

Precision Teaching and Success for Shawn

April D. Miller and Annie Lou Polk

Annie "Lou" Polk enrolled in graduate level courses at the University of Southern Mississippi to have an opportunity to learn new teaching methods and techniques. One of the new techniques Lou was introduced to was Precision Teaching. Lou, a teacher in a public school district in South Central Mississippi, enrolled in a graduate level course called "Diagnostic Techniques for Exceptional Children" as a part of the required coursework for a Masters degree in Special Education, Fall 1992. This course was taught by April Miller and included instruction in Precision Teaching. Students enrolled in the course were required to implement an intervention measured through the use of Precision Teaching in an applied setting and present the data to the class, in the form of a Chart share. Some students in the course complained the Chart was too hard to learn or to read, but others, like Lou, embraced Precision Teaching and used the charts to improve instructions for their students.

Subject

Shawn, a 12 year old student with learning disabilities and severe behavior problems, was placed in Lou's classroom at the beginning of the 1992-93 school year. The previous school year, with a different teacher, Shawn had "spent more time out of the classroom than in it." Most of this time, Shawn was either suspended (11 days) or was "spending the rest of the day" in the principal's office. Shawn had been suspended multiple times during the previous school year for disruptive behaviors in either the classroom or on the school bus. Lou's principal challenged her to "find something that works" with Shawn.

Shawn's cumulative folder indicated reading performance at the first grade level and math at the end of second grade level according to

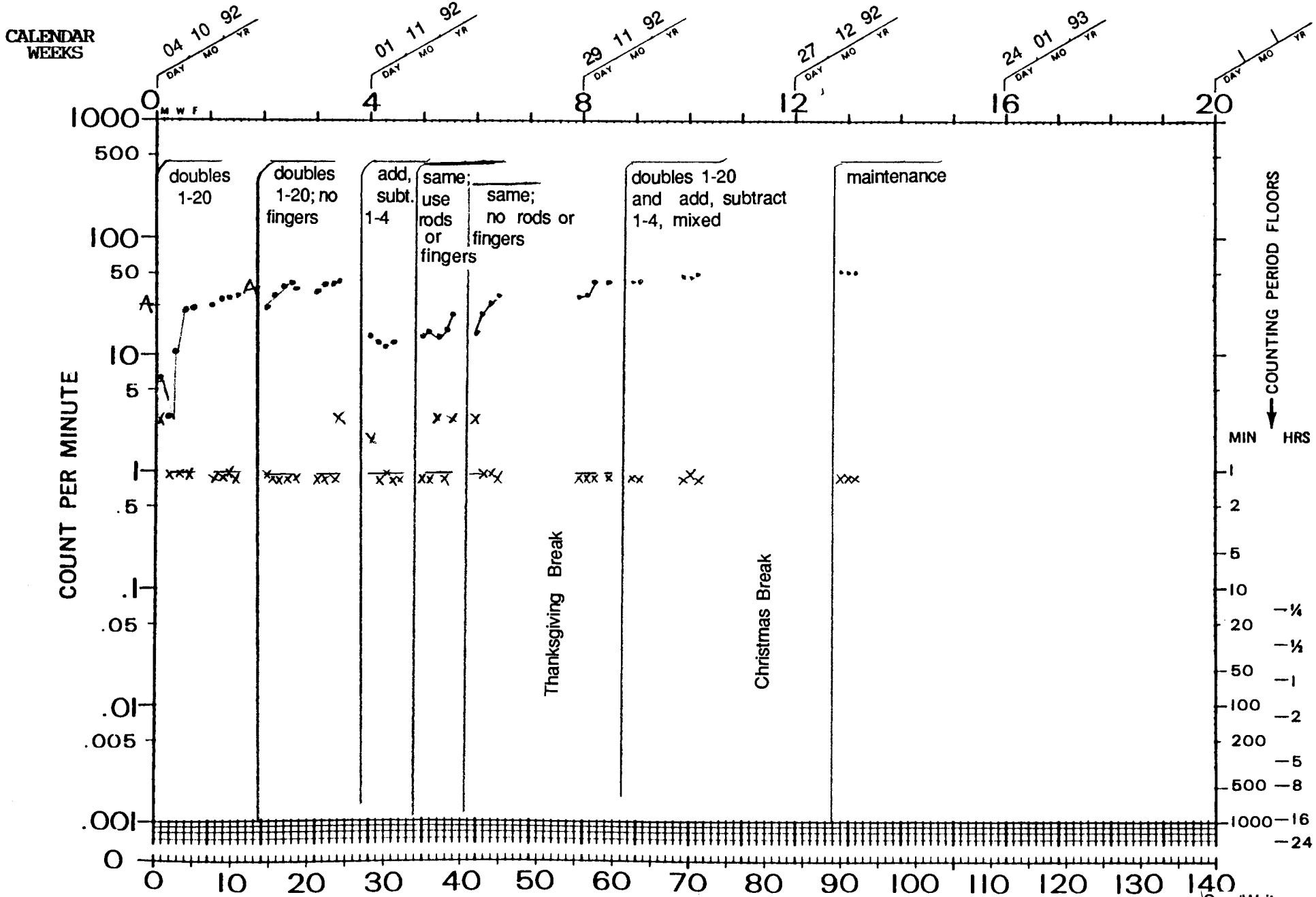
teacher assessments and recent evaluations on the WRAT-R and WISC-R. Lou decided to draw on Shawn's strengths, and began with mathematics. Assessment indicated that Shawn did not have the basic addition facts memorized, but recognized numbers and could effectively solve the basic facts by counting his fingers. He was embarrassed by his skill level and using his fingers, and was willing to try something new.

Procedures

Through the use of a daily time trial, Lou measured Shawn's performance on mathematics facts and encouraged him to "go fast." This form of practice was preferred by Lou because it could be completed in a very short amount of time and was less likely to create frustration for Shawn. Daily, Shawn was shown his Chart. As Shawn met his aims, Lou changed the method of calculating (i.e., no fingers) or the pinpoint.

Results

The Chart displays Shawn's see/write performance on mathematics facts during the first semester of the 1992-93 school year. In all phases, Shawn's performance increased and met the aims set. He showed enthusiasm about seeing the corrects accelerating and the learning opportunities decelerating and was motivated to make even small improvements. Another benefit of the intervention was that Shawn wanted to come to school and did not disrupt class. His behavior steadily improved, while his willingness to attempt new skills increased across the school year. Additionally, Shawn's attendance improved, and he was referred to the principal's office only 5 times during the entire school year.



A. Miller	A. Miller	L. Polk		Shawn	12		See/Write
SUPERVISOR	ADVISER	MANAGER		BEHAVIOR	AGE	LABEL	Math Facts
	East Marion Elem. School		L. Polk	L. Polk			COUNTED
DEPOSITOR	AGENCY		TIMER	COUNTER			