

In Memoriam

Eric C. Haughton
1934–1985

Brilliant, creative, warm, humorous, kind, gentle, caring, energetic, loving—those were the most frequent adjectives written by an audience of approximately 300 teachers attending a Precision Teaching conference in Orlando, Florida in April 1980. The teachers wrote their adjectives in a one-minute timed writing. They were describing Eric Haughton.

At 2:30 PM on Thursday, 11 July 1985, Eric Christian Haughton lost his nineteen month bout with liver cancer and the world lost a great man. Applied behavior analysis lost one of its first and most dedicated contributors. Precision Teaching lost one of its founders and the major force in developing the concept and procedures of behavior fluency.

Eric was born in Ottawa, Ontario, and was adopted at birth by a lawyer and his wife. His zest for learning started early with Latin and French lessons while he rode his tricycle. He attended grade and high schools in Ottawa and went on to obtain his B.A. in Philosophy and Psychology at the University of Western Ontario. Eric also obtained a bit of campus notoriety by driving home from a pub one night in a public transportation bus which the driver had left temporarily unattended while having a cup of coffee.

From 1960 to 1961 Eric joined Ted Ayllon at the psychiatric hospital in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. They produced the very first landmark behavior modification projects. Jack Michael advised this research from Houston. Their satiation of the towel hoarder and treatment of the broom holder are truly applied behavior analysis classics, even though the term “Applied Behavior Analysis” was not yet coined.

Eric received his M.A. in Clinical and Experimental Psychology from the University of Toronto in 1962. Wanting to get closer to educating children, Eric be-

came a research assistant to Fred Skinner and Jim Holland in the Center for Programmed Instruction at Harvard from 1961 to 1963. We met when Eric visited Harvard’s Behavior Research Laboratory at Metropolitan State Hospital where I was analyzing psychotic behavior. We had many all-night discussions following a typically superb dinner in Eric’s and Sandy’s Beacon Hill apartment. Often, Paul Touchette and Bea Barrett were also dinner guests at the Haughton salon.

Excited by our plan to teach special education teachers to monitor their pupils’ rate of response, Eric and Ann Duncan preceded me to the University of Kansas in September 1964. Eric was my fourth doctorate. His dissertation, “*A Practical Way of Individually Tailoring Classroom Consequences*,” displayed academic behavior frequencies on 6 cycle by 40 day charts and was accepted in October 1967. It used “essay forms” which were the precursors of the currently popular precision teaching practice sheets.

As an assistant professor in Special Education, Eric taught at the University of Oregon from 1967 through 1971, training Abigail Calkin, Clay and Ann Starlin, Owen White, Martin Waechter, and Chuck Zimmerman, among others. He moved Precision Teaching into regular education with Ann Starlin’s first grade classroom at Santa Clara School in Eugene. They pioneered daily one-minute timings and entire classrooms of primary graders charting two or three of their academic behaviors each day.

Single for some time after his first marriage to Sandy, Eric met Elizabeth Freeman at the first California Behavior Modification conference at Napa in 1971. They married and together they made a fine, highly sensitive, creative precision teaching team—Elizabeth with her ex-

tensive classroom skills and experience and Eric with his creative approaches to monitoring and chart analysis.

From 1971 through 1972 Eric developed practice sheets for the complete range of elementary instruction with Harold Kunzelmann in the Clover Park School District, Tacoma, Washington. Then, after one year in Seattle, Eric took the chair of Exceptional Education and assistant professor at York University, Toronto. While he edited *Special Education in Canada* circulation rose from 2,300 to 3,400. Eric taught at York from 1972 through 1974 and while there he trained Mary Kovaks.

Eric and Elizabeth located a supportive superintendent and set up a twelve-year experiment in the Hastings County Board of Education, Belleville, Ontario. Eric's long-range plan was to start first graders charting their own learning and move the children up a year at a time until they would be high school seniors, fluent in all their skills, who had charted their own learning for all twelve years of school. Eric hoped to use their standard achievement test scores to demonstrate the effectiveness of Precision Teaching.

While at Hastings County, Eric integrated Precision Teaching with Direct Instruction. This wedded education's most powerful monitoring system with its most powerful curriculum. Eric also supported taking these methods into private schools under the direction of Michael Maloney in Belleville, Kent Johnson in Seattle, and Ian and Eilene Spence in Connecticut.

After four years, the Hastings superintendent moved to a bigger district, leaving Eric and Elizabeth with their twelve-year experiment only one-third complete. Eric and Elizabeth stayed on in Belleville and continued developing ever-increasing behavior aims. Some reading fluencies were over 300 per minute. Together, they demonstrated that *high fluency guarantees accuracy, retention, endurance, and application*. Eric trained Michael Maloney and Ann DesJardins in Belleville, and advised Ray Beck and the model Precision Teaching Project in Great Falls, Montana.

Eric used the Standard Celeration Chart exclusively to analyze and summarize behavior. He also always used the "Is-does" equations to separate potential operant behavioral components clearly from their demonstrated functions. In Belleville, Eric began comparing the different behavior channels. Using the alternative hear-write, hear-say, or see-say channels, when school children are having difficulty learning in the see-write channel, is one of Precision Teaching's most powerful diagnostic and remedial tools.

The learning channels from Belleville joined with the one-minute timings from Oregon, the practice sheets from Tacoma, and the fluency aims from Toronto, to form Eric's quartet of major contributions to Precision Teaching practice. He was refining his matrix of learning channels when he became ill.

Even though he focused more on workshops for teachers than on published articles for academics, Eric authored 29 published articles, edited one journal, was on the boards of three others, and had eight articles in preparation when he died.

Eric was in such pain during his last year that he could not attend to the Macintosh computer he bought to process his unpublished documents. Rather, he spent most of that last year sailing, an old love from childhood days on the Ottawa River. In fact, for those last months he spent more time on the water than on land. Elizabeth, always solicitous, caring and loving, with the same penchant for sailing, crewed every voyage.

He also developed a new skill and love—silversmithing. One of his favorite gifts was a silver ring with a width of the times-two frequency difference on the Standard Celeration Chart. A one-week-long gold bar was soldered on each ring at the 33 degree angle of a times-two per week learning.

Brilliant, creative, warm, humorous, kind, gentle, caring, energetic, loving—yet, those 300 Orlando teachers were very right. So lived and loved Eric Haughton.

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