

# Direct Instruction

## NEWS

**ADI** Effective School Practices

DON CRAWFORD and RANDI SAULTER, Editors

## DI Treats for Fall

Welcome to the fall 2011 edition of the DI News. We have a number of tasty treats in this issue that we hope you enjoy. We have two success stories in this issue. One school, Stevenson Elementary, in Kentucky, has seen amazing growth since the adoption of DI some four years ago. This school is assisted in its implementation by ERI (Educational Resources, Inc.) which helped them achieve great gains. We are always happy to include success stories in the DI News and look for other implementation companies and consultants to send us their stories.

The second school, David Douglas Arthur Academy, in Portland, Oregon, received the Wes Becker Award for Excellence at the ADI national conference this year. This charter school has had high scores since its inception—because of being a school that uses DI programs all day, all the time. However, the school won the award in large part because of the extraordinary leadership of its principal, Stephani Brown. She began as a third grade teacher and

after several stellar years was promoted to the leadership position. Stephani is a constant source of encouragement to her staff and instills in every teacher the desire for excellence in teaching. Read about the results in the article.

Your editors have written an article about excellence in teaching as well. The same evaluative methods that are used by consultants and implementation companies to achieve excellent results in schools can also be applied by teachers to themselves. Our article details how to go about assessing oneself in six key areas and choosing how to go about making improvements. If you strive to be an excellent educator, you may find this article helpful.

We have an article describing the awards ceremony at the national ADI conference this year. Kace Wickman's reporting on the event is so well written that those who were lucky enough to attend will recall it fondly. If you were not able to be in Eugene, this

article will let you in on what you missed.

Dr. Almitra Berry has graced our pages with another article. This time she compares assessment to her mother's recipe for sweet potato pie. Who doesn't like sweet potato pie?

Dr. Kozloff's regular column "Martin's Musings," is about clear communication. He explains the importance of short, simple declarative sentences when teaching. We love his use of graduate level examples, because it drives home, for all of us, the importance of clear teaching when we are learning new information. It is very abstract for us to understand that children get confused when letter sounds aren't presented properly, but when Dr. Kozloff presents his graduate school examples, we get the point.

We hope you will find this issue interesting, informative, or both! **ADI**

FALL 2011, Volume 11, Number 3

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AMY JOHNSTON, Executive Director, Association for Direct Instruction

## ADI News

The summer season is always a busy and exciting time for the Association. In July we hosted more than 600 educators from around the world at the 37th Annual National DI Conference in Eugene. Three weeks later we were in Ashland, Oregon for our first-ever Southern Oregon Conference, where attendance soared above 200 educators! This conference was also notable

because it was the first in the Association's history to be held on a college campus in partnership with the university and the local education service district. We sincerely thank Gregg Gassman of Southern Oregon University (SOU) and Sandra Crews from the Southern Oregon Education Service District (SOESD) for helping to make

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this event a resounding success. We are already discussing plans for future collaborations with both organizations and are looking forward to making the Southern Oregon Conference an annual event.

When we weren't preparing for and hosting conferences this summer, we were packing our offices and making arrangements to move. You read that correctly... ADI has a new home! After 30 years of sharing space with Engelmann-Becker (EB) and the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI), we have moved into a place of our own. Our new space is in the heart of downtown Eugene only two

blocks from the Hilton hotel where we host the National Conference. Our new offices are cheerful and spacious and will allow us to expand as we begin this new chapter.

Speaking of chapters, we are pleased to announce that the new book from Siegfried "Zig" Engelmann and Doug Carnine, *Could John Stuart Mill Have Saved Our Schools?*, is now available for purchase through the ADI store. Coauthors Engelmann and Carnine look at Mill's 1843 publication, *System of Logic*, and speculate as to the impact Mill's methods could have had on education in the early 20th century. This fascinating book has been hailed by Williamson M. Evers, Former U.S.

Assistant Secretary of Education, as "...a hugely important contribution to the literature on effective teaching practices" and deserves a place on every DI supporter's bookshelf.

Engelmann and Carnine's new book, along with many other great titles, can be purchased through our website at [www.adihome.org](http://www.adihome.org). While you're there, be sure to note our upcoming conferences and workshops in your area and make plans to attend. And, if you're ever in the neighborhood, please drop by our new office at 30 E. Broadway, Ste. 150 in downtown Eugene and say hello. We wish you all a wonderful school year and thank you for your continued support of ADI. **ADI**

## KASE WICKMAN

### *Awards for Excellence at the National DI Conference*

The Association for Direct Instruction presented its annual Excellence in Education Awards—and one surprise award—to four deserving winners during the 37th National Direct Instruction Conference and Institutes in Eugene, Oregon on July 24.

Dr. Marcy Stein was inducted into the ADI Hall of Fame; the David Douglas Arthur Academy in Portland, Oregon received the Wesley Becker Excellent School Award; Jerry Hill, a student in Buffalo, Wyoming, was granted the Wayne Carnine Student Improvement Award; and Brenda Williams was presented with the South Carolina Service Provider of the Year award at the McGraw-Hill Education/SRA social hour.

To open the night, a cake was presented to Zig Engelmann in anticipation of his 80th birthday in November. Director of Training Bryan Wickman, who has worked with Engelmann for more than 30 years, led attendees in a round of "Happy Birthday."

"Beyond admiring the great works that you've done and being well respected, you're also well-loved," Wickman said. "Happy birthday."

Lyndsay Root, McGraw-Hill's marketing manager, welcomed the conference attendees, and explained the new social media efforts coming soon to promote DI and support its practitioners.

"We're out there, we're part of this with you, and we're bringing that community out to the web," Root said.

Bob Dixon, who recently retired from ADI's board of directors, emceed the evening. He spared the audience from hearing any recitations of the *Essentials for Algebra: Teacher's Guide*, which he claimed was his original plan, and instead introduced the first award of the evening, the South Carolina Service Provider of the Year Award, a non-ADI honor presented to a very surprised Brenda Williams.

"No one has ever been able to surprise me, ever!" Williams said when

she reached the podium. "Ever! Ask my family!"

"DI is my passion, and I have another twin, behavior is my second passion, so again, thank you so much," Williams said.

#### **Plan now to attend**

#### *Effective Programs for Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders— A Direct Instruction Conference*

**October 20–22, 2011  
Hilton Penn Station,  
Newark, New Jersey**

Complete brochure and registration information available at [adihome.org](http://adihome.org)

#### *Southwest DI Conference*

**December 6–8, 2011,  
Phoenix, Arizona**

*Online Registration Now  
Available [adihome.org](http://adihome.org)*

Linda Carnine presented the Wayne Carnine Student Improvement Award, named in honor of her husband Doug's late father. The award comes with a plaque and \$200 for the winning student.

Jerry Hill, a 13-year-old student at Clear Creek Middle School in Buffalo, Wyoming, was selected as the recipient of this year's Carnine Award. Jerry started as a new student at Clear Creek in September 2010, and was repeating seventh grade after missing weeks of school because of illness every year since he had been a kindergarten. Even more concerning, Jerry was unable to read.

Bonnie Bischoff, Jerry's teacher who nominated him for the award and accepted on his behalf, called Jerry "one of those kids that all of us have had the privilege of teaching."

She explained that when Jerry took the placement test for reading, he

was performing so poorly that she stopped him.

"I just stopped him and I said, 'It's not your fault that you can't read. I'm going to teach you how to read, Jerry!'" Bischoff said. "He looks at me with those big hazel eyes and those big ears and goes—he doesn't talk much—'okay.'"

Jerry progressed all the way through Decoding A, and by the end of the school year was at Lesson 25 of Decoding B2, and his test scores in reading went from below the first percentile in the fall to the 26th percentile in the spring.

"He said, 'I ain't never had nobody teach me like this,'" Bischoff said. "And that's the epitome of Direct Instruction. No one gives attention to those kids like Direct Instruction...he had the taste of success."

David Douglas Arthur Academy was selected for the 2011 Wesley Becker Excellent School Award. Don Crawford, executive director of the Arthur Academies, explained that the set of six charter schools in Portland that DDAA is part of is "all DI, every day, all year long. It's a wonderful place to be; it's like I'm at home."

Chuck Arthur, the Academy founder, also spoke about the schools, which have expanded from two classrooms in 2002 to the six full schools functioning today, which all score very high on achievement tests.

DDAA itself was named Oregon Charter School of the year and received an "outstanding" rating on the Oregon School Report Card, in addition to the honors at the DI conference this year. One hundred percent of third- and fourth-graders at DDAA passed the state's reading tests, and over 97 percent of the students school-wide passed the tests as well.

The schools and organizations listed below are institutional members of the Association for Direct Instruction. We appreciate their continued support of quality education for students.

Alliance Academy of Cincinnati  
*Cincinnati, OH*

American Horse School  
*Allen, SD*

American Preparatory Academy  
*Draper, UT*

Baltimore Curriculum Project Inc.  
*Baltimore, MD*

Beacon Services  
*Milford, MA*

Bear River Charter School  
*Logan, UT*

Centennial Public School  
*Utica, NE*

City Springs School  
*Baltimore, MD*

Clarendon School District District Two  
*Manning, SC*

Criterion Child Enrichment  
*Milford, MA*

David Douglas Arthur Academy  
*Portland, OR*

Dreamcatcher Direct Instruction Centers  
*Berthoud, CO*

Educational Resources Inc.  
*Ocala, FL*

Evergreen Center  
*Milford, MA*

Exceptional Learning Centre  
*Ajax, Ontario*

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy  
*Calgary, AB*

Gering Public Schools  
*Gering, NE*

Gresham Arthur Academy  
*Gresham, OR*

Hinckley - Finlayson Sch Dist  
*Hinckley, MN*

Mescalero Apache School  
*Mescalero, NM*

Morningside Academy  
*Seattle, WA*

Mountain View Academy  
*Greeley, CO*

Mystic Valley Regional Charter  
*Everett, MA*

NIFDI  
*Eugene, OR*

Portland Arthur Academy  
*Portland, OR*

Reynolds Arthur Academy  
*Troutdale, OR*

Santee Community School  
*Niobrara, NE*

St. Helens Arthur Academy  
*St. Helens, OR*

USD #428  
*Great Bend, KS*

Wasilla Middle School  
*Wasilla, AK*

Woodburn Arthur Academy  
*Woodburn, OR*

Principal Stephani Brown was the last to speak for DDAA. She started as a teacher when she was 23 years old.

“When I first started teaching, I didn’t know anything about Direct Instruction,” she said. “The first time I saw it, I was hooked.”

Since then, she has risen to lead the school, informing and inspiring staff through professional development and camaraderie, as well as boosting students’ achievements. The school’s success, she said, was “due in combination to great curriculum, great teachers, great leadership, and a lot of support.”

Doug Carnine presented the final honor of the night, the DI Hall of Fame induction. Marcy Stein was chosen as the 2011 inductee for her decades of work and achievement in Direct Instruction. Carnine said that Stein had begun her teaching career as his assistant at a DI math course at the University of Oregon.

“She did a great job, she was enthusiastic, she learned quickly, and she

talked even faster than that,” Carnine said. “What is inspiring about Marcy is how she has channeled her intelligence and her enthusiasm since that time 35 years ago.”

Stein has crisscrossed the country, as a founding member of the education faculty at the University of Washington-Tacoma and the overall founder of the special education master’s degree at the same school, and as a DI coach and trainer who helps to implement the curriculum. She also took special interest in individual children, such as the coworker’s son who began as a non-reader in fourth grade, and under Marcy’s care, was reading at the sixth grade level after six months, and is now a college graduate and voracious reader.

Carnine likened Stein’s attitude to a quote by Amelia Earhart: “The most difficult thing is the decision to act. The rest is merely tenacity. The fears are paper tigers. You can do anything you decide to do.”

“Marcy has a tenacity and a patience and a passion for doing things that are

in the best interests of children,” Carnine said. “That really is the foundation of her leadership.”

Stein joked in her short speech of thanks that she had explained the Hall of Fame award to a non-DI friend as a sort of lifetime achievement award.

“I get the lifetime, I’ve got that down, and I’m not sure about the achievement part,” she joked.

She remembered hearing a behaviorist explain that many teachers have low expectations for students because they’ve never seen breakthrough success in a child.

“If you’ve never seen it, you may not believe that it actually can happen,” she said. “I got to see it firsthand at a very young age, and that’s what fuels the passion: when you know what can happen and you’ve seen it demonstrated over and over and over again...I’m grateful that I know it can be done and I’m grateful that after all these years, I still get to feel that passion and try and communicate it to my students. Thanks.” *ADI*

WILLIAM MITCHELL, Educational Resources, Inc.

## Success Stories

### R.E. Stevenson Elementary

#### Success Story

Since August of 1969, R.E. Stevenson Elementary has been serving the city of Russellville in Logan County, which is located in south central Kentucky. Stevenson Elementary is a kindergarten through sixth grade school with a population of 602 students. As one of the two rural schools in the Russellville City School System, Stevenson proudly models its newly renovated school campus. Staff members are proud of its increasing enrollment. Stevenson Elementary is a Title I school with approximately 78% of its student body receiving free and

reduced lunch. In the past year Stevenson has added three additional teachers to meet the growing population of students.

The mission of Stevenson Elementary School is to build a foundation for lifelong learning. Members of the teaching staff believe that learning to read is a stepping stone toward ensuring that students are successful as twenty-first century learners. Teachers’ primary objective is to help students learn to read with the goal of becoming proficient in reading. The Steven-

son Direct Instruction reading program was designed to help all children at Stevenson read at or above grade level by the time they exit the primary program. Stevenson Elementary staff has proudly partnered with Educational Resources, Inc. for the past four years to implement this program.

Since adopting Reading Mastery as the school’s reading program, students, parents and teachers have witnessed tremendous reading proficiency growth at SES. The breakdown of specific reading components has proven to be a key element in developing fluency, decoding, and comprehension. In keeping with the focus on reading, the SES staff has expanded the reading block from 90 minutes a day to 120 minutes of instruction in all primary classrooms daily. Additionally, a highly qualified full-time reading interven-



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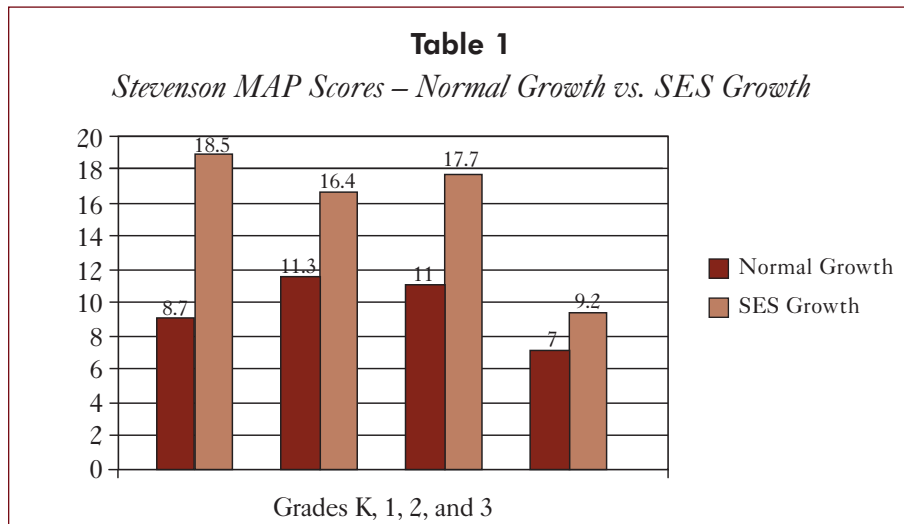
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recording, analyzing, and altering individual student instruction by using the learning progression protocol of the

Direct Instruction program. Teachers are trained using side-by-side coaching with the assistance of a consultant from Educational Resources, Inc. The coaching component has proven to be critical in teaching and maintaining the program's high degree of program implementation. Dibels, PAST, and MAP (Measurable Academic Progress) assessments are implemented three times during the year as a formative assessment tool to alter classroom instruction and determine tiers of students that require extensions in learning strategies. Stevenson Elementary School staff is proud of the high degree of success in assisting students to achieve to their maximum potential in reading as a result of the Reading Mastery focus. *ADD*



ALMITRA L. BERRY, Ed.D.

## *Assessment is Like Mom's Sweet Potato Pie*

I remember hovering around the kitchen as a child waiting for the opportunity to taste test the sweet potato pie filling. In our house, those pies were only made during the holidays, and my mom still holds the family bragging rights to the best pies on Earth. As a teenager, I asked my mother for the recipe, but she said she didn't have one. As an adult, certain she was simply trying to keep to herself some secret ingredient that made her pies better than any others I had ever tasted, I asked again. I got the same response, but she told me what went into them and what she looked for. I simply knew how they tasted at varying stages and what the best filling tasted like right before being poured into the crust.

Screening devices and assessment—formative and summative—are much like the secret recipe to Mom's sweet potato pie. It all begins in the grocery store. When selecting the proper yams (yes, yams, not sweet potatoes) you have to screen carefully using the right

device. The screening isn't going to tell you exactly how the pie is going to come out, but proper screening does give you some clue as to which potatoes are riskier than others, which are not quite ready for pie-making and which might be. In the classroom, screening devices properly employed indicate a level of risk for a learner. While screening devices don't tell you which students will succeed and which will not, they do give you an idea of which learners may need a little extra work in order to make the necessary gains in instruction.

Once all the ingredients to Mom's sweet potato pies were in the mixer, I got to taste. This formative assessment resulted in feedback. Too much sugar or not enough? More milk? More time in the mixer? Adjustments were made and then another formative assessment, or taste test, occurred. Connoisseur of sweet potato pie filling as I am, this could go on for quite some time. In instruction, our formative assessments are used to deter-

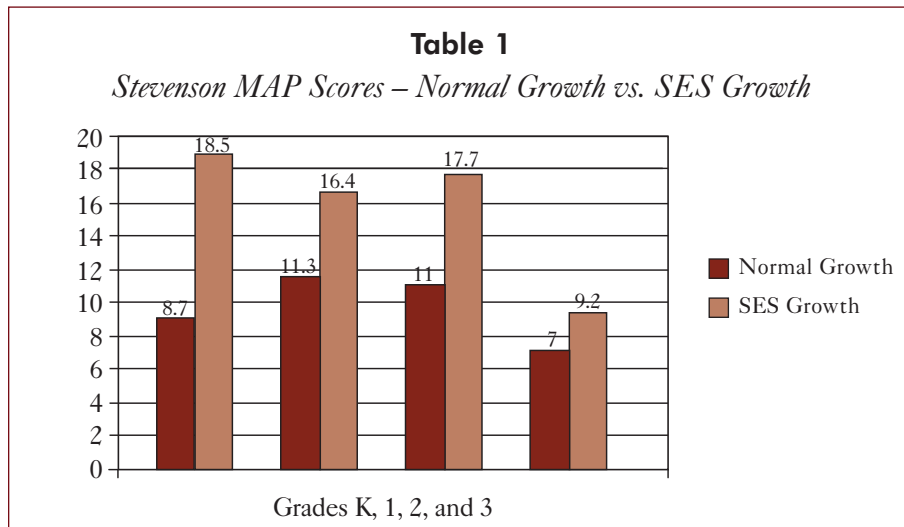
mine whether or not the learner is benefitting from the instruction that is given. When we find that adjustments need to be made in terms of time, duration, or intensity of instruction or intervention, the adjustments must be made immediately. The data that comes from a formative assessment in the classroom must be acted upon just like the pie filling taste test: immediately if not sooner! Failing to make the adjustments may result in a pie that is missing the right amounts of critical ingredients. With a struggling learner who is, say, learning to read, failure to make the adjustments in instruction may yield a child who is lacking phonemic awareness, fluency, or some other critical skill.

Unlike other forms of formative assessment, summative assessment occurs too late to make an immediate adjustment. Once the pie is in the oven, the ultimate assessment is underway. No more tinkering or adjusting; once the pie is baked and served, judgment is made. While many may complain about high stakes testing, their purpose is clear. How can we possibly determine whether or not instruction worked without a final summary judgment? The critical response to summa-

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tive assessment is making the necessary adjustments for the next term of instruction.

In the case of the sweet potato pie, Mom was able to make adjustments to future screening processes: “I’ll never buy potatoes from Supermarket X again!” In education we do not have the luxury of rejecting the children that come to our store of learning. We can, however, look at the data from our screening measures along with the summative assessment and determine whether or not we made proper choices about curriculum, instruction, and intervention. The data we receive from screening and all formative and summative assessment should serve as indicators of the validity of instruction for the students in our school or classroom. If the summative assess-

ment does not yield good data, could it be that we failed to respond appropriately to the indicators during formative assessments? Perhaps we needed to add more spice, less sugar, or just blend the ingredients a little longer and/or at higher speed. Maybe the potatoes were undercooked and we assumed it would be okay to begin combining ingredients too soon. Could it be we used the wrong kind of milk? In the case of the early learner, perhaps we moved to whole-word recognition before the child had mastered sound-by-sound blending. Could it be we used the wrong curriculum or method?

Children are not sweet potato pies. There’s too much at stake for failing to use assessments and the data they yield about student learning. If I make a less

than stellar batch of pies, they’ll still get eaten. I can shrug off my epicurean shortcomings, but there is no do-over for a child who does not learn to read because we have not taught him.

Direct Instruction programs take the guesswork out of instruction because they are research-validated. When taught with skill and fidelity, when students work to mastery level, when assessment data is acted upon correctly, the outcomes are predetermined. Students will be successful learners and skilled readers, writers, and mathematicians. You can’t say that about teacher-developed curriculum. Methods that allow teachers to tinker and be creative are much like Mom’s sweet potato pies: outstanding when done by a master, but impossible to replicate with any consistency. *ADI*

DON CRAWFORD, Portland Arthur Academy and RANDI SAULTER, DI Consultant

## *How to achieve excellence in teaching: A self-evaluation action plan*

Who wants to be a mediocre teacher? If you just raised your hand, you are done reading. Nobody does, but how does one become excellent? Typically, teachers attend workshops and other forms of professional development. But are all ideas, workshops, materials equally good for improving teaching skills? Moreover, are most of them even good for children? Definitely not! Why don’t most teachers become excellent? Arguably, it is because they don’t have a systematic way of evaluating themselves to be certain that they are moving in the right direction.

The same information that we use to make schools excellent can be applied by individual teachers to themselves. Excellence in teaching can be learned and developed. There are two things to be done. First, we must approach improvement systematically. Second, we must base our improvement efforts on data from the classroom, not simply test scores. We have all seen poor

teachers get lucky and get a smart class whose test scores make them look good. We have seen the reverse as well: excellent, hard-working, effective teachers get a class full of low performers whose test scores make the teacher look bad.

In approaching improvement systematically there are several things that must be done continuously. That means over and over without getting distracted by shiny objects or slick salespeople who claim to be able to change things without the components shown in figure 1 on page 8.

We begin by choosing where to focus our efforts, based on student needs evident in our classroom. (Don’t bother selecting things to implement without regard to what is needed! That is the problem with attending random professional development sessions. If the information being covered is NOT oriented toward our specific goal it is less than helpful—like not at

all helpful.) Then we have to measure our starting point. We then hunt for some research-based ideas that can help address the needs that have been identified. Next, we need to make a plan to change some things in our classroom. Thoughtfulness is important. It is not useful to just dive in without some amount of planning. Typically teaching behavior has to change. This is scary! Realizing that one’s own behavior (Read as: “What you, the teacher, is doing”) has to change (Read as: “Improve”). It is not about the “stuff” (worksheets, posters, cool pencil grips from the teacher store, etc.). Things like teaching habits, more work, or better organization are what we are talking about here. These are the biggies, people! As changes happen, we need to measure again to see if there is improvement. Does a systematic approach sound like it might be effective in helping a teacher improve student outcomes?

**Choosing where to focus.** The aim should be something that matters to student achievement. Choose the most important factors first. Choose things that can be measured. Finally,



tive assessment is making the necessary adjustments for the next term of instruction.

In the case of the sweet potato pie, Mom was able to make adjustments to future screening processes: “I’ll never buy potatoes from Supermarket X again!” In education we do not have the luxury of rejecting the children that come to our store of learning. We can, however, look at the data from our screening measures along with the summative assessment and determine whether or not we made proper choices about curriculum, instruction, and intervention. The data we receive from screening and all formative and summative assessment should serve as indicators of the validity of instruction for the students in our school or classroom. If the summative assess-

ment does not yield good data, could it be that we failed to respond appropriately to the indicators during formative assessments? Perhaps we needed to add more spice, less sugar, or just blend the ingredients a little longer and/or at higher speed. Maybe the potatoes were undercooked and we assumed it would be okay to begin combining ingredients too soon. Could it be we used the wrong kind of milk? In the case of the early learner, perhaps we moved to whole-word recognition before the child had mastered sound-by-sound blending. Could it be we used the wrong curriculum or method?

Children are not sweet potato pies. There’s too much at stake for failing to use assessments and the data they yield about student learning. If I make a less

than stellar batch of pies, they’ll still get eaten. I can shrug off my epicurean shortcomings, but there is no do-over for a child who does not learn to read because we have not taught him.

Direct Instruction programs take the guesswork out of instruction because they are research-validated. When taught with skill and fidelity, when students work to mastery level, when assessment data is acted upon correctly, the outcomes are predetermined. Students will be successful learners and skilled readers, writers, and mathematicians. You can’t say that about teacher-developed curriculum. Methods that allow teachers to tinker and be creative are much like Mom’s sweet potato pies: outstanding when done by a master, but impossible to replicate with any consistency. *ADI*

DON CRAWFORD, Portland Arthur Academy and RANDI SAULTER, DI Consultant

## *How to achieve excellence in teaching: A self-evaluation action plan*

Who wants to be a mediocre teacher? If you just raised your hand, you are done reading. Nobody does, but how does one become excellent? Typically, teachers attend workshops and other forms of professional development. But are all ideas, workshops, materials equally good for improving teaching skills? Moreover, are most of them even good for children? Definitely not! Why don’t most teachers become excellent? Arguably, it is because they don’t have a systematic way of evaluating themselves to be certain that they are moving in the right direction.

The same information that we use to make schools excellent can be applied by individual teachers to themselves. Excellence in teaching can be learned and developed. There are two things to be done. First, we must approach improvement systematically. Second, we must base our improvement efforts on data from the classroom, not simply test scores. We have all seen poor

teachers get lucky and get a smart class whose test scores make them look good. We have seen the reverse as well: excellent, hard-working, effective teachers get a class full of low performers whose test scores make the teacher look bad.

In approaching improvement systematically there are several things that must be done continuously. That means over and over without getting distracted by shiny objects or slick salespeople who claim to be able to change things without the components shown in figure 1 on page 8.

We begin by choosing where to focus our efforts, based on student needs evident in our classroom. (Don’t bother selecting things to implement without regard to what is needed! That is the problem with attending random professional development sessions. If the information being covered is NOT oriented toward our specific goal it is less than helpful—like not at

all helpful.) Then we have to measure our starting point. We then hunt for some research-based ideas that can help address the needs that have been identified. Next, we need to make a plan to change some things in our classroom. Thoughtfulness is important. It is not useful to just dive in without some amount of planning. Typically teaching behavior has to change. This is scary! Realizing that one’s own behavior (Read as: “What you, the teacher, is doing”) has to change (Read as: “Improve”). It is not about the “stuff” (worksheets, posters, cool pencil grips from the teacher store, etc.). Things like teaching habits, more work, or better organization are what we are talking about here. These are the biggies, people! As changes happen, we need to measure again to see if there is improvement. Does a systematic approach sound like it might be effective in helping a teacher improve student outcomes?

**Choosing where to focus.** The aim should be something that matters to student achievement. Choose the most important factors first. Choose things that can be measured. Finally,

choose the factors that research shows make a difference. We got into this profession to make a difference!

Below are six key areas of teaching which could require improvement. They are listed in their approximate order of importance:

- Student engagement
- Student mastery
- Assessment skills
- Efficiency in instruction
- Student motivation
- Academic challenge or rigor

Let's walk through each of these areas and how to assess if each is an area of need.

**Student engagement.** Undoubtedly, the first goal that has to be achieved by teachers is to make sure the students are engaged—or paying attention to the lesson. If the students are not engaged, they are not going to learn. Therefore, if students are off-task, to improve their achievement first one must improve student

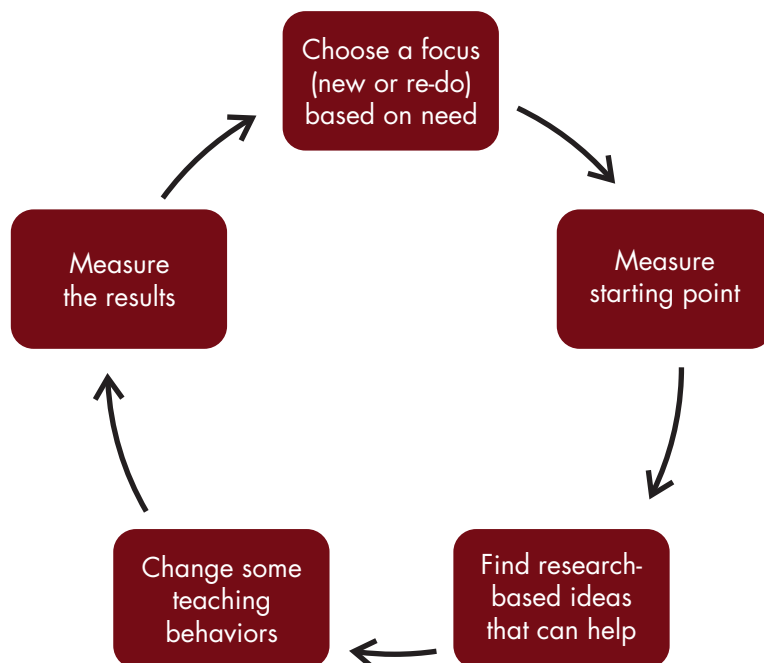
engagement. How do you know if this is an area of need? Are over 90% of students engaged at all times? An easier way to answer that question is to ask whether, at one time, are no more than two or three students off task? (That's 90% on task in a typical classroom.) If a teacher can answer yes, then he/she can move on to the next area. If the answer is no (there are more than two or three off task), then engagement must be the first area of focus.

**Student Mastery.** Next the teacher needs to figure out if he/she needs to improve mastery. There is little point in teaching if we do not bring students to mastery in the material. What is reasonable to expect in terms of student mastery? In utilizing Direct Instruction (DI) materials, we know that all correctly placed students ought to be able to achieve mastery. On any given lesson or test, however, some will be having an "off" day and might not be at mastery. So a fair expectation is that at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the students are meeting mastery goals on any test or work assignment. What are the mastery goals in DI curriculums? Students should pass each checkout in reading,

they should earn over 90% on each mastery test, and they should earn over 85% on independent work. If DI curriculum materials are not being utilized, it is much more difficult to achieve mastery. Commonly, people expect that 80% is mastery in non-DI curricula. If  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the students are at mastery consistently then there is no need to focus on improvement efforts on mastery—it's not an area of need. On the other hand, if less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a class is at mastery, then that is the first and most important area on which to focus self-improvement efforts. We would refer you to a 2008 article, "Remedies for Fixing Problems with Mastery—Without Sacrificing Lesson Progress" in the *Direct Instruction News*, Volume 8, Issue 3.

**Assessment skills.** If mastery is generally OK (most of the time at least 75% of the students are at mastery), then does the teacher need to improve so that 100% of the students achieve mastery? To achieve 100% mastery a teacher may need to develop his/her assessment skills. To achieve mastery with all of the students, a teacher needs to be able to zero in on students and objectives that need more work. The teacher needs to be able to ferret out any issues that the students have with learning the material. The teacher should ask him/herself these questions: Do I have concrete and specific knowledge of each student's achievement? Am I fully aware of individual student achievement levels and skill deficits? Am I able to analyze all tests to find areas of class-wide weaknesses vs. individual weaknesses? Am I able to identify "can't" problems from "won't" problems in tests? Can I tell what kind of remediation is needed when analyzing assessments? Can I distinguish fact, component, and strategy errors in math? If the answer is "no" to any of these questions then the next most important area on which the teacher should focus is developing more and/or better skills in assessment—learning how to give and analyze assessments. This in turn will enable the teacher to fix mastery problems with all of the students, even the ones that need extra instruction.

**Figure 1**  
*Striving for Excellence*



**Efficiency in Instruction.** If mastery and assessment are OK, does the teacher need to improve efficiency in instruction? Outside of DI few people ask themselves this question—because they have no way to self-evaluate. One of the most important innovations in DI is that lessons are carefully constructed to be relatively equal in length and completed in one instructional period. In this way, by using DI materials and teaching pedagogy we can evaluate our efficiency in instruction by asking ourselves, “Am I completing a lesson a day (assuming enough time\*) on most days?” See Table 1 for the time needed in the daily schedule for DI lessons.

The other important question a teacher can ask is, “Am I on track to complete the level by the end of the year?” If this is accomplished in DI programs, with mastery, then students will progress a year for each year in school. Sometimes we have a more ambitious goal—such as catching students up by doing a level and a half in one year. Whatever our goals are, to self-evaluate we write down our goals and check our progress against them early in the school year. If we aren’t making the progress we want or expect, then we need to work on improving our efficiency of instruction. We would refer you to a 2009 article, “Remedies for Fixing Problems with Lesson Progress—Without Sacrificing Mastery” in the *Direct Instruction News*, Volume 9, Issue 1, p. 15-17.

**Student motivation.** So a teacher’s students are engaged, mastering material, making a year’s progress each year, and that teacher knows how to assess to find any problems. What more can be done? The next area to look for improvement is the area of motivation. Does the teacher need to improve student motivation? Ask these questions:

- Are students participating enthusiastically in academic lessons?
- Are students proud of specific academic accomplishments in class?
- Are students able to articulate academic achievement goals they have?

- Are students completing all assignments?
- Are students interested in and aware of their grades and how well they are learning?

If all of these things are strong, then the teacher has great student motivation. If not, then this might be a good area of focus. In our experience, few teachers are doing the best job possible in motivating their students. The difference a teacher can make in student learning by motivating students to strive for achievement goals is huge. In places without structured DI curricula, this variable turns out to be just about the only thing teachers can use to improve achievement. Teachers may not have the tools to easily reach mastery, but they can motivate the heck out of their students. How to motivate students is a whole other article (or a six hour workshop if we can get teachers in one spot long enough). We would refer you to a 2007 article, “Fixing Motivation Problems” in the *Direct Instruction News*, Volume 7, Issue 3, p. 22-31.

**Academic challenge or rigor.** Once a teacher knows he/she has students highly motivated, what more can be done? He/she can work to systematically increase the challenge or academic rigor in the class. How would a teacher decide if there was a need to increase the challenge in a class? Ask the following questions:

- Is the class academically rigorous? (Do students have to work at it to succeed?)
- Do students feel some pressure to perform at their best?
- Are students aware of excellence goals that they are striving towards?
- Can one see evidence of students studying and making an effort to learn?
- Do all students recognize a need to be engaged—including top students?

These are lofty goals, but they are the ones to focus on when all the rest have been achieved. This is particularly true in classrooms with students who learn easily. They will find grade level DI to be quite easy and the teacher has an obligation to find ways to increase the challenge in the classroom.

**Progress not perfection.** The teacher’s goal is to make progress in these areas, rather than to expect to be perfect. One begins by finding out where he/she is at the start—by doing a rigorous self-evaluation. Then set a goal to improve the student outcome data. Learn what research says will make a difference in that variable. Make the change in teaching behavior and then collect rigorous, honest data for a post evaluation. Don’t expect perfection. Improvement is good—especially when it is not an accident.

**Table 1**  
*Daily schedule for DI Lessons*

Subject	Time Needed *
Reading Mastery	75-90 minutes (30 / group)
Language/Writing	50-60 minutes
Spelling Mastery	15 (in Rdg kit) 30 SplMstry
Math Facts	10 minutes
CMC	50-60 minutes



**Collecting data and/or getting observed.** Once an area is chosen the teacher will need some baseline data to see where he/she is starting. In many full DI implementations, data is already being collected on a weekly basis (number of students at mastery for each test or checkout, lesson progress each week and over the course of the year, assessment analyses of tests that break out by objectives) that will tell how one is doing. When other areas are examined, such as engagement, motivation and challenge, a teacher may need someone to observe in the classroom and interview students—to see how things are going.

**Measuring engagement.** Someone may need to observe in a room to help a teacher measure the rate of student engagement. The observer should observe a different student every 15 seconds—from the front of the room, so they can see faces. The observer watches that student for a few seconds and codes each student as + for engaged in the lesson (on task) or – for not engaged (off task). Someone could video (15 seconds per student), then a teacher could code it him/herself. The observer should go around the room a couple of times getting video or rating each student. The rate of engagement is a percentage: the number of plus marks over the total number of observations. An observer

would have to walk around and look at student's work to check engagement rate during independent work. It may look like everyone is engaged, but students must be observed to see what they are doing to be sure. A decent engagement rate is 90%, but 100% is feasible in DI classrooms. Whatever a teacher's rate is, he/she can work on improving it if he/she is not happy with it.

**Measuring motivation.** To measure the level of motivation in a room one will need to have someone observe and interview. Engagement is part of motivation, so that should be checked as well. The rest is simply added to the engagement observation. The observer should look for enthusiastic participation as well as high levels of engagement. The more evidence the observer can find of student enthusiasm, the more motivated are the students. You will also need to have someone interview students—or the teacher can do it. Ask the following questions of students:

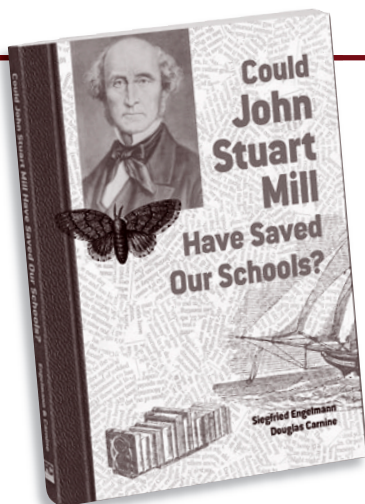
- What work are you proud of?
- How well are you doing in this class?
- How can you tell if you're doing well?
- Do you have any goals you wish to accomplish?

- What motivates you in this class?

If students clearly have goals and are motivated, then this area is strong. Conversely, if students are unable to say what they are doing well, or what they want to do, or what are their goals, then motivation is clearly an area that could use improvement.

**Measuring challenge.** Students must be engaged and motivated in order for a teacher to be able to increase the level of challenge in the classroom. The observation for challenge would include the observation and interview for engagement and motivation. The observer would have to look for enthusiastic participation as well as *pride in accomplishment*. The observer should walk around to see how *carefully* and *accurately* students are doing independent work. Students would also need to be interviewed. In addition to the motivation questions above, the following are good questions to gauge the level of challenge in the room.

- Do you study for any tests in this class?
- What have you done to do better in this class?
- What are you most proud of?
- What goals do you have for yourself?
- What have you done that really took effort?



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- Do you have to work hard in this class?

If there is a good academic challenge in the classroom, students will be able to answer these questions with specifics. If they draw a blank when you ask these questions—not so much. To review, there are six key areas of teaching in which to improve—if one wishes to increase student achievement. The first is engagement. Students have to be listening and engaged in order to learn with an engagement rate of at least 90%. The second is

general mastery, where  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the class is passing or testing above 90%. Students need to master the material to benefit from the instruction. The third area is assessment skills in order to find out how to help the students who are in the bottom  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the class. The fourth area is efficiency—the ability to use time wisely in the classroom so as to make a year’s progress every year. The fifth area is motivation, whether or not a teacher is getting the best out of his/her students. The final area is academic challenge and rigor. If everything else is in place, then a teacher

will want to learn how to push students to achieve more.

Pat Riley, who won seven NBA championships and knows something about the subject, said this about excellence, “Excellence is the *gradual* result of *always* striving to do better.” If we all strive to do better, we’ll get better and better and become consistently excellent. Our students will learn more and be better prepared for life. Our classrooms will be more successful and joyful! Our school outcomes will get better. Sound like a good plan? **ADI**

JONATHAN LUEBKE, David Douglas Arthur Academy

## Wesley Becker Excellent School Award

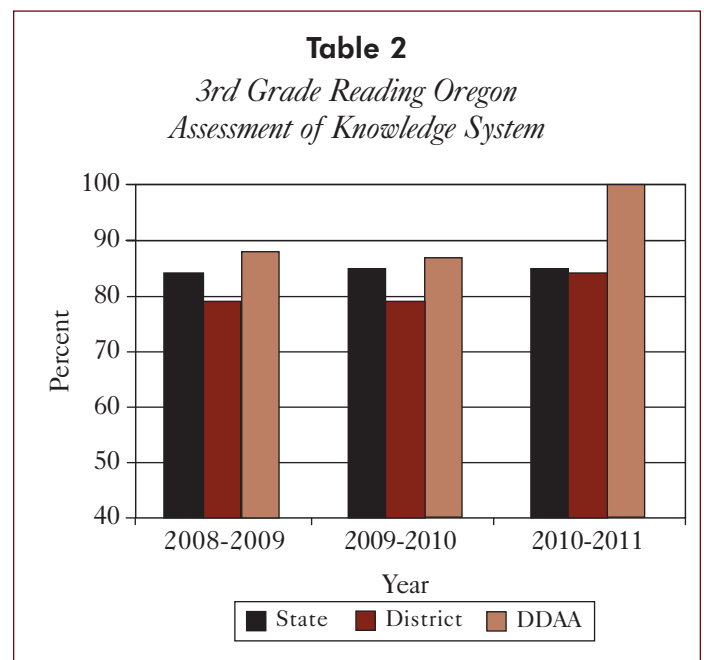
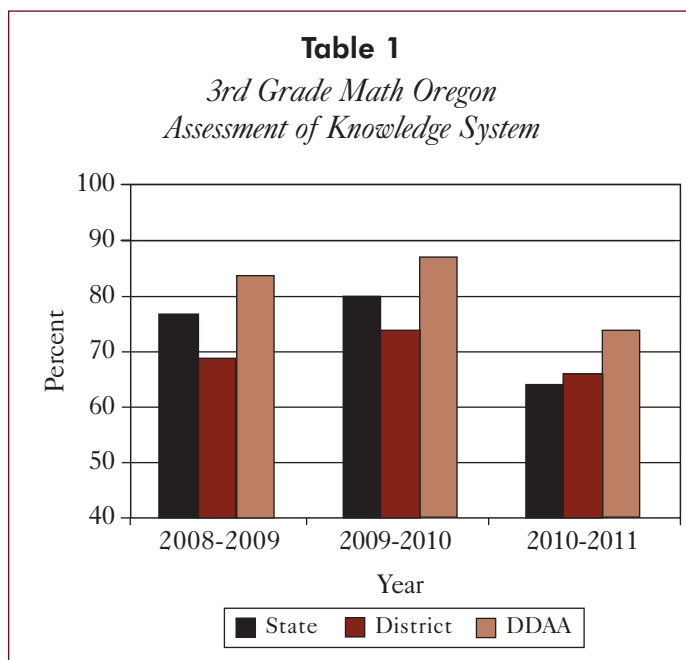
Arthur Academy’s mission statement says it all: “Every single student, regardless of ethnicity, parental income, learning difference, culture, or native language, will become a fluent reader and will master the academic and intellectual skills necessary to succeed at the next level of schooling.” Thanks to Direct Instruction Curriculum, the David Douglas Arthur Academy (DDAA) achieves that mission statement and more.

DDAA has exceeded expectations of

what it means to be a successful school. The school has scored very high on achievement tests and much higher than any district run schools and state schools (see attached graphs). One hundred percent of the third and fourth graders passed the state reading tests with over 97% of students school-wide passing. DDAA third, fourth, and fifth graders outperformed the rest of the state by 13% or more on the state reading test and 16% higher in math. Direct Instruction

has been the key to the continued success of DDAA; the programs are well organized and teach the students the skills needed to read at grade level or, in many cases, significantly above grade level.

DDAA has a stellar staff that continually strives to be the best they can be. The staff at DDAA is a very cohesive group that works together for the betterment of their students. The staff truly works as a team. Staff development, weekly collaboration meetings, and unrivaled cooperation assist the teachers in being more effective in the classroom. Teach-



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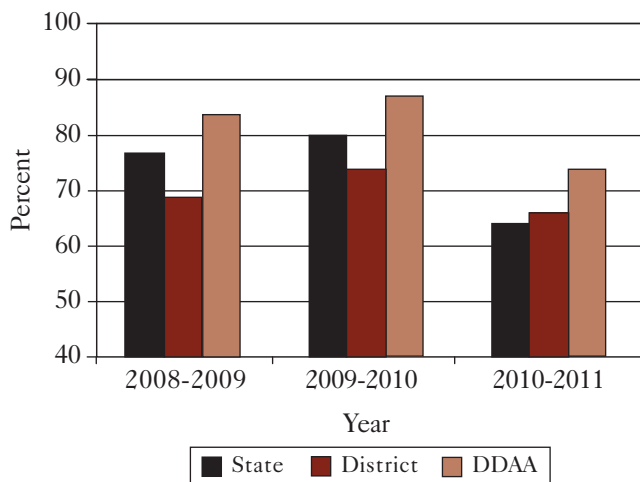
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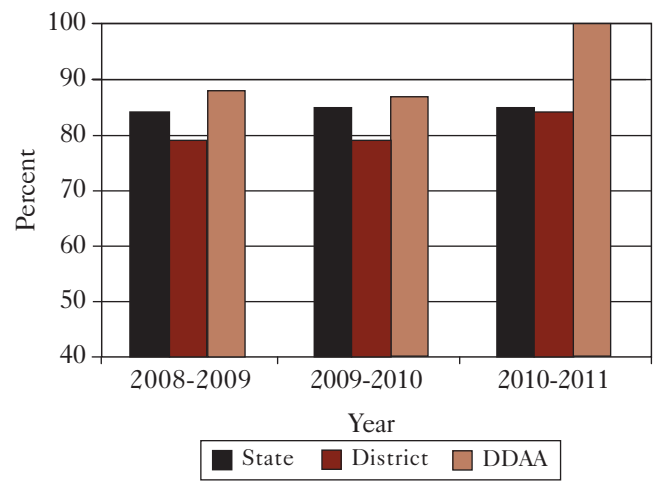
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**Table 1**  
*3rd Grade Math Oregon Assessment of Knowledge System*



**Table 2**  
*3rd Grade Reading Oregon Assessment of Knowledge System*



ers continually strive to find new ways to motivate their students to be the best they can be. Parent volunteers are very active and support the staff in many ways, from parking lot attendants to lunch room helpers.

This past year DDAA was selected as the Oregon Charter School of the Year by the Northwest Center for Educational Options. "This award speaks to the hard work that our students and staff have put in to strive for educational excellence," said principal Stephani Brown. Along with this pres-

tigious award, one of DDAA's very own teachers, Shawn LaPointe, was recognized as the Oregon Charter School Teacher of the Year. His students love coming to school and are always highly engaged in their academics.

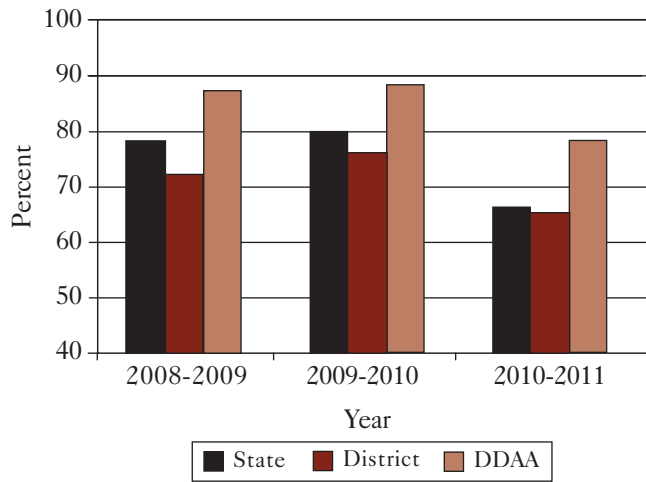
This past fall, DDAA received an overall rating of "Outstanding" on the twelfth annual Oregon School Report Card. Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo said in her letter to DDAA, "Receiving this rating is a testament to the incredible commitment and hard work of your school

community. You have shown what is possible when teachers, administrators, classified staff, students, parents, and the community partners work together toward a common goal and share the belief that all students can achieve at high levels."

The school is being recognized around the district and now the state. Achievement test scores have steadily improved and the Direct Instruction curriculum has been an integral part of the school's success. *ADI*

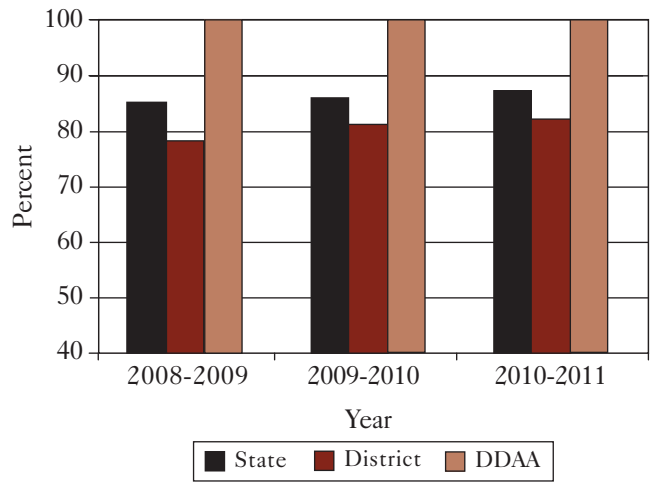
**Table 3**

*4th Grade Math Oregon Assessment of Knowledge System*



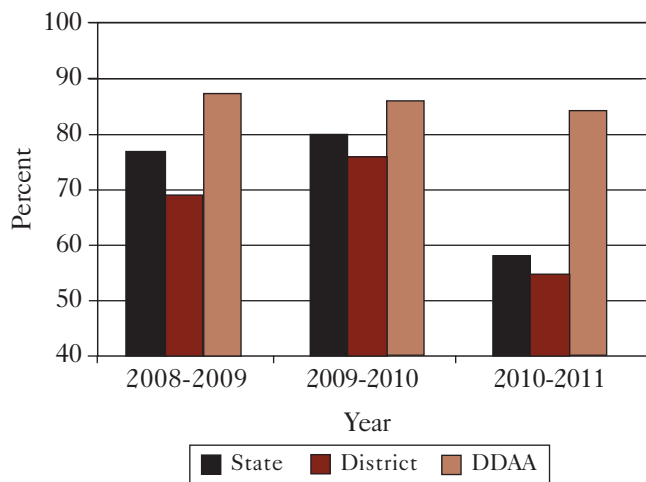
**Table 4**

*4th Grade Reading Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Percents*



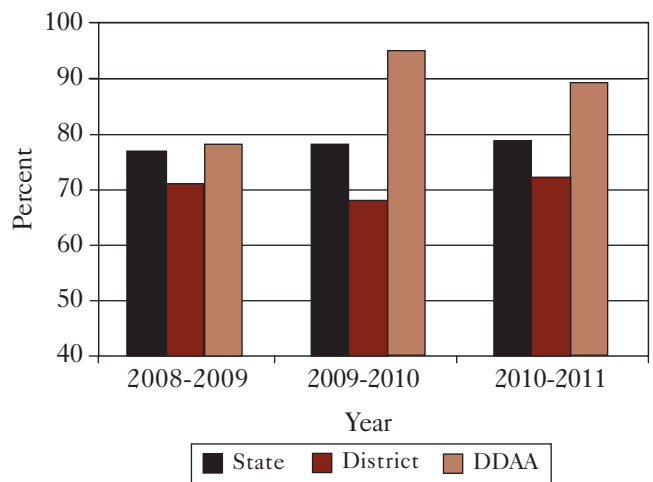
**Table 5**

*5th Grade Math Oregon Assessment of Knowledge System*



**Table 6**

*5th Grade Reading Oregon Assessment of Knowledge System*



# Martin's Musings

## Accurate Comprehension and Communication

Accurate comprehension and communication is THE most important thing to learn—if you want to be a great teacher. Former students will say...

“She made me smart!”

“He taught me more than any other teacher!”

“She communicated so clearly!”

But, if you are fine spending your life as a mediocre teacher, then don't tackle this document—even though I worked my fingers to the bone writing it for YOU.

No, do something else. Make new “friends” on facebook.

“Please, be my friend. Heathcliff! I'm so lonely. So very lonely. All I have is this tiny piece of Kleenex to keep me company.”

Pathetic.

Yet strangely amusing...

Okay, I can see you're still here.

Good.

Here are two rules.

**First rule.** *To figure out what talk or text says (how it represents reality), translate long, complex, wordy, and confusing sentences into simple declarative statements.*

“What's a simple declarative statement?”

I'm THRILLED that you asked.

A simple declarative statement (I said statement, not sentence) has a **subject** (what the statement is about)

and a **predicate** (the part that tells more about the subject).

Here are examples of *simple declarative statements*.

**I** (subject: what the statement is about) **is cold** (predicate tells more about the subject).

**I** (subject: what the statement is about) **rule the night** (predicate tells more about the subject).

**In the beginning of G-d's creating the heavens and the earth** (subject: what the statement is about), **the earth was without form, and void** (predicate tells more about the subject).

Note: The subject is not G-d. Read the sentence again.

The statement is about the **period** of the beginning of G-d's CREATING the heavens and the earth. That is the subject. That predicate tells more about the PERIOD.

It would be terrific if human beings thought, spoke, and wrote in simple declarative statements—except for poetry and plays and such, where we're **not** shooting for simplicity.

But sadly, the **stark reality** reminds us that **Human beings are blabber mouths**.

We stuff our speaking and writing with useless flap and doodle, piffle, and bilge. The result? Students mutter, “Oh, my G-d! What is he talking about?!”

**Second rule.** *To communicate knowledge (representations of reality) effectively (students get it) and efficiently (they get it easily), speak and write in simple declarative statements.*

Here's a **brilliant** way to see it. Okay, not so brilliant, but pretty clever.

### Signal and Noise

Clear communication of knowledge (instruction) boils down to this: mostly signal, very little noise.

**The signal is the information or knowledge (about reality) that is supposed to be communicated** by a painting, poem, declaration, sculpture, dance, symphony, lesson in math or reading, description, explanation, or argument by a prosecuting attorney in a trial.

The **noise** is everything that

1. **Hides** the signal. “Blah blah blah yadda yadda The Constitution was blah blah in 17 yadda yadda...” The Constitution **what?**
2. **Distracts** you away from the signal. “This letter [f] makes the sound...ffff.” [But Teacher is not pointing directly at the letter, and so students are looking at something else when the teacher says ffff.]
3. **Gives the signal more than one possible meaning** (makes the signal ambiguous) so that you aren't sure **WHAT** the information is.

Teacher: “This letter is ay (a). It says ahhh.”

Kids: “Now I'm all confused. What's the name? ay? ahh?”

### Correction

The previous three issues of the Direct Instruction News were printed with the wrong Volume and Number. The Fall 2010 issue is Volume 10, No. 3. The Spring 2011 issue is Volume 11, No. 1. The Summer 2011 issue is Volume 11, No. 2.



What's it say? ay? ahh? Geez, lady, make up your mind. I'm a little kid!"

4. **Doesn't signal** (signify, point to, mean) **anything**.

Learning is a constitutive but iterative process of inquiry-based discovery that adjusts cognitive

structures in relation to the pragmatics of action." (I. M. A. Doodlehead, 2009, *Journal of Advanced Nonsense*)

Compare paragraph 2 of the Declaration of Independence, on the left, with a passage from a journal article, on the right.

In order to communicate clearly, do the following.

1. **Communicate so that it's easy for students to discern the message—the knowledge statements (SIGNAL)—embedded in talk and text (NOISE)**. They must filter out the noise (extra

**Table 1**

*Signal and Noise*

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. [Thomas Jefferson. First author. Paragraph 2. *Declaration of Independence*. July, 1776. ]

**Jefferson arranged statements in a logical sequence. Each statement communicates a rule about human beings. The first statement (rule) is very general—about human nature. The last statement justifies revolution. It follows logically from the earlier statements. Is there any question what Jefferson is saying? NO.**

With the reframing of poverty as a cultural problem and, in turn, antipoverty reformers' redeployment of the language used by cultural groups (e.g., groups formed from ethnic, religious, and gender affiliations) in their struggles for recognition, the goal of restructuring the political economy in the name of social justice has been displaced if not rendered unintelligible or terroristic-in our advanced capitalist society. Nevertheless, although talk of wealth redistribution has all but disappeared from the U.S. stage, the discourse of distribution is far from dead. As Young (1990) points out, common sense (Gramsci, 1971) notions of social justice in the United States frequently revolve around a distributive frame-work that masks critical institutional analyses of domination and oppression. This dominant distributive paradigm "defines social justice as the morally proper distribution of social benefits and burdens among society's members" (p. 16). These benefits include material resources, such as income, but also nonmaterial social goods, such as rights and self-respect. When employed in social justice discussions, the distributive paradigm frequently fails to examine social structures and institutional contexts, such as the division of labor and the organization of decision-making bodies. It also frames rights, including social respect, as possessions rather than relationships...

(More than Words? Delving into the Substantive Meaning(s) of "Social Justice" in Education Author(s): Connie E. North Source: Review of Educational Research, Vol. 76, No. 4 (Winter, 2006), pp. 507-535 Published by: American Educational Research Association Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4124413> Accessed: 03/08/2010 00:42

**The sentences are complex; one thought is imbedded in another. It's hard to tell what the author is saying. What are the subjects? What is the author telling about the subjects? What is the argument? Is there a conclusion? Is there some point we are supposed to get?**

Note that when you don't use the right words, and don't arrange words into a series of simple declarative statements, you don't communicate anything. And then everyone will get bored and stop trying to learn.

words, unclear words) and hear/see the signal.

## 2. Communicate so that the message is clear in what it says.

How to do this? Easy.

1. All clear cognitive knowledge (thinking—talking in your head—and communicating) is in the form of *simple declarative statements*. Declarative statements state a **subject** (what the statement is about), and then state a **predicate** (TELLS something about that subject).

“The United States (subject: a thing that is particular) is in the Northern Hemisphere (predicate: tells about the subject).” **FACT** knowledge communicated with a simple declarative statement.

“The five classes of fungi (subject) are Basidiomycete, Ascomycetes, Glomeromycetes, Zygomycetes, and Chytridomyetes (predicate: tells a list of things about the subject).” **LIST** knowledge communicated with a simple declarative statement.

“Basidiomycetes (subject: a whole class/concept, not a subject that is a particular thing) is a class of fungi (the larger class of genus in which Basidiomycetes is located) that produces spores that are formed outside a pedestal-like structure, the basidium (the difference between Basidiomycetes and other things in the class of fungi) (genus and difference are both part of the predicate).”

<http://www.basidiomycetes.org>  
**CONCEPT** knowledge (in this case, a verbal definition) communicated with a simple declarative statement divided into subject and a predicate that tells two things about the subject—genus, then difference. *More on genus and difference in a minute.*

“Cryptococcus neoformans (subject: a whole class/concept,

not a subject that is a particular thing) is a Basidiomycetes fungus that is toxic (predicate: tells that the subject is IN a larger class).” **RULE** knowledge communicated with a simple declarative statement.

“To sound out a word (subject: an action that has an objective) look at the letter on the far left; say the sound of that letter; move your eyes to the next letter to the right and keep saying the sound; now say the next sound; continue until there are no more letters (predicate: tells more about the subject).” **ROUTINE** knowledge communicated with a simple declarative statement.

*Notice that different forms of knowledge—facts, lists, concepts, rules, and routines—can all be communicated the same way—with simple declarative statements of subject and predicate.*

In other words, you can communicate ANYthing with simple declarative statements.

Or, you can sound like a moron.

**Sidebar: More on definitions** by stating the subject (the CLASS to be defined), and then the predicate consisting of genus and difference.

In the case of definitions of higher order concepts (justice,

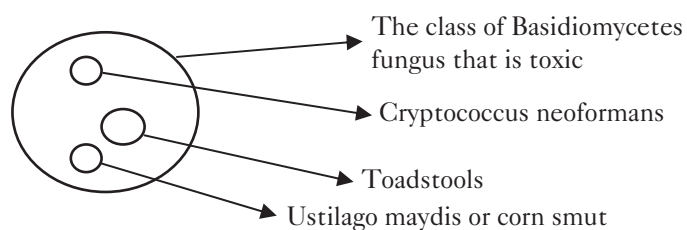
fungus, government, slope of line, chemical bond, family), the predicate tells two things: first it tells the genus or larger class in which the subject concept is located; then it tells more about the subject class to show how it is **different** from other classes in the genus.

So, verbal definitions of higher-order (abstract) concepts should be in the form of simple declarative statements like this. **Subject** (class/concept to be defined) is in a larger class (genus part of the predicate) and it has the following features (difference part of the predicate). For example,

“A kingdom (subject concept—a whole class of things—to be defined) is a state (genus: the larger class in which the class of kingdoms is located) governed by one person for the common good” (the difference between kingdoms and other classes of states, such as aristocracies and dictatorships). [From Aristotle. *Politics*.]

**Substantive corruption** (subject concept—a whole class of things—to be defined) is a political process (genus: the larger class in which the class of substantive corruption is located) in which the political establishment agrees among itself to expand its influence and extract resources from the system for its own gain using

**Figure 1**  
*Rule Knowledge*



**illegitimate means** (the difference between substantive corruption and other things in the class of political processes).

[Adapted from [http://www.etsnrityroad.info/index.php/weblog/single/the\\_coming\\_crises/](http://www.etsnrityroad.info/index.php/weblog/single/the_coming_crises/) posted Saturday, June 19, 2010]

Compare the above with this one, below. Notice how the **difference** portion of the predicate helps you to **see the difference** between substantive corruption and procedural corruption.

**Procedural corruption** (subject concept—a whole class of things—to be defined) is a **political process** (genus: the larger class in which the class of procedural corruption is located) in which the **political establishment**—faced with a loss of power—becomes more authoritarian, and discards the fundamental rules of the system in order to maintain the flow of power and resources (the difference between procedural corruption and other things—such as substantive corruption—in the class of political processes).

[Adapted from [http://www.etsnrityroad.info/index.php/weblog/single/the\\_coming\\_crises/](http://www.etsnrityroad.info/index.php/weblog/single/the_coming_crises/) posted Saturday, June 19, 2010]

2. As said, all clear cognitive knowledge (thinking—talking in your head—and communicating) is in the form of simple declarative statements. However, writing and speaking (ways to communicate knowledge that represents reality) may NOT be IN simple, easy to grasp declarative form. So, you and your students need to rearrange speech and text into simple, easy to grasp declarative statements. Subject then predicate.

“One thing only she had.” (not a simple declarative statement).  
Fix it. “She had only one thing.” (simple declarative statement)

“Rights from God are given.” (not a simple declarative statement). Fix it. “Rights are given from God.” (simple declarative statement)

“The singularity. What a world changing event that will be.” (not a simple declarative statement) Fix it. “The singularity will be a world changing event.” (simple declarative statement)

“How many Middle East states are likely to fall to radical Islam? Six.” (not a simple declarative statement) “Six Middle East states are likely to fall to radical Islam.” (simple declarative statement)

You may think that turning the above sentences into simple declarative statements is no big deal. Well, it’s a **REAL big deal!** Here’s the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

“A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.”

Some people think this amendment is about the militia.

“A well-regulated militia (subject) is necessary to the security of a free state (predicate).”

No. NO. NO! The subject is NOT the militia.

**YOU** can see that the subject is **THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS.**

And the predicate is **SHALL NOT BE INFRINGED.**

The part about the militia being necessary to the security of a free state is the **REASON WHY** the right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

If citizens do not **GET** this, then they can be easily fooled by groups who claim that the Second Amendment does not protect the right to keep and bear arms. “It’s just about the militia.”

Let’s practice! **THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL TO LEARN.**

Turn these into simple declarative statements. Find the subject

Dear friends in the DI community,

## What do you remember most about your first experience seeing or using DI?

You no doubt have plenty of stories to share about your first time with Direct Instruction, whether it was 30 years ago or last month. We hope to hear these stories—and learn from them—in upcoming issues of the DI News.

Send us your responses—short answers are fine—to Don Crawford, [dc0843@aol.com](mailto:dc0843@aol.com), or Randi Sautler, [itsrandi@aol.com](mailto:itsrandi@aol.com). Let us know your name and your affiliation (school, organization, synagogue, rifle club, political party, etc.). Have a good idea for a future question? Let us know that, too! —Don & Randi, editors



and predicate. Remove all the blah blah noise, and then state the subject and predicate. Label the subject and predicate.

“The attachment of the Roman troops to their standards was inspired by the united influence of religion and of honor.” [*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol.1 Edward Gibbon, 1782]

Translation. 1. The Roman troops were attached to their standard. [The Roman eagle atop a pole.] 2. The attachment was inspired by the united influence of religion and honor.”

“The golden eagle, which glittered in the front of the legion, was the object of their fondest devotion...” [*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol.1 Edward Gibbon, 1782]

Translation. 1. The golden eagle glittered. 2. The golden eagle glittered in front of the legion. 3. The golden eagle was the object of their fondest devotion.

“Listening not to me but the Word (Logos) it is wise to agree that all things are one.” (Heraclitus c. 500 BCE)

Translation. 1. I am not the one you should listen to. 2. Listen to the Logos. 3. All things are one.

“Be it enacted by the General Assembly, that no crime shall be henceforth punished by deprivation of life or limb...” [*Memoir, Correspondence, and Miscellanies, From the Papers of Thomas Jefferson.*]

Translation. 1. The General Assembly is enacting. 2. No crime shall be punished by deprivation of life or limb. 3. The General Assembly enacts a law that no crime shall be punished by deprivation of life or limb.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created

equal...” [From paragraph 2, Declaration of Independence, July, 1776]

1. Some truths are self-evident. 2. We hold some truths to be self-evident. 3. All men are created equal. 4. One truth that we hold self-evident is that all men are created equal.

“...government by the whole people, being the government of the most numerous and most powerful class, is an evil of the same nature as unmixed monarchy...” [John Emerich Edward Dalberg. Lord Acton]

*Sometimes the subject and predicate are in different sentences. YOU have to find the subject and predicate and boil the several sentences into ONE simple declarative statement.*

Translation. 1. Government by the whole people is government of the most numerous and powerful class. 2. Government by an unmixed monarchy is an evil. 3. Government by the whole people is an evil. 4. Government by the whole people and government by an unmixed monarchy are evils of the same nature.

Okay, so you’ve removed the blab from sentences and restated the sentences as simple declarative statements of subject and predicate. GREAT! But it can get tricky because...

3. **Sometimes the subject and predicate are in different sentences. YOU have to find the subject and predicate and boil the several sentences into ONE simple declarative statement.** Look at this.

“What, then, is law? It is the collective organization of the individual right to lawful defense.” [Fredric Bastiat. *The Law*. 1850]

What’s the subject? The law. The next sentence tells MORE about the law; it tells what the law IS.

So, the simple declarative statement of subject and predicate—that pulls together the two SENTENCES—is **The law (subject) is the collective organization of the individual right to lawful defense (predicate).**

How about this one?

“There is the authority of the extraordinary and personal gift of grace, the absolutely personal devotion and personal confidence in revelation, heroism, or other qualities of individual leadership. This is charismatic domination...” [Max Weber. “Politics as a Vocation.” 1918]

What’s the subject? Charismatic domination—in the second sentence.

What tells more about charismatic domination? The first sentence.

What words in the first sentence FOCUS right on—and tell more about—charismatic domination? Not “There is the...” Who cares about that? The words that focus on charismatic domination are “the authority of the extraordinary and personal gift of grace, the absolutely personal devotion and personal confidence in revelation, heroism, or other qualities of individual leadership.”

So, what’s the simple declarative statement that connects subject and predicate?

Hint. Charismatic domination is...

Now find the subject and predicate—which may be in different sentences; toss out the noise, and state subject and predicate.



“A better definition of terrorism is a deliberate attack by armed men on unarmed civilians. Terrorism is aggression against civilians as civilians, inevitably taken by surprise and defenseless.”

[André Glucksmann, “From the H-Bomb to the Human Bomb,” *City Journal*, Autumn, 2007]

Subject is: ter\_\_\_\_\_m

Predicate is spread over TWO sentences. Combine all of the words that tell MORE about the subject.

Now say the simple declarative sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ (subject) is \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ (predicate).

Do the same thing with this one.

“War is the father of all, king of all. Some it makes gods, some it makes men, some it makes slaves, some free.” [Heraclitus, c. 500 BCE]

\_\_\_\_\_ (subject) is \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ (predicate).

Now this one.

Ringworm (*tinea corpora*). This is caused by a microscopic fungus, not a worm. Warmth, humidity, sweating, and poor air circulation all help bring about these fungal infections. <http://quickcare.org/skin/fungus.html>

\_\_\_\_\_ (subject) is \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ (predicate).

Okay, you’re doing fine. You (1) removed the noise from one sentence and expressed subject and predicate in one simple declarative statement; and you (2) found subject and predicate in several sentences, removed the noise, and combined the subject and predicate in one simple declarative statement. But remember the sad fact that **Human beings are blabber mouths.**

4. *Sentences may contain more than one knowledge statement. So, you and your students need to identify separate statements in speech and text, and arrange these into a series of simple, easy to grasp declarative statements.*

I’ll show you how.

1. “That public virtue, which among the ancients was denominated patriotism, is derived from a strong sense of our own interest in the preservation and prosperity of the free government of

*Sentences may contain more than one knowledge statement. So, you and your students need to identify separate statements in speech and text, and arrange these into a series of simple, easy to grasp declarative statements.*

which we are members.” [*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol.1 Edward Gibbon, 1782]

Segment into:

1. One public virtue among the ancients (subject) was denominated patriotism (predicate).
2. Patriotism (subject) is derived from a strong sense of our own interest in the preservation and prosperity of the free government of which we are members.
2. “Electromagnetic radiation can be described in terms of a stream of *photons*, which are massless particles each traveling in a wave-like pattern and moving at the *speed of light*.” [http://imagine.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/science/know\\_11/emspectrum.html](http://imagine.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/science/know_11/emspectrum.html)

Segment into:

1. Electromagnetic radiation (subject) can best be described in terms of a stream of *photons* (predicate).
2. Photons (subject) are massless particles [genus, or larger class in which photons are located. MK] each traveling in a wave-like pattern and moving the *speed of light* [difference between photons and other things in the class of massless particles. MK] NOTE. This is a definition. See the genus and difference?
3. “In the study of objects which change their brightness over time, such as *novae*, *supernovae*, and variable *stars*, the light curve is a simple but valuable tool to a scientist.”

[http://imagine.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/science/how\\_11/light\\_curves.html](http://imagine.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/science/how_11/light_curves.html)

Segment into:

1. The light curve (subject) is a simple but valuable tool to a scientist in the study of objects which change their brightness over time (predicate).
2. *Novae*, *supernovae*, and variable *stars* (subject) change their brightness over time (predicate).
4. “The obvious definition of a monarchy seems to be that of a state [genus or larger class in which monarchy is located. MK], in which a single person, by whatsoever name he may be distinguished, is intrusted with the execution of the laws, the management of the revenue, and the command of the army (difference between monarchy and other kinds of states. MK). But, unless public liberty is protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians, the authority of so formidable a magistrate will soon degenerate into despotism.” [*History of the Decline and Fall of the*

*Roman Empire*, Vol.1 Edward Gibbon, 1782]

Do you see that that first sentence is a definition of monarchy? Note the genus and difference.

Segment into:

1. A monarchy (subject) is a state [genus part of the predicate], in which a single person, by whatsoever name he may be distinguished, is intrusted with the execution of the laws, the management of the revenue, and the command of the army (difference part of the predicate).
2. Monarchy degenerates into despotism [the subject is not monarchy, but the degenerating of monarchy into despotism. MK] when public liberty is not protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians (predicate: tells more about the degeneration of monarchy).
5. “Political correctness is communist propaganda writ small. In my study of communist societies, I came to the conclusion that the purpose of communist propaganda was not to persuade or convince, nor to inform, but to humiliate; and therefore, the less it corresponded to reality the better. When people are forced to remain silent when they are being told the most obvious lies, or even worse when they are forced to repeat the lies themselves, they lose once and for all their sense of probity. To assent to obvious lies is to co-operate with evil, and in some small way to become evil oneself. One’s standing to resist anything is thus eroded, and even destroyed. A society of emasculated liars is easy to control. I think if you examine political correctness, it has the same effect and is intended to.” [Theodore Dalrymple. <http://archive.frontpagemag.com/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=7445>]

This is complex. BUT WE CAN DO IT! We are THAT tough!

Notice how below you can *substitute words whose meaning is clearer—synonyms*. You can point this out to students. “Writ small’ means smaller version of.”

You can also **add comments to clarify**.

Also notice that **there are hidden statements**. The writer **MUST** believe the hidden statements in order to go from one written statement to the next. For example, if I say two things....

*Notice how below you can substitute words whose meaning is clearer—synonyms. You can point this out to students.*

1. All beings are mortal, and
2. Fred is mortal.

How did I get from 1 to 2? Because there is a hidden statement. What is it? Fred is a being.

So, it goes like this...

1. All beings are mortal.
2. Fred is a being. [hidden, implied]
3. Fred is mortal.

So, to help students see how a writer got from X to Z, add Y, help them find the hidden statement.

Okay, let’s segment that tough one above.

Segment into:

1. Political correctness (subject) is communist propaganda **writ small**. Or, *Political correctness is a*

*smaller version of communist propaganda.*

2. The purpose of communist propaganda was not to persuade or convince, nor to inform.
3. The purpose of communist propaganda was to humiliate.
4. If you say what is obviously untrue, you humiliate yourself. (**hidden statement**)
5. Communists want citizens to be humiliated. (**hidden statement**)
6. The less it (subject: communist propaganda) corresponded to reality (*i.e., is obviously untrue*) the better (*because citizens will be that much more humiliated*).
7. People (subject) lose their sense of probity (*what is right and proper, and what is wrong*) when people are forced to remain silent.
8. People (subject) lose their sense of probity when they are being told the most obvious lies.
9. People (subject) lose their sense of probity when they are forced to repeat the lies themselves.
10. When a government (subject) obviously lies, that is evil. (**hidden statement**)
11. When you (subject) assent to obvious lies, you cooperate with evil.
12. When you (subject) assent to obvious lies, you in some small way become evil yourself.
13. When you (subject) assent to obvious lies, your standing to resist anything is eroded.
14. When you (subject) assent to obvious lies, your standing to resist anything is destroyed.
15. A society of emasculated liars (subject) is easy to control.

## Everyone likes getting mail...

ADI maintains a listserv discussion group called DI. This free service allows you to send a message out to all subscribers to the list just by sending one message. By subscribing to the DI list, you will be able to participate in discussions of topics of interest to DI users around the world. There are currently 500+ subscribers. You will automatically receive in your email box all messages that are sent to the list. This is a great place to ask for technical assistance, opinions on curricula, and hear about successes and pitfalls related to DI.

### To subscribe to the list, send the following message from your email account:

To: majordomo@lists.uoregon.edu

In the message portion of the email simply type:

subscribe di

(Don't add *Please* or any other words to your message. It will only cause errors. majordomo is a computer, not a person. No one reads your subscription request.)

### You send your news and views out to the list subscribers, like this:

To: di@lists.uoregon.edu

Subject: *Whatever describes your topic.*

Message: *Whatever you want to say.*

The list is retro-moderated, which means that some messages may not be posted if they are inappropriate. For the most part inappropriate messages are ones that contain offensive language or are off-topic solicitations.

16. The intended effect of political correctness (subject) is to emasculate citizens and make them easy to control.

**Here. Segment these into simple declarative statements. You will be so smart when you learn to do this!**  
Remember:

- Many sentences contain more than one declarative statement.* Segment the sentence into these separate declarative statements.
- Sometimes a simple declarative statement is spread over several sentences.* The subject may be one sentence (and not necessarily the first sentence) and the predicate is in another. In fact, the predicate (words that tell more about the subject) may be spread over several sentences. So, find the subject and predicate, and collapse the sentences into one statement.
- You can substitute a clearer word—a synonym.
- You can add a comment to clarify.
- You should add hidden statements.

“All is flux, nothing stays still.” (Heraclitus c. 500 BCE)

“The progressive development of man is vitally dependent on invention. It is the most important product of his creative brain.” (Nikola Tesla. *My Inventions*. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Publishing.)

“The rampart itself was usually twelve feet high, armed with a line of strong and intricate palisades, and defended by a ditch of twelve feet in depth as well as in breadth.” [Description of Roman legion camps. *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol.1 Edward Gibbon,1782]

“A well-regulated militia *being* (can you think of another word that makes this easier to get? How about a two-letter word starting with i and ending with s?) necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the People to keep and bear arms shall not be

infringed.” (Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution)

“We must realize that war is universal, and strife is justice, and that all things come into being and pass away through strife.” (Heraclitus c. 500 BCE)

“This world, which is the same for all, no one of gods or men has made, but it was ever, is now, and ever shall be eternal fire.” (Heraclitus c. 500 BCE)

“For a Monarchy readily becomes a Tyranny, an Aristocracy an Oligarchy, while a Democracy tends to degenerate into Anarchy. So that if the founder of a State should establish any one of these three forms of Government, he establishes it for a short time only, since no precaution he may take can prevent it from sliding into its contrary, by reason of the close resemblance which, in this case, the virtue bears to the vice.” [Niccolo Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*]

“Thrasymachos. And the different forms of government make laws democratical, aristocratical, tyrannical, with a view to their several interests; and these laws, which are made by them for their own interests, are the justice which they deliver to their subjects, and him who transgresses them they punish as a breaker of the law, and unjust.” (Plato, *Republic*. 428/427 BCE – 348/347 BCE)

“But the possession of unlimited power, which corrodes the conscience, hardens the heart, and confounds the understanding of monarchs exercised its demoralizing influence on the illustrious Democracy of Athens.” (Lord Acton)

Well, that's probably enough for now. More reading here.

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