




Decision-making with Learning Pictures

The primary reason for charting is to be able to make frequent decisions about the effects of, and if necessary, changes in "IS" Plans. A schedule of bi-weekly (every other week) decisions based on learning pictures is one of the best ways of maintaining efficient use of charts. We need about 7 to 10 data-days on the chart in order to make a reliable decision, so a bi-weekly schedule is best for decision-making with any particular chart. But since it's best to do things regularly (i.e., every week on the same day) in order to "keep in the habit," we divide our charts into 2 groups and alternate groups of charts for decision-making from week to week.

Learning Pictures are the graphic patterns formed on the Chart by about 7 to 10 closely spaced data-days (or data-weeks on weekly charts). There are many kinds of learning pictures, but they can usually be sorted into those showing Growth (accelerating corrects and/or decelerating errors or skips), those indicating Maintenance (flat lines and/or unchanging distance between corrects and errors), and Regression pictures (with accelerating errors and/or decelerating corrects). Elementary school children, who chart their own performances daily, have assigned amusing names to various learning pictures such as "Jaws" () , "Crossover Jaws" () , "Crash Landing" () , and so forth. Through learning pictures even young children can be sensitive to their own patterns of growth.

The weekly process of decision-making is best organized on a Learning Picture Report form. For each chart in the set for that week, describe the movement cycle and list its project number. (At this point you may want to make multiple copies for use on future decision days, so that you won't always have to fill in that part of the form.) Then, if there are enough data-points to form a good picture over the preceding two weeks, and the pattern falls into one of the categories marked on the form, simply put a check (✓) in that category. (If you need to draw lines through the patterns in order to clarify a very bouncy picture, consult with your advisor if you don't know what to do.) If the picture shows Growth or Regression, but doesn't fit any of the pictures on the form, draw the picture in the appropriate box under "other." Finally, if the picture is a Maintenance picture, indicate in the appropriate box whether corrects are higher than errors (+), equal to errors (=), or lower than errors (-). If you have a one-line or a three-line Maintenance picture, draw it under the appropriately sloped pattern.

Once you've classified all your learning pictures for a given week (and indicated how many weeks the child has been on that project and phase), decide how to change the Regression pictures' "IS" Plans and write a brief description of the revision (with details on the "IS" Plan itself). If the picture is growing or maintaining, note "no change" or "watch another two weeks." You may decide to change some of the Maintenance pictures' "IS" Plans in an attempt to produce growth. Seek help and share whenever you can!

When you've finished your decision-making and revisions, count up the number of learning pictures in each of the 3 categories. Then chart them on a count per week chart (• = Growth, Δ = Maintenance, X = Regression). Use a different Learning Picture Summary chart for each of the 2 sets of charts for alternate weeks. These summary charts will help you to see your own progress in refining your decision-making and programming skills.