Direct Instruction

A Noticeable Shift from Fads to Evidence

An Educators' Guide to School-wide Reform, a 141-page report from American Institutes for Research, found that only the programs Direct Instruction, High Schools That Work, and Success for All had adequate evidence for effectiveness in reading instruction. Commissioned by five education groups—including the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers. The report is also available on the World Wide Web at www.aasa.org/Reform/index.htm.

The development of criteria for what constitutes acceptable research evidence has made easier the task of convincing the educational community of the value of research findings in informing practice. Having established these criteria, it becomes easier to determine which of the plethora of reading programs available does have adequate research support at any given time. The examination of existing evidence employing stringent criteria by a range of groups has supported Direct Instruction as a valuable approach to reading instruction for both regular and struggling readers. For example, the American Federation of Teachers series of documents Building From The Best, Learning From What Works names Direct Instruction programs among their recommendations to schools, as published in: Seven Promising Reading and English Language Arts Programs, Three Promising High School Remedial Reading Programs, and Five Promising Remedial Reading Intervention Programs. [On Line]. Available www.aft.org


Another report, Reading Programs that Work: A Review of Programs for Pre-Kindergarten to 4th Grade (Schacter, 1999 Available at: http://www.mff.org/publications/publications.taf?page=279 similarly includes Direct Instruction among six school-wide effective reading models. These reports have been influential in drawing attention to the large corpus of supportive research developed over the years indicative of the effectiveness of the Direct Instruction model across a wide range of educational settings. The model is now being implemented with varying degrees of fidelity in increasing numbers of school settings. In the USA, this interest has been furthered by the impact of the Reading Excellence Act (1998 http://www.ecs.org/html/offsite.asp?document=http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/REA/overview.html and the Elimination of Reading Deficit Act (2000) (http://edworkforce.house.gov/press/press106/hr4307intro41300.htm) with their emphasis on empirically supported programs as a requirement for federal funding. As a consequence, there has been a very rapid rise in interest within the educational community. As an indication, the number of educational web pages that now make reference to Direct Instruction has increased dramatically in the past 18 months as the use of any search engine will attest.

The U.S. Department of Education's Joint Dissemination Review Panel validated various education programs as exemplary and qualified them for national dissemination. All the submitted Direct Instruction projects were certified as exemplary in reading and math for the primary grades across the full range of students in large urban and rural districts and various ethnic populations. Block, J.H., Everson, S.T., and Guskey, T.R. (1995). School improvement programs: A handbook for educational leaders. New York: Scholastic.

Numerous evaluations have been conducted on the effects of Direct Instruction, in the form of small- and large-scale, longitudinal follow-up and short-term studies. These studies have found significant positive effects on student achievement in reading, language arts and/or mathematics. Some high-poverty schools report average test scores at or above grade level -- in a few cases, several grades above.
Follow Through is a large compensatory education program that operated in scores of communities across the United States throughout the seventies and that continues, on a reduced scale, today. During its most active phase, it was conducted as a massive experiment, involving planned variation of education approaches and collection of uniform data at each site. (Carl Bereiter and Midian Kurland.)


Adams & Engelmann's meta-analysis of DI studies resulted in an effect size of .68 for the 44 acceptable comparisons involving Reading Mastery. To further place this medium-to-large effect size in perspective, a recent meta-analysis of the effectiveness of the whole language approach to reading found an effect size of only .09 (Stahl & Miller, 1989).


Information about Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons http://www.startreading.com/

The Association for Direct Instruction http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~adiep/

The discussion list for Effective School Practices involves world wide e-mail conversations between individuals committed to effective teaching of children. It is often passionate, but also a source of inspiration and knowledge. To join - email to: MAJORDOMO@LISTS.UOREGON.EDU

The message: SUBSCRIBE DI

J/P Associates can provide various add-ons such as homework books to the Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading programs, and others. See at http://www.jponline.com/

The research base supporting the use of Reading Mastery has been compiled by Bonnie Grossen, Ph.D. http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~adiep/rdgtxt.htm

DI Program Information

Research on the Corrective Reading program can be located at: http://www.sra4kids.com/teacher/directin/index.html

Some other references are:


Reading Treatment and Research Centre. (1986). *Corrective Reading program: An evaluation in a Victorian Technical school*. Melbourne, Australia.


The placement test for the Corrective Reading program can be located at: [http://www.sra4kids.com/teacher/reading/cr/decode/test_1.html](http://www.sra4kids.com/teacher/reading/cr/decode/test_1.html)

A school evaluation including the Corrective Reading program can be located at: [http://www.uoregon.edu/~bgrossen/GoetheYear1Eval.pdf](http://www.uoregon.edu/~bgrossen/GoetheYear1Eval.pdf)

Information on the *Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* program can be located at: [http://www.uoregon.edu/~phyllis](http://www.uoregon.edu/~phyllis) and at [www.startreading.com](http://www.startreading.com)

The article: *The Research Base for Reading Mastery* by Bonnie Grossen is at: [http://www.uoregon.edu/~adiep/rdgtxt.htm](http://www.uoregon.edu/~adiep/rdgtxt.htm)

View reports supportive of Direct instruction:


