

# Using Precision Teaching in a Homeschool Setting

Cynthia A. Riha Lizard Hollow Academy Santa Rosa, CA  
2005 International Precision Teaching Conference, Pittsburgh, PA



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**Cynthia Riha**  
Lizard Hollow Academy

With Carl Binder  
Ottavia, Jeremy & Luca

### What I'm going to talk about

- Who I am and why I'm here
- Insights on the homeschool world and why we chose this path
- Overview of methods
- Lessons learned and challenges
- The real result and what's next

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## My background

- 25 years of sales and marketing in hi tech
- Met Carl Binder....life changed...
- 3 kids -- now 8, 12 & 15
- Started with Elizabeth when daughter not reading in 2nd Grade
- Elizabeth identified language delay in oldest son
- 4 summers at HLC for all 3 children, one summer worked as teacher
- Tried unsuccessfully to add PT with Elizabeth's help after school
- Summer Institute at Morningside added structure, principles, more skill, curriculum strategies
  
- And lots of coaching from Dr. Fluency!

## Why Homeschooling

- Hit failure point with oldest son in 4th grade
  - "but I have 4 or 5 kids worse than him!"
  - Tested very high on decoding (thank you Elizabeth)
- Youngest son very bright, bored, strange sense of humor
- Teenage daughter floundering in pop culture
- My mid-life crisis....ready to take risks to reach higher goals

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## The Real Reason



## The Homeschooling World

Unschoolers  
*Self-directed learning*

Us

Classical Education  
*Rigorous school-at-home*

- Revolutionaries by definition
- Polarized but collegial
- Tenacious researchers
- Highly networked
- Emphasis on child's experience
- Align with Alfie Cohn

welltrainedmind.com

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## Overview of Structure

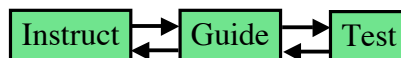
- Each child has individualized program for Math and Language Arts
- Social Studies and Science done together with different emphasis and expectations
- Work independently on keyboarding, music, foreign language, logic, etc.
- Work proportionately different by subject based on interest and needs

## Core Tools

Organize by **3 Stages of Learning**



Steer with **Mathetics/Delayed Prompting**



Ensure learning with **Precision Teaching**

•Charting      •Pinpoints      •Channels

Shape with **Clicker-training**

...works on dogs AND kids!

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## Integrating Precision Teaching

- Looked like a learning center at the beginning
- Added instruction as needed
- Learned to not practice everything with each child
- Had to find balance between incentives and child's capacity
- Had to experiment with channels for each boy
- Started to trust celeration
- Learned to go back and practice more things

## Precision Teaching = Confidence

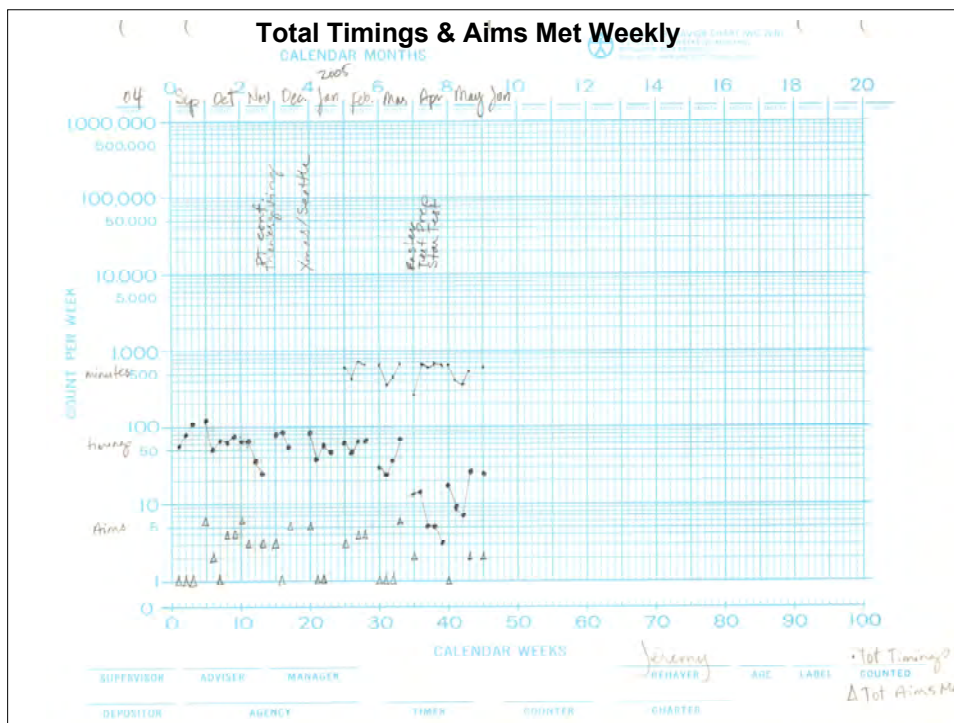
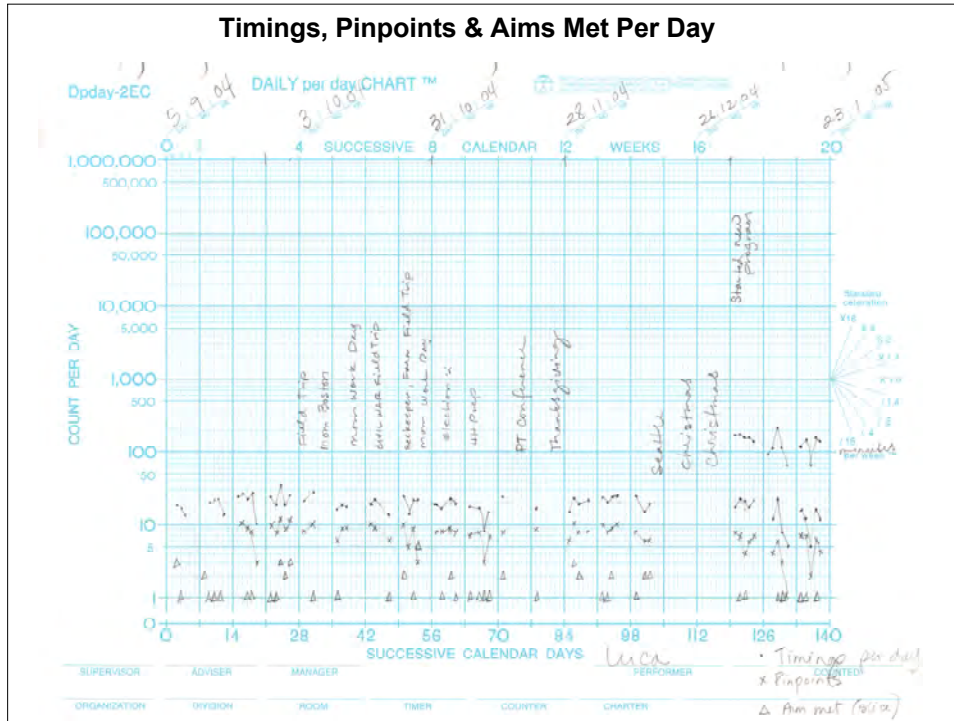


Last year the boys did:

- 3,665 timings
- on 54 pinpoints
- and met 154 aims!

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## Sample Schedule

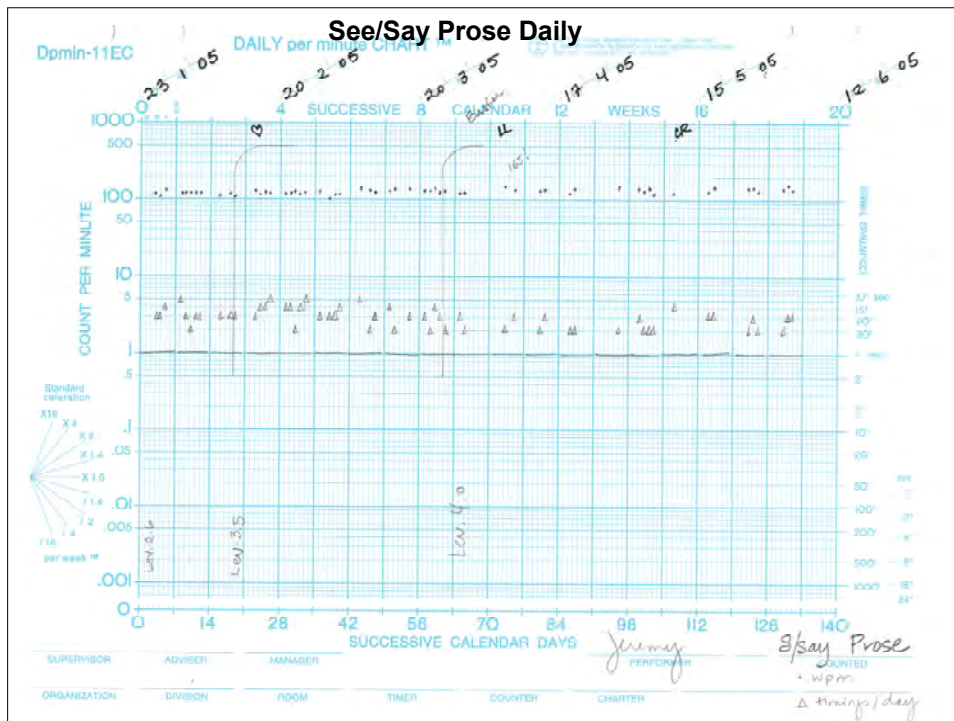
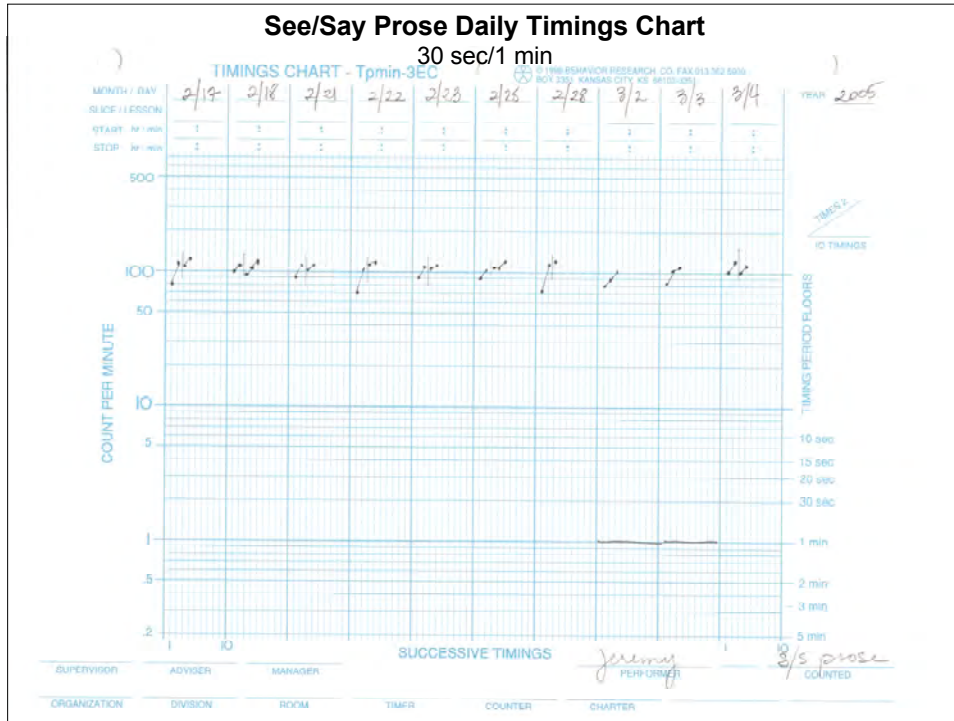
Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Free/Write	Free/Write	Free/Write	Edit Free/Write	Spelling
	Quick Read	Quick Read	Quick Read	Quick Read	LA Makeup
	Vocabulary Practicce	Vocabulary Practicce	Vocabulary Practicce	Vocabulary Practicce	
2	Easy Grammar	Dictation/Poem/Spelling	Easy Grammar	Dictation/Poem/Spelling	Logic
	Reading Success	Writing Strands	Reading Success	Writing Strands	
3	Break				Break
	Math Foundations	Math Foundations	Math Foundations	Math Foundations	Math Application
	Saxon Lesson	Saxon Lesson	Saxon Lesson	Saxon Lesson	
4	Lunch				Lunch
5	History	Music/Art	History	Math Literature	Science
	Keyboarding	Keyboarding	Keyboarding	Keyboarding	
6	Italian	Italian	Italian	Italian	Pick a poem Finish story
	Literature	Literature	Literature	Literature	Choose new book Review Vocab cards
7	Phone book, Dictionary				Start Saxon

## Language Arts Program

	Instruction	Practice
<b>Reading Fluency</b>	Read silently (total time) REWARDS	see/say prose, see/say prep. phrases, see/say word parts, see/say 1200 words, see/say prosody
<b>Vocabulary/Language Development</b>	Collect vocabulary words Use electronic or book dictionary Memorize poems	free/say objects, see/say categories, see/say antonyms, free/say steps, see/say analogies, see/say cultural lit cards, see/say vocab cards
<b>Grammar</b>	Easy Grammar workbook Copy & Dictation	see/write punctuation/capitalization
<b>Spelling</b>	Words from writing, literature	see/say from cards hear/write spelling test
<b>Writing</b>	Edit free-writes Bravewriter online program Writing Strands Letters, Thank yous	free/write (5-10 minutes)
<b>Literature &amp; Comprehension</b>	Read selected books Discuss	free/say details
<b>Handwriting</b>	Copy & Dictation Untimed practice	free/write HLC handwriting program

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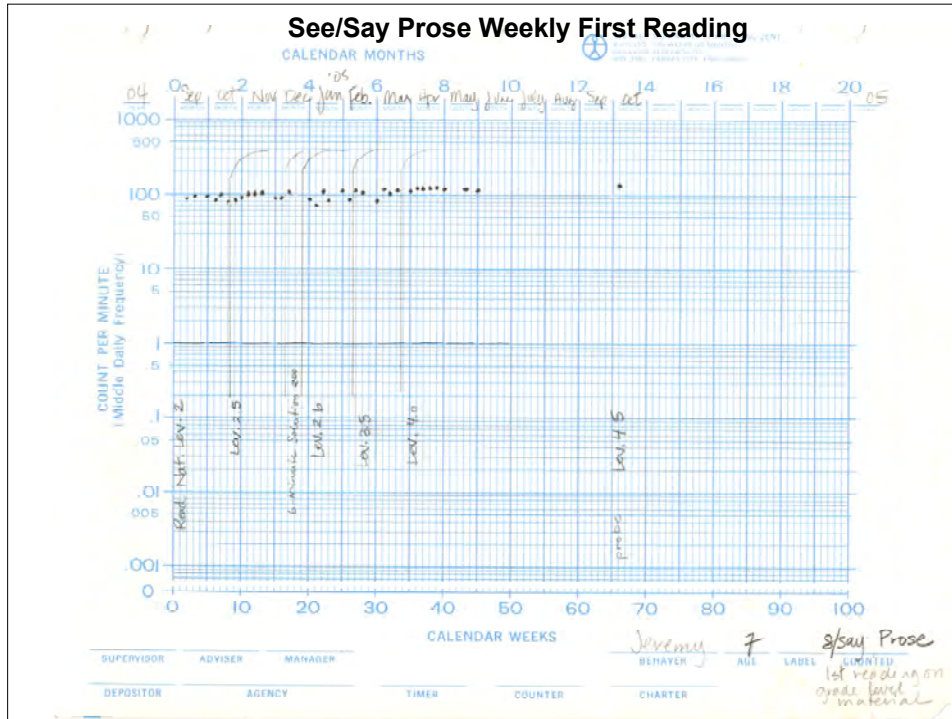
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## A Note on Language Development for Parents

- Don't assume they know (what seems like) the obvious
- For example:
 

<i>Family phone numbers</i>	<i>Addresses</i>
<i>City, county, state</i>	<i>Directions</i>
<i>Math terms</i>	<i>Relationships</i>
<i>Symbols</i>	<i>Abbreviations</i>
<i>Sayings, idioms</i>	<i>Categories</i>
- Use SAFMEDS, games, I say/You say, "quiz" in real life

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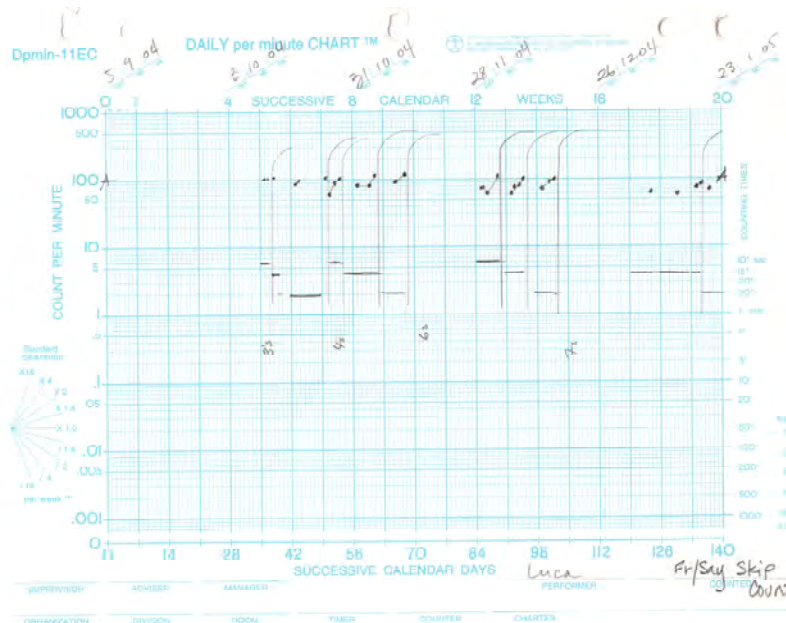
## Math

Instruction	Practice	Application
Saxon curriculum	Standard foundations sequence	Family Math problems
Dice games	See/Say	Logic puzzles
Dominoes	See/Write	Cooking
Cards	Hear/Say	Life opportunities
White board visuals	Hear/Write	
Biographies	Free/Say	
Math Literature	See/Say, Hear/Say Terms	
	See/Write Math Minutes	

Livingmath.net

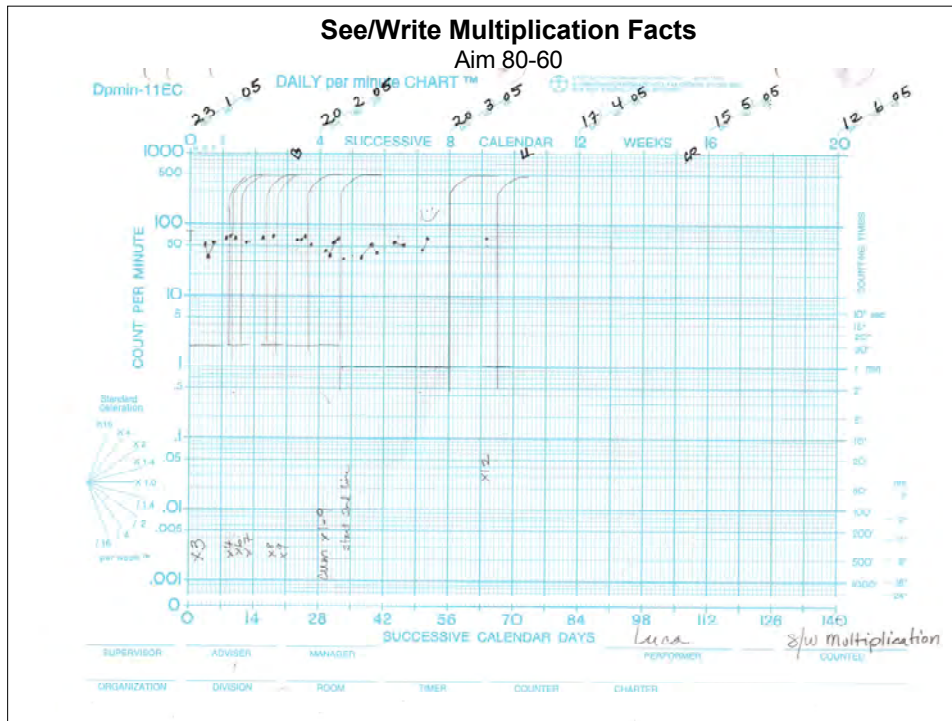
### Free/Say Skip Count

Aim 100



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## Social Studies & Science

- No packaged curriculum
- **History:** books, videos, magazines, field trips, time lines, research projects
- **Social studies:** workbooks, mom's materials, CDs
- **Geography:** maps, books, postcard club, integration with history, electronic globe
- **Science:** classes, field trips, camps, microscope, books by subject, interest-led, natural science dominates

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## Six Boxes for Homeschooling



Session on Six Boxes  
 Saturday 1:00 Brighton III

## The Learning Environment



- High level "why"
- Weekly schedule
- Daily schedules
- Task expectations
- Can't participate with bad attitude



- Space & Personal desk
- Use of references, internet, software
- Electronic dictionary
- Fun school supplies
- Separate binders by subject
- Curriculum, source material, expertise
- Program management
- Coaching from Dad
- Natural opportunities



- Evolving point system
- Personal best
- Time off
- Praise from relatives
- Kisses to mom from Dad
- Natural family consequences

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## What They Bring That I Have to Manage....

<p>Skills &amp; Knowledge <b>4</b></p>	<p>Selection &amp; Assignment <b>5</b></p>	<p>Motives &amp; Preferences <b>6</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing fluent knowledge</li><li>• PT skills</li><li>• Learning &amp; study skills</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning challenges</li><li>• Verbal styles</li><li>• Natural interests</li><li>• Learning channel preferences</li><li>• Parent/child relationship dynamics</li><li>• Developmental phases</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individual preferences</li><li>• Body chemistry</li></ul> <p><b>Changes with how I manage the other 5 boxes!</b> </p>

## Advice for Non-Homeschooling Parents

- Correlate to what they're studying in school
- Pick one subject
- Do only a few pinpoints
- Experiment with channels
- Find the right incentives
- Use games to make "fast" and "knowing" fun

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## Room for Improvement

- Weak in social studies, erratic in writing
- Not enough physical activity - add PT?
- Boys need to chart & time independently
- Make more time for self-directed interests
- Find leadership and public speaking opportunities
- Always more Box 1

## Lessons Learned

- The organism is always right
- Channels, channels, channels
- Don't practice everything
- Application means *real world* situations
- Think broadly about what a child with language delays might be missing
- My own limitations are growth opportunities for everyone
- Be agile

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## The Important Results



- All of life is about learning
- Chance to become really good at things
- Everyone feels progress
- Family grows together
- No sense of limitation
- Trust, care, respect & wide-open interest in Life

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Presentation available for  
download on Fluency.org

