences. She would often get frustrated during reading-related times, slouching in her chair, putting her head down, or hiding under the table. Due to her reading skill deficits, Regina was selected for one-on-one instruction in addition to what she already received in a small-group setting from her school's Instructional Support Teacher.

Over the course of the 8 weeks of instruction and 7 weeks of practice trials with letter sounds, Regina made rapid and substantial progress. In addition to being able to telescope and segment without errors, she was fluent with the first eight letter sounds targeted for instruction. With these critical skills in place, Regina was able to meet the goal of intervention by starting to sound out and

read words.

The combination of Direct Instruction and Precision Teaching was highly effective for Regina. As Figure 2 indicates, she continued to increase her fluency with letter sounds during the weeks of instruction and intervention. Regina looked forward to the practice trials, asking during lessons, "Are we going to do the 10-second thing?" She also took great pride in her hard work toward becoming a reader, pointing and saying excitedly, "Look! I got all the way to here!" when she made it further on the letter sound practice sheet than she had before. This pride and enthusiasm carried over to other aspects of reading. After sounding out words was introduced, Regina would want to do words first during the lesson and ask to read more words because she liked it so much. Her classroom teacher noticed that she was hearing more sounds in words and that she knew more letter sounds. In addition, her teacher and the instructor noticed an increase in Regina's willingness to participate in reading activities and language arts centers, as she no longer hid under tables for reading-related projects and sat up and paid attention during lessons and centers.

Regina's letter sound performance accelerated during intervention. The student who only knew the sounds for m and s at the beginning of October knew a dozen by the beginning of December and was fluent with eight. As her fluency increased, so did her confidence in her abilities as a reader. Although she was excited on the last trial of the last day of instruction when she met the fluency aim for the first time, her smile was one of self-assurance, as if to say, "I knew I could do that." With the foundational reading skills she has in place, she will be able to do much more.

### FLUENCY AIMS

Task	Fluency Aim
Hear-say Segmenting	40-60 sounds per minute
Hear-say Blending	10-15 words per minute
See-say Letter Sounds	100-120 sounds per minute
See-say Blending	80-120 blends per minute
See-say Sight Words	80-120 words per minute

REFERENCES

- Carnine, D. W., Silbert, J., Kame'enui, E. J., & Tarver, S. (2004) *Direct instruction reading* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Kubina, R. M. (2002). *Performance standards* (or fluency aims). Retrieved May 5, 2009, from <http://www.precisionteachingresource.net/psfluencyaims.pdf>
- Lindsley, O. R. (1990). Precision teaching: By teachers for children. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 22(3), 10-15.