

# Direct Instruction

## news

ADI Effective School Practices

DON CRAWFORD and RANDI SAULTER, Editors

## *Honoring Champions in DI, Plus Lessons from a Fable, Flapdoodles, and First Days*

Welcome to the fall edition of the *DI News*. This issue should help bring those of you who could not attend the National Direct Instruction Conference in Eugene this summer up to date. Kase Wickman, daughter of ADI Executive Director Bryan Wickman, has written about the awards given out at the conference. [Editors' note: One wonders how hard it is to type while your arm is being twisted.] You can read about Adrienne Allen and Ed Schafer, who were given lifetime achievement awards. Three awards went to Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, where great DI implementations have been accomplishing wonderful things.

We also have a first for the *DI News*. We have a member who offered her reviews of sessions in Eugene and thoughts about what she learned at the conference. We hope you enjoy her insights and we hope it inspires more of you to write in to the *DI News* with your observations, successes, and other stories.

Our board member article in this issue, "A Bad Application of Good Principles," comes from Don Steely. Dr. Steely knows DI deep down in his bones. His amusing story shows how DI principles can (or should) be applied in other areas in life. After all, DI is about flawless communication, isn't it? So wherever communication is faltering, DI has something to contribute.

This issue's article from Randy Sprick and the Safe and Civil Schools group talks about preparing for the first day of the new school year. That really seemed timely to us when we first began preparing for this issue back in August. By the time you read this, that day will have come and gone, but the ideas are critical and will definitely help you either turn over a new leaf next week or get better prepared for next year.

We bring you a fable in this issue. This fable is about a village in long-ago times, but it just might have applicability today. In the story, the villagers don't want to talk about certain topics. But as you'll see, their resistance to facing things squarely leads to some problems. We hope this fable amuses you as well as causes you to think.

We have great success stories again this issue. We have the story of Arapahoe School, a K-8, public school located on the Wind River Reservation in rural Wyoming. It won the Wes Becker Award for its outstanding achievement with DI. Find out how the school achieved a whopping 622% increase in reading achievement. We have the story of great improvement in Coffeetown High, a K-12 school, in a town smaller than most schools today.

This issue's edition of Martin's Musings brings you "Fads and Flapdoodle vs. Serious Instruction." In it Dr.

Kozloff squares off against the nonsense taught in schools of education. He pulls no punches as he tells it like it is. He offers good advice on how to avoid the road to Stupidville, where people believe that foolish terms like "authentic, brain-based instruction" have any real meaning as a guide to effective education. He is both hilarious and instructive.

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## Direct Instruction News

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## Contribute to DI News:

*DI News* provides practitioners, ADI members, the DI community, and those new to DI with stories of successful implementations of DI, reports of ADI awards, tips regarding the effective delivery of DI, articles focused on particular types of instruction, reprints of articles on timely topics, and position papers that address current issues. *The News'* focus is to provide newsworthy events that help us reach the goals of teaching children more effectively and efficiently and communicating that a powerful technology for teaching exists but is not being utilized in most American schools. Readers are invited to contribute personal accounts of success as well as relevant topics deemed useful to the DI community. General areas of submission follow:

**From the field:** Submit letters describing your thrills and frustrations, problems and successes, and so on. A number of experts are available who may be able to offer helpful solutions and recommendations to persons seeking advice.

**News:** Report news of interest to ADI's members.

**Success stories:** Send your stories about successful instruction. These can be short, anecdotal pieces.

**Perspectives:** Submit critiques and perspective essays about a theme of current interest, such as: school restructuring, the ungraded classroom, cooperative learning, site-based management, learning styles, heterogeneous grouping, Regular Ed Initiative and the law, and so on.

**Book notes:** Review a book of interest to members.

**New products:** Descriptions of new products that are available are welcome. Send the description with a sample of the product or a research report validating its effectiveness. Space will be given only to products that have been field-tested and empirically validated.

**Tips for teachers:** Practical, short products that a teacher can copy and use immediately. This might be advice for solving a specific but pervasive problem, a data-keeping form, a single format that would successfully teach something meaningful and impress teachers with the effectiveness and cleverness of Direct Instruction.

**Submission Format:** Send an electronic copy with a hard copy of the manuscript. Indicate the name of the word-processing program you use. Save drawings and figures in separate files. Include an address and email address for each author.

**Illustrations and Figures:** Please send drawings or figures in a camera-ready form, even though you may also include them in electronic form.

Completed manuscripts should be sent to:

ADI Publications  
P.O. Box 10252  
Eugene, OR 97440

Acknowledgement of receipt of the manuscript will be sent by email. Articles are initially screened by the editors for placement in the correct ADI publication. If appropriate, the article will be sent out for review by peers in the field. These reviewers may recommend acceptance as is, revision without further review, revision with a subsequent review, or rejection. The author is usually notified about the status of the article within a 6- to 8-week period. If the article is published, the author will receive five complimentary copies of the issue in which his or her article appears.

*Honoring Champions... continued from page 1*

Our final article this month is an outgrowth of years of watching teachers and schools set up class-wide reinforcement systems whose design, from the outset, is fundamentally flawed. Then all the teachers go to a lot of

trouble to carry out the new plan and are quite disappointed with the results. The article outlines 13 principles in the design of such systems that, if taken into account before embarking on the reinforcement sys-

tem, will ensure far more success. The principles are fairly simple and they make a huge difference. Keep this one on your reference shelf for when you need it.

We hope you find this edition helpful, hopeful, or both. [\*ADI\*](#)

BRYAN WICKMAN, Executive Director, Association for Direct Instruction

# One Member's Observations of the National Direct Instruction Conference 2009

**Editors' note:** In every issue we ask for contributions from our members. After the National Direct Instruction conference this summer in Eugene, we received the following observations from one of our members, Cathy Burner. We are delighted to publish her thoughts and hope to see more submissions from other members of ADI in the future.

## Keynote session

Keynote speakers Siegfried "Zig" Engelmann and Dr. William Heward delivered very timely educational messages to kick off this 2009 conference. Hearing

firsthand stories from Engelmann about the initial stages of the research that made these Direct Instruction programs possible was a thrill.

The unique instructional design of the programs potentially dates as far back as 1843, to a philosopher named John Stuart Mill and his book, "A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive" (1843). Had co-authors Engelmann and Wes Becker been able to work with Mill as Mill drafted his theories regarding instruction, it would have saved them significant time. For exam-

ple, Mill's method of agreement, which states, "When two or more instances of the phenomenon under investigation have only one circumstance in common," was only discovered by Engelmann and Becker by trial and error. The circumstances in which alone all the instances agree are the cause or effect. The very famous non-examples used by Engelmann once again direct us back to Mill's philosophy. It is interesting to note that Mill never put his theories into practice; in fact, it took more than 160 years before Engelmann and Becker did their own research and put his theories into practice.

Another theory by Mill, "Joint method of agreement and difference is consistent with only one possible infer-

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.

American Preparatory Academy  
*Draper, UT*

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Los Molinos Unified School District  
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*Everett, MA*

NIFDI  
*Eugene, OR*

Oconomowoc Developmental  
Training Center  
*Oconomowoc, WI*

Park Elementary School USD 428  
*Great Bend, KS*

School District of New Richmond  
*New Richmond, WI*

The Academy of Columbus  
*Columbus, OH*

Winona Elementary  
*Loveland, CO*



ence,” later became the cornerstone of Engelmann’s work. Mill stated, “The final product is validated through empirical investigation.” As time has shown, DI programs are the most efficient way to instruct students and help them catch up with their peers, and thus research-based instruction opened the door for curriculum design. The educational community finally caught up with science. When all studies confirm these theories set forth, the logical result is that learning will take place. These breakthroughs in thinking have led to the DI programs as they exist today.

Heward, a professor emeritus at the Ohio State University, delivered a timely message directed at the naysay-

ers of research-based educational programs. He stated that students have the right to an effective education, and research has produced a reliable knowledge base in support of DI programs. Heward noted one common complaint among educators: overly structured curriculum plans impede true learning. Another complaint cited by educators was that drill and practice should be minimized. However, structure, drill, and practice are the heart and soul of the research-based DI programs, and Heward understood this and communicated this to the audience. Heward’s message could not have been more appropriate and was an excellent and timely start to the conference.

## **Reading Fluency— Implementing the DRF Program**

Don Crawford, the co-author of the Differentiated Reinforcement Fluency (DRF) program with Engelmann, presented this much-needed reinforcement program. When students fail a checkout test, this program offers a systematic approach for a remedy. Prior to these programs, teachers typically had a student re-read a story until the student reached a passing level for the reading checkout. Many times, the student was never able to meet the checkout criteria and therefore fell further behind. Not only does this program give the struggling student alternative passages to read, it also gives the educator powerful data-keeping instruments to log information and track progress, as well as a schedule for degrees of reinforcement.

## **Spelling Mastery and Expressive Writing**

Anne Desjardins presented the *Spelling Mastery* and *Expressive Writing* programs. *Spelling Mastery*, which I personally have used extensively, now has a new placement test that should be used when placing students. *Expressive Writing* was delivered with many real-life student samples of writing. Both programs are excellent examples of strong DI programs and practices and work well to quickly bring students up to par when properly implemented by educators.

## **Spoken English—A Direct Instruction Program**

Engelmann, Owen Engelmann, Dan Johnston, and Jerry Silbert delivered a well-prepared two-day session of exercises and visuals from the new *Spoken English* program. The United States is home to many young immigrants, many of whom have never had formal training in the English language. With each passing day English becomes the universal language for the world. The *Spoken English* program could not be more timely in helping these young students learn conversational English and thereby

# **New Video Available!**

## **HELPING KIDS SOAR: Children Reaching Their Full Potential with Direct Instruction**

From award winning producer Jon Palfreman, this video features two schools in different parts of the country that have used DI successfully with all children, including high performing students.

This video shows how a careful implementation of Direct Instruction with NIFDI support can help bring out the joy and wonder of reading as it prepares students for advanced content.



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**Contact us today to learn what NIFDI can do for your school!**

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experience more success in their other classes and/or jobs as well.

## Essentials for Writing

Dr. Bonnie Grossen, the co-author of this program with Zig Engelmann, presented the new *Essentials for Writing* program. The presentation of her program and the associated research was filled with delightful stories of Samoan children and their experience with this expressive writing program. It was good to hear straight from the author stories about how this program was

### *Help us out!*

Contribute your story of success with DI! We want to hear from you!

You all have stories and it is time to share them. This is *your* journal—let it reflect your stories!

See the directions on page 2 on how to make a contribution. You'll be glad you did.

created to help this specific group of students. The walkthrough of the lessons immersed presentation participants in the hands-on approach needed to become more familiar with the proper delivery of the program.

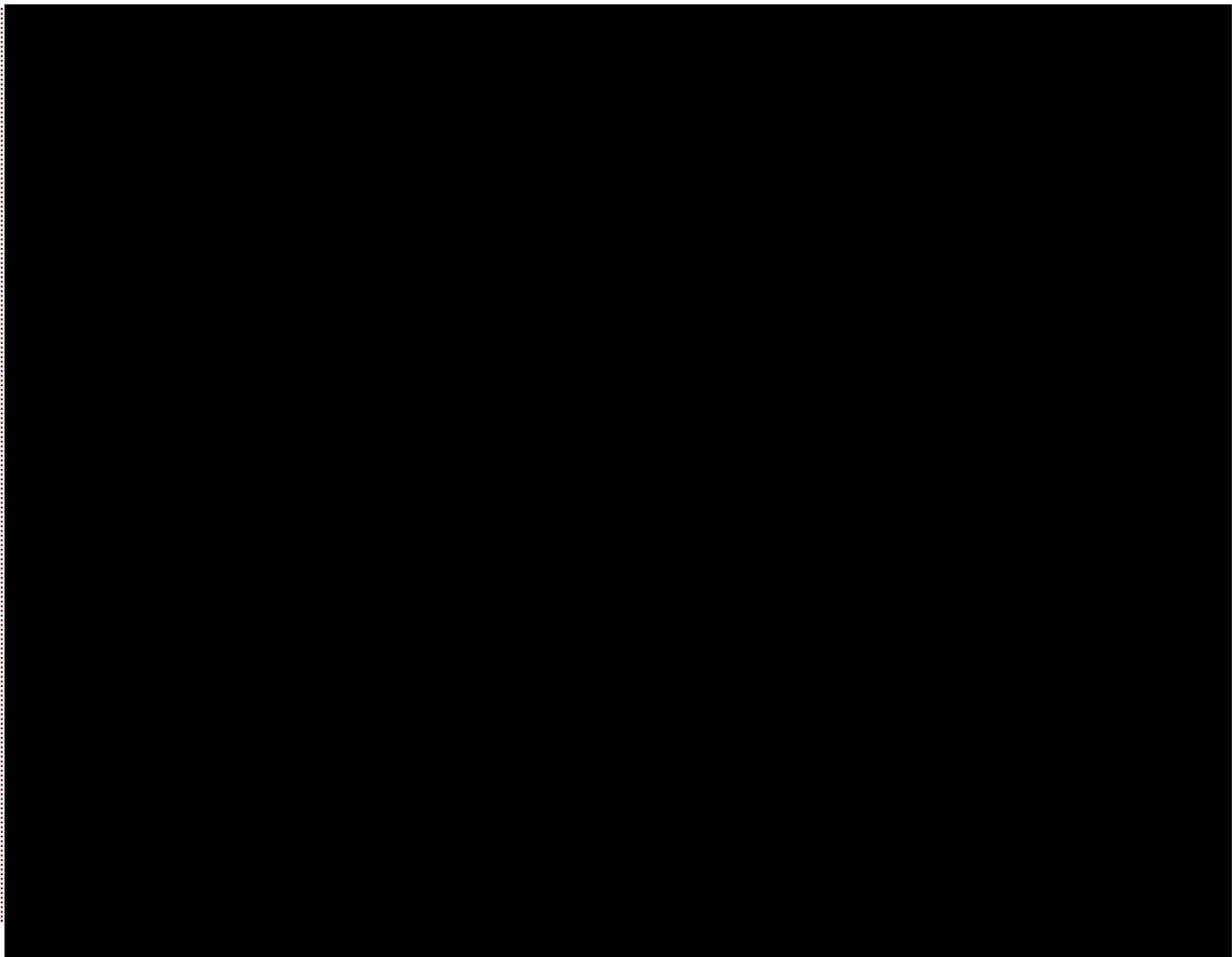
## Action Plan

The educational community could benefit from the message delivered by Heward, as research-based curricula is frequently thwarted or derided by professionals. Heward has asked me to assist him in securing more avenues to deliver his message. As a consultant in numerous states, I will investigate the possibility of securing more arenas for Heward. We both reside in Columbus, OH, and have a professional friendship dating back to 1975. In addition, the other professional organizations I am a member of frequently call for speakers for their regional, state, and national conferences. I plan to forward these invitations to him.

On a personal level, the action I plan to take in my private consulting is to utilize the DRF program. The program was designed for the majority of the programs I use to consult, including

*Reading Mastery K & I* and *Decoding B1 and B2*. Many times, students do not pass the reading checkouts associated with *Reading Mastery* and the *Decoding* programs. Teachers do not have time to supervise the suggested program remedy (the re-reading and re-testing of the students) and, as a result, failing students get further behind in the program. The fluency program provides a menu of reading selections and methods. The fluency program gives wonderful guidelines to educators as to how to discriminate which students will best benefit from the fluency program and the use of reinforcement to better bring a child to mastery. We will still be faced with the time-factor issues for the teacher to deliver these programs. It will be my recommendation for these select students to receive this instruction at the Response to Intervention pullout time of the day. It is not necessary for the classroom teacher to deliver the fluency program; a paraprofessional could learn the technique quickly. These procedures and new implementations will help reach the goal of better student education. **ADI**

KASE WICKMAN



KASE WICKMAN

## *DI Educators, Students, Schools Earn Awards and Recognition at the National DI Conference*

The Association for Direct Instruction presented its annual Excellence in Education Awards and DI Hall of Fame inductions during the National Direct Instruction Conference in Eugene, OR, July 19. The honorees are as follows:

### **Excellence in Teaching**

Dinah Wallace, who coordinates the reading mastery and language programs for six elementary schools in Glasgow, KY ("I thought it was in Scotland," quipped ADI board member

Bob Dixon, who hosted the awards), received the evening's first award, for excellence in teaching.

Wallace has a vast knowledge of DI, working with students from preschool to sixth grade, including special education, gifted education, and all that falls between. She has 26 years of classroom experience and taught in almost all the schools she now oversees before becoming a resource for the entire district.

Under Wallace's supervision, the district's reading scores in Kentucky's performance tests have risen from 85, in 2003, to 100 in 2008, five points above the statewide average.

"I can honestly say that she is the reason that Direct Instruction continues to stay at the level it is in our district," said Lorie Ervin Richey, one of Wallace's coworkers who nominated her.

Barren County School District curriculum resource teacher Shari Alexander wrote of Wallace: "Literally thousands of students have been touched over the years because of the efforts of Ms. Wallace in sustaining our Direct Instruction programs. ... Our success would not have been possible without Ms. Wallace's unyielding commitment

to excellence and doing what is best for students.”

### **Wes Becker Excellent School Award**

The Wes Becker Excellent School Award for 2009 and \$1,000 was presented to Arapahoe School, on the Wind River Reservation in rural Wyoming. Ninety-eight percent of the students at the school are Native American, and every student is part of the free and reduced-price lunch program. Arapahoe School faced absenteeism, low literacy at home, and limited vocabulary skills among its students.

Arapahoe applied for and received a Reading First Grant in 2007, and school-wide implementation of Direct Instruction soon followed to huge success.

“The best way to describe the teachers at this school is that they accepted the new challenge with courage,” said Tami Bebee, regional director for Educational Resources, Inc. and Arapahoe School’s nominator.

In the spring of 2007, when Arapahoe School first applied for a Wyoming Reading First grant, just 13% of first graders were at benchmark for DIBELS. Just one year later, that same group of students was tested and 43% of them met the benchmark as second graders.

“This award is all about teamwork, and it would be impossible for Arapahoe School to achieve what they have in the two years since their implementation without a tremendous team effort,” Bebee said.

### **Excellence in Education in Support of Implementation**

Lynann Barbero, honored with an Excellence in Education Award in Support of Implementation, directed a nationwide implementation of DI in schools overseen by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE).

With 50,000 students spread across 23 states, the BIE’s jurisdiction is wide and often remote, making it even more remarkable that its teachers could be so dedicated to merit the results BIE schools have seen. “These folks get on planes, get in cars, drive for hours. Our schools are not easy places to get to!” Barbero said.

Before DI implementation, only 28% of the approximately 9,000 students tested were reading at grade level. Now, four years later, 70% of those students were found to be reading on grade level when they took the DIBELS test again.

Under Barbero’s direction, the BIE has been strikingly effective. Compared to all the states in the union, the BIE was found this year to be second most effective in the country at raising comprehension scores at third grade, and fourth most effective at raising literacy rates.

Before taking her position as director of the Reading First Initiative with BIE, Barbero worked as a special education educator, a principal, and a deaf educator. She has worked with the BIE for six years.

### **Wayne Carnine Most Improved Student Award**

“As we all know, it’s all about the children,” Doug Carnine said, introducing the award for most improved student. “That’s what it’s all about.”

Destinee Marie Thompson, a 9-year-old from Birdspring, AZ, was honored as this year’s recipient. She is mildly cognitively impaired and lives with her grandmother and aunt. Her mother died last year.

When she started preschool, Destinee was basically non-verbal and shied away from speaking or reading aloud. Now, however, she will read to anyone who will listen, and she is teaching her adopted half-brother, Emetrio,

## *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.



how to read. Destinee herself only learned to read this year, having before just guessed at words from context and memory.

In February 2009, Destinee could read zero to one words per minute. By May 2009, she read 49 words per minute with three errors in the first book of the *Reading Mastery Series Grade 1*.

“She is now the social butterfly and more sure of herself,” Mary Kimmie, reading coach at Little Singer Community School, which Destinee attends, wrote of her. “She used to say that other girls were being mean; now she plays with them.”

Destinee will receive \$200 from the Carnine family.

### Hall of Fame

*Adrienne Allen*

Zig Engelmann presented the award. Jerry Silbert, who has worked with DI consultant Adrienne Allen for about 15 years, accepted the award on her behalf.

“She didn’t want to be locked up in the confines of an office,” Engelmann

said of his former assistant. “She wanted to be where the action was and train the teachers.

“She’s unique in several ways among trainers. When she goes into a school to train someone, she is thinking about a way to turn that school around.

“She has one virtue that may not always be a virtue: she has super integrity,” Engelmann said. If Allen felt like an administrator was not committed to what she was teaching them, she would excuse herself from training them. Her rationale: she only had so much time to help as many kids as possible, so if an administrator was not all in, the children would not benefit.

Regardless of performance and behavior problems, Silbert said that Allen would tell him, “Just get me a principal who will follow through on what I ask the principal to do, and I’ll be there.”

“Adrienne, you’re great,” Silbert said. “Two words for Adrienne: competence and integrity.”

*Ed Schafer*

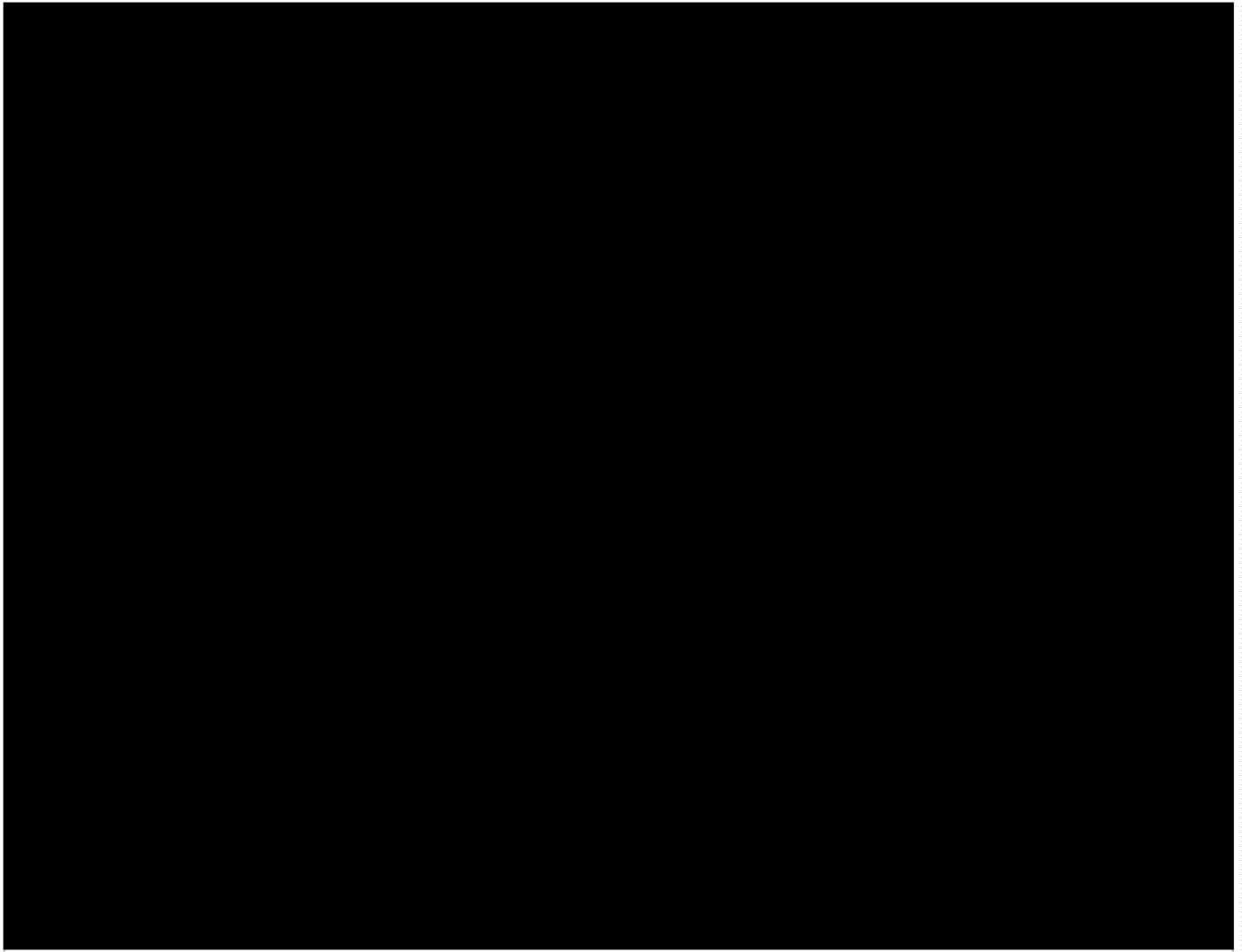
Ed Schafer has worked in education for 35 years, from the preschool to the college level. “When you talk about Ed Schafer, he has literally been there, done that,” said Molly Blakely, a long-time colleague who presented Schafer with the honor.

“Many of us know how to ‘do’ Direct Instruction. Ed knows how to teach people how to do Direct Instruction, but more importantly, how to think about Direct Instruction. He is a gift to everyone he works with,” Blakely said.

“Folks like me have much to be humble about,” Schafer said. “From time to time it may appear that we stand tall—unusually tall. It appears that way because we are standing on the shoulders of giants.” Those giants that Schafer referred to included the authors and creators of Direct Instruction, as well as the trainers and administrators to implement the programs. However, some of Schafer’s giants were surprisingly small.

“We learn from the kids,” he said. **ADI**





DON STEELY, ADI Board of Directors

## *A Bad Application of Good Principles*

Unbelievably, it was almost 40 years ago that I became a DI disciple—not quite the original training group, but one of the Illinois transplants. Over the years, I've taught DI, trained DI, written DI programs, and proselytized DI. I've beaten my head against numerous educational establishment walls, convinced that they would eventually crumble under the logic and performance of DI. Walls can be very obstinate; heads can be equally hard.

I have used DI with general education kids, low performers, deaf kids, and my own children. The principles we use and the things we do every day

just seem so damn obvious—pretest, good signals, model-lead-test, making sure learners understand vocabulary, and having good reinforcement systems. I mention these not because you need reminding of them, but merely to note that they are part of our everyday teaching repertoire. They're ingrained, right? We'd like to think so, but it seems that such principles are sometimes attenuated when dealing with adults.

Unfortunately, I have a personal and egregious example of this attenuation. It's one of those "I should have known better" stories. But before I confess

my blunders, an aside is needed. About four years ago during one of those muddled phases in life, I went on a trip to Guatemala to help install reasonably efficient cook stoves. Why cook stoves? Well, about 60% of the world's population cooks over an open wood fire, typically three rocks on the ground. It's ridiculously inefficient, as any smoky-smelling camper can tell you. It may be novel, interesting, and, perhaps in some way, even primitively satisfying when you do it as a camper, but hardly so when you do it as a way of life. Excessive wood burning causes deforestation and air pollution. It's a health hazard: respiratory problems are the leading cause of death for Central American children under 5 and certainly a significant debilitating health

factor for women. Much of the day, both are around the fire. It takes a long time to cook on an open fire and, since it takes quite a while to start a fire, the fire is kept smoldering when not in use. Open fires cause burn injuries. Young kids playing around an open fire are like raw meat in front of a dog—you just know what’s going to happen. And it’s costly, whether users have to buy firewood (up to 30% of many monthly salaries) or have to spend hours a day collecting and hauling it back home, usually tied in a bundle, strapped on their shoulders.

As a result of that trip, I became a wood cook-stove disciple and somehow ended up as the site development director for StoveTeam International. StoveTeam International is a nonprofit that sets up locally owned, self-sustaining factories for producing our own cook stove, one that uses 70% less wood, produces 90% less smoke, doesn’t create any burn hazards, and is cheap, portable, and quick to get started. If you’re not yet pandiculating, visit our website at [www.stoveteam.org](http://www.stoveteam.org).

Whether or not that aside was enlightening, there is an educational point to it. StoveTeam’s first factory was started in a typical Central American country. We (the StoveTeam board of directors) found Jorge (of course not his real name), who was savvy, environmentally motivated, and a businessman in search of a new career. Jorge had, according to his self-reporting, a number of fairly successful business endeavors—selling motorcycles, importing/exporting, making pizzas, shuttling cars to Central America (minus the drugs, I’m told), installing solar systems, and repairing sewing machines. Yes, yes, I know this self-reporting and long list of jobs should have been like having a corrective reader tell you, “I already know how to read.” But we StoveTeamers are excessively enthusiastic about our project—damn the pesky implications, full speed ahead.

Now understand, Jorge was, and still is, the penultimate salesman. He has a well-paced presentation, involves the audience, is funny and convincing, and takes advantage of every opportunity. In another life, he would have made a great DI teacher. In this life, honestly, he could sell you some potted poison oak plants or a copy of *How to Have Fun with Whole Language*.

We assumed (that would be our second mistake) that a reportedly successful businessman, now a factory owner, would know something about

*DI techniques are sometimes very necessary and appropriate for dealing with adults. With adults, we often assume too much, take instructional shortcuts, and otherwise fail to use good DI teaching techniques.*

accounting—be able to do profit/loss reports, cash flow summaries, and balance sheets. So with enthusiasm and a healthy dose of naiveté, we told Jorge to prepare monthly reports for us. We considered monthly reports necessary because we were funding the factory start-up expenses and paying Jorge a consulting salary. It seemed like a pretty good idea to keep track of where our money was going. What we got was a collection of numbers that made no sense, literally or numerically. What we should have done was pretest.

Subsequently, we still didn’t do a thorough pretest. We just assumed (mistake three) that he did not understand what we wanted. So, being well-intentioned adults and all, we provided a model. “Okay, Jorge, here is what we want your reports to look like.” Model with no lead or test? Come on, we’re all adults here. We hoped that showing

a model would be sufficient, but we got two months of reports that made even the federal budget look comprehensible—missing information, numbers in the wrong place, incorrect numbers. Even the month of the report wasn’t right. What we should have done was model, lead, test.

By now, our opinion of Jorge was changing. While he might be a great salesman, we were beginning to believe that he really wasn’t much of a businessman. In truth, I think a lot of small-business persons in Central American are somewhat lacking in what we *norteamericanos* would call “business sense.” Their prevailing business model seems to be that if you end up with more money at the end of the day than you started with that morning, it was a good business day. Labor expense? Overhead? Set-asides for taxes and tool replacement? What are those about?

So not doing a model-lead-test was what, our fourth mistake? But we sort of did that next. Twice I sat down with Jorge and we did monthly reports. “This figure for factory labor goes here. What was the electricity cost this month? It goes there. Your travel expenses go in this blank. This is your bank balance and it goes there.” In the following test months we got reports that made a bit more sense but were only marginally more accurate than Madoff’s accounting. But they were an improvement.

In addition to the inaccuracies and mislabeling, timeliness was an ongoing issue. Jorge was not responding on signal—the signal being the third of the month for the previous month’s report. What we should have done was give good signals. So starting weeks in advance of the third, I’d start giving Jorge “get ready” prompts. Apparently, though, calendars in Central America do not contain the third day of the month because no report was ever received by the third of the following month, nor was one ever received less than a week late. Sure

we *gabachos* joke around about “*mañana*,” but seriously, “*mañana*” cannot mean “tomorrow”—it must mean “later,” as in maybe in two days, maybe in a week, or maybe next month. When it comes to temporal issues, the cultural chasm between *norteamericanos* and Central Americans makes Hell’s Canyon seem like an easy stone toss. Although I can admire the attitude of “nobody is bleeding and nobody is dying, so what’s the rush,” dealing with it on our terms is about as frustrating (and successful) as trying to keep slugs out of a North-west garden.

Next we considered that perhaps the solution to the lack of timeliness was to up the contingency for responding on signal. The smart approach would have been to add a monetary bonus for the good behavior of getting reports done on time, but in our frustration we gave in to the dark side. “*Autorizar Jorge, no reportaje, no dinero.*” One week, two weeks, and still we had no report. Then we got a frantic, emotional phone call saying that he was closing the factory because he didn’t have any money and couldn’t pay the workers. Believing that our stove mission superseded common sense, we paid a portion of what we thought the month’s billing would be and sent the rest when his *reportaje* finally arrived. Yes, I know, bad form. What we should have done was have an adequate reinforcer the first time. Not only had we resorted to punishment rather than reinforcement, we gave in. It probably doesn’t surprise you that the routine was repeated the next month, and the next.

It was becoming obvious that we were seriously missing something here. Well, duh, we had presumed from the beginning that Jorge understood the vocabulary we were using. He does *habla ingles* and he did spend 10 years in the US and Canada, but perhaps he really didn’t understand what terms like “overhead,” “cash flow,” and “account balance” mean. In core

instruction like reading and math, vocabulary often isn’t an issue because we’re going to be teaching the vocabulary as we go. But when dealing with older, or much older, learners and fairly high-level content, it certainly can be an issue. What we should have done was test for basic vocabulary understanding.

Since we didn’t want to come off as *cabezones gabachos*, we decided the more diplomatic approach was to just change our report to a very simple question-and-answer format and avoid the vocabulary issue. Teaching Jorge accounting vocabulary on our periodic Central American trips would not have been a good instructional setup any-

way. So, “inventory” became “How many stoves were in the storage room at the end of the month?” “Production” became “How many stoves did you make this month?” “Account balance” became “How much money did the bank say you have?”

That’s about as simple as we could make it, short of giving up on his reports. But for some of us, being stubborn has become diabolically reinforcing. I suppose our next effort, if the simplified reporting fails, is to back off the punishment and instead offer a reward for accurate and timely reports.

Ultimately, I think Jorge will out-stubborn us. I have a suspicion that Jorge really just wants to muddle through for

## *DI-ANNOUNCE Electronic List*

An electronic list is now available: DI-ANNOUNCE. As its name indicates, DI-ANNOUNCE is an electronic list for announcements on resources for those studying or implementing Direct Instruction. List topics include the following:

- research articles, news articles, and other publications on DI;
- updates on DI implementations;
- meetings, conferences, and workshops on DI;
- authors’ remedies for specific exercises in the DI programs that have been identified as being difficult for children;
- new DI products and resources;
- grant opportunities or awards for DI research or implementation;
- job opportunities for DI researchers or practitioners;
- sources of data on student performance for analysis or distribution.

Note that DI-ANNOUNCE postings are limited to ANNOUNCEMENTS. The list is NOT a discussion list, and it is moderated. Any replies, jokes, or other off-task messages will be rejected. There is an on-line, web-based archive of postings for later reference and retrieval. In this way, the list is designed to be a streamlined tool for communicating information on the most critical developments in the field of Direct Instruction.

To subscribe, send a message to [join-DI-ANNOUNCE@lyris.nifdi.org](mailto:join-DI-ANNOUNCE@lyris.nifdi.org).

You will then receive a “welcome” message with additional information about the list. You can also go to <http://lyris.nifdi.org/> to see an archive of past announcements sent to the list, including the “welcome” message.

The list launched last October. You are invited to join the list and send announcements as appropriate. Feel free to call Kurt Engelmann at the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI) via 877.485.1973 toll-free or email [kurt@nifdi.org](mailto:kurt@nifdi.org) if you have any questions about the list.

another four months, after which we will no longer be financially helping his factory and he will no longer have to do reports. Then he can go back to doing business as Central Americans do business. Cross-cultural endeavors have some interesting conundrums.

If there is anything to take away from this embarrassing little story, it is that DI techniques are sometimes very necessary and appropriate for dealing with adults. With adults, we often

assume too much, take instructional shortcuts, and otherwise fail to use good DI teaching techniques. Consider spousal relationships for a moment. There often seems to be some serious vocabulary misunderstandings around words like “listening,” “talking,” and “a good movie.” And of course, some of our species are notoriously known for responding when they should be listening or not responding at all. And I’ll let you pon-

der the issues surrounding the “learner” not wanting to learn the desired responses.

Of course, instructional rigor in adult situations is often not really necessary. We are dealing with adults, and they usually are reasonably smart. Right? Well, some of them, anyway. At any rate, if they’re just not getting it, perhaps we should step back, reconsider our instructional methods, and diplomatically and surreptitiously do it the right way. *ADI*

RANDY SPRICK, *Safe & Civil Schools*



## *Preparing for the First Day of the New School Year*

When you teach students how to behave responsibly during the first month of school, you dramatically increase their chances of having a productive year.

Over the summer, you have been developing or refining your vision and organization and clarifying your expectations for student behavior in your classroom. Now, it is important to focus on implementing all of that creative work as you make your final preparations for the school year. If you don't get students on board from the beginning, it can be very difficult to change any negative behavior patterns as the year progresses.

The first step in finalizing your preparations for the beginning of school should be to complete these important tasks:

- Develop and post your Guidelines for Success. (Module 1, Task 2)
- Ensure that you hold positive expectations for all students. (Module 1, Task 3)
- Identify your level of classroom structure. (Module 1, Task 7)
- Draw up your daily schedule. (Module 2, Task 1)

- Arrange your physical space. (Module 2, Task 2)
- Create or review your attention signal. (Module 2, Task 3)
- Prepare beginning and ending routines. (Module 2, Task 4)
- Identify and post your classroom rules. (Module 2, Task 5)
- Put together procedures for managing student work. (Module 2, Task 6)
- Create a Classroom Management Plan. (Module 2, Task 7)
- Prepare or review lessons on your behavioral expectations. (Module 3, Tasks 1-3)

Note: The parenthesized notes in the above list refer to the specific chapters in *CHAMPs: A Proactive and Positive Approach to Classroom Management* where you can find more detailed information.

In addition, you will want to:

- Develop a modified class schedule for the first day of school to ensure the inclusion of tasks and activities unique to that day.
- Create a large, clear sign with your name, your grade level or subject,

and the room number and post it in the hallway or on your classroom door to help students find you easily.

- Prepare an initial activity for students to work on when they enter your room—something reasonably short and somewhat open-ended that does not require assistance from you.
- Prepare a plan for dealing with families who want to take your time on the first day. For instance, you might write a brief note and distribute it prior to their arrival that emphasizes your desire to spend your time on the first day of school helping your students feel comfortable in your classroom. Include information about how and when they can reach you after the first day of school is over.

When the first day of school arrives, your goal will be to manage it in a manner that will make students feel welcome and will help them learn to behave responsibly from the beginning. The following strategies can help you do this:

- Write your "Day One Schedule" on the board, an overhead trans-

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Excerpted from Sprick, R., Garrison, M., & Howard, L. M. (1998). *CHAMPs: A Proactive and Positive Approach to Classroom Management*. Eugene, OR: Pacific Northwest Publishing.

parency, or a flip chart to give students a sense of what their day will be like.

- Greet students individually as they enter your room and get them started on the initial activity discussed above.
- Get students' attention as soon as the bell rings and introduce them to your attention signal. Explain how you expect them to behave when you use it.

- Communicate essential classroom information in the first 10 minutes.
- Explain the activities listed on the Day One Schedule and what your behavioral expectations are for each activity using this three-step cycle: (1) teach your expectations, (2) monitor student behavior, and (3) give students clear feedback (both positive and corrective) on their implementation of your expectations.

- Conclude the day or class period by orienting students to your ending routines.

These strategies will help you get your first day of school off to the best start. Remember, the information you present and the atmosphere you establish on "Day One" will yield valuable dividends throughout the school year. ~~ADD~~

DON CRAWFORD, Baltimore Curriculum Project

## *Stretching: A Not-so-subtle American Educational Fable*

Long ago, there was a village where stretching came to be highly valued. The people of the village knew that many good things come from stretching yourself as far as you can. The village had a system of neighborhood tutors, not quite like home schooling but not like schools, either. When people realized that some children didn't seem to stretch themselves as much as others, they asked themselves whether some of the tutors could perhaps do a better job with their children.

There is one other thing you should know about this village. It was considered horribly improper to talk about differences in height. And although it was acceptable to admire how tall someone was, it was unconscionably rude to say anything about how short someone was, or to mention that someone was shorter than others, or even to hint that the members of some families were shorter than others. Except to admire really tall people, differences in height were never discussed in polite company. At least, never in a way that suggested that anyone might be anything other than tall or, in the case of children, soon-to-be tall.

When the people of the village decided that they wanted to assess

how well their children were able to stretch, they realized they needed some kind of test. Someone suggested that they measure either how low or how high the children could reach when they stretched. So they checked how low the children could stretch, and all of them could comfortably put their hands flat on the floor. (Remember, stretching was considered very important in this village, so everyone worked at it a lot.)

Because all the children did equally well at reaching the floor, no one was impressed. They really wanted a test that would let them know which tutors were doing a better job. So they decided to test how high children could stretch. All the children stood next to a wall, reached as high as they could stretch, then made a mark on the wall. Then someone measured all those individual marks on the wall and displayed the data.

Unlike stretching down, stretching up revealed great differences among children. The data showed that the children's marks were made at a great variety of heights. Some were quite high, some quite low, and a great number in the middle. The exact average was 1.37 cubits high. Everyone wanted

their child's mark to be above the 1.37 cubits average, of course. As it turned out, about half of the parents were disappointed. The data was shared throughout the village, with names removed for confidentiality reasons. Because of this, no one was able to draw the conclusion that shorter students made marks at a below-average height even if they stretched very hard. The village as a whole was disgraced because so many children were in the bottom quartile (the bottom 25%).

A report was released showing that some tutors in some neighborhoods had a lot more of their children making below-average height marks on the wall. While people were generally aware that people in some neighborhoods seemed to be somewhat shorter, it was not something one would go out and measure! It would not be conscionable to produce data that suggested that people were shorter in some neighborhoods than in others. What a furor that would cause!

The village decided to institute a new program, which it called Program 1, to provide some extra help for tutors who had a lot of students in the bottom quartile. Program 1 tutors were given money to hire more help, extend the school day, and do more testing with their students in the bottom quartile. The Program 1 tutors were admonished to work a lot harder on stretching, which they agreed to do—

especially because they were embarrassed to find so many of their students in the bottom quartile.

Apparently the extra effort paid off. The following year, everyone was delighted to find a lot of improvement. Parents were happy because almost all children improved—that is, their marks were higher than they had been the year before. The Program 1 tutors found that almost all their children did better on the test than the year before. The village residents were happy because they discovered that now more than half of their children (who were making their mark for the second year) were able to put marks higher than the 1.37 cubit average. It never occurred to anyone in the village that it was simply the result of students normally growing and getting taller—it was much more palatable to ascribe the improvement to the hard work everyone had done.

Testing in the village went on this way for quite a while, rather happily. There was improvement year after year (because children do grow) and a lot of parents were happy. Even so, there was a persistent problem of children making low height marks. Many children were still in the bottom quartile, and they did seem to be concentrated in certain neighborhoods and among certain tutors. The possibility that there might just be shorter people in those neighborhoods was not something that could be contemplated or discussed in polite company. Instead, the villagers were certain it was wrong to have so many children be inadequate at stretching. Perhaps some of the tutors were better than others at inspiring their students to stretch more—and that didn't seem right. What about the people who lived near one of these low-performing tutors and sent their children to this tutor? Some of the tutors had higher-than-average height marks, while other tutors had a lot of students who had lower-than-average height marks. This did not sit well with the villagers, especially because they couldn't stomach the idea that

kids were just shorter in some neighborhoods. No, it was clear that some tutors were simply failing! The village hosted some town meetings about what to do.

At one particularly emotional meeting the villagers decided to pay to put some of the children with below-average marks on buses so they could go across town to work with tutors whose children had above-average marks. The program started and the buses began rolling. The receiving tutors were stunned. They had never seen children mark this low. (Of course, they had never seen children this short either, but they were far too polite to mention that embarrassing fact, and they certainly wouldn't have stooped to actually measuring the height of the children. How inconsiderate that would be!) The tutors found bused children who couldn't stretch high enough even to make an average 1.37-cubit-high mark. They worked hard to get these students to stretch a great deal harder. Some tutors and some children made improvements, but an awful lot of them didn't. No one knew

what that meant, but mostly the parents hated their children having to take long bus rides out of their neighborhood each day. So gradually the riding of buses came to be seen as not worth the trouble.

Over the years a variety of reforms were put into place to get the students with below-average height marks to stretch themselves to new heights. One year the tests were redone and a new average of 1.44 cubits was found. Everyone was distressed to find out that once again so many of the students were not stretching themselves enough to be above average. But the tutors worked very hard, and the next year the children grew again and the scores improved—a lot of the students who previously were below average (got taller and) improved to making above-average height marks. But the problem of low-stretching students continued. Obviously (because height couldn't be considered as a factor) some tutors were simply failing to emphasize stretching enough, and their students were getting short-changed. Some tutors had more than

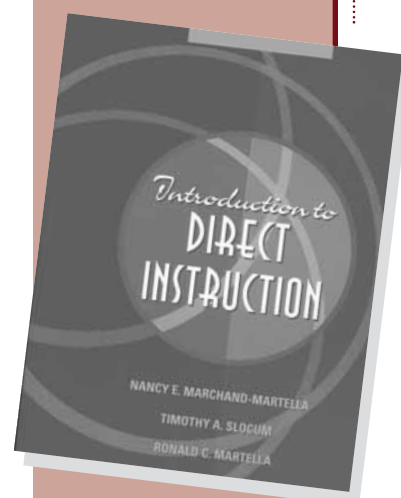
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half of their students in the bottom quartile. Perhaps stronger measures were needed to force the failing tutors to do a better job.

A large group of villagers felt that there were problems with the “How high can you reach?” test. For one thing, it wasn’t clear enough. It was hard to figure how many students should be above average. And a comparison wasn’t what they wanted anyway. Why not a test that sets an absolutely clear minimum standard for everyone to hit? So a village standard was put in place. Each tutor was to have a spot painted on the wall. It was the same height for every tutor in town, but the exact height was secret for confidentiality reasons. (Rumor had it that it was set at exactly the 25th percentile—the height exceeded by 75% of the students, or the height that the lowest quartile did not reach.) The tutors were required to have every student attempt to stretch up and touch the spot—and then to report the percentage of their pupils who reached the spot. The new touching-the-spot test would make clear who was trying and who was not.

The results of the touching-the-spot test were published in the paper next to the name of the students’ tutors. And the results were shocking. Some tutors had 100% of their students reach the spot while others had almost no students who could reach the spot. And even more embarrassing was that the differences between neighborhoods and tutors were even more striking than before, especially because the height of the people in the neighborhoods could neither be acknowledged nor taken into account. What else, then, could the villagers conclude other than that tutors in some neighborhoods were just not trying or motivating the children, while in other neighborhoods all the children were receiving what they needed to succeed in life? This obvious inequity was very distressing to the villagers.

So a new reform plan was put in place to ensure that everyone’s children learned to stretch themselves to the fullest. Everyone was going to learn to stretch until they reached the standard spot. More ambitiously, failure would not be considered as an option—even though no one was certain that really short students could touch the spot no matter how hard they stretched. The villagers were determined that tutors would get whatever extra training and professional development they needed. But they also planned to increase penalties and interventions

*The new plan said that in a few years, every tutor would make certain that every child could touch the spot. No child would be left behind. It would be a glorious day.*

for persistently failing tutors. Some tutors were going to lose their licenses, of that there was no doubt. The new plan said that in a few years, every tutor would make certain that every child could touch the spot. No child would be left behind. It would be a glorious day.

There were some exceptions. What about special students with documented cases of being height challenged? Could we expect them to reach the spot? Well, no, of course not. Students who were suspected of being height challenged could have their height measured, but only if their parents gave signed permission. (*Oddly enough, this was the only time that tutors were allowed to measure the height of students and the results were kept confidential.*) Once measured, students identified as having a documented height challenge had some special rights.

One of their special rights was that they were allowed to stand on a chair for their touching-the-spot test. Of course, some tutors went right out and got all but their tallest children tested. Some tutors found that, according to the measurements, the majority of their students could be documented as being height challenged. Of course, this seemed to suggest that children were shorter in some neighborhoods than in others, which was shocking to say the least. When the village elders heard about this, they were outraged, as were the parents of those children. Something must be wrong with the measurements. It was a gross inequity to allow that certain neighborhoods had an overrepresentation of students identified as having height challenges.

Once tested, all of these short students who had been failing the touching-the-spot test were now allowed to stand on chairs and could pass the test without extra stretching. These apparently unscrupulous tutors, who were trying to identify so many special students, could not be allowed to defeat the whole system of accountability. So that loophole was quickly closed. A ruling was passed that a tutor could have no more than 10% of his or her students documented as height challenged, regardless of what measurements might show. That instantly solved the problem of having too many students documented as being height challenged, but still some tutors had too many students with below-average height marks.

Meanwhile, the tutors discovered that it was very important to align the students as carefully as possible under the spot, and to give them practice reaching for the spot. Before, the children had been able to stand wherever they wanted to make their mark. But with the new test, it was very important that the students align themselves correctly under the spot, and that they had some practice reaching for a particular spot on the wall. Sometimes children weren’t careful enough—they would stand slightly to one side or the other of



the spot, and when they stretched they would not touch the spot. If, however, they stood just in the right spot where their arm was at its highest, they could reach the spot. Some tutors found that helping students align their stretching with the spot and giving students touch-the-spot exercises improved their results tremendously. Some tutors saw improvements of 40% to 50% more students reaching the spot by aligning students with the spot and practicing a lot.

Some more thoughtful villagers asked themselves if all this focus on how to reach a particular spot on the wall was really helping students stretch themselves more. Shouldn't there be more variety of stretching exercises? In fact, when students were given a surprise "How high can you reach?" test, a lot of the gains realized from aligning students to touching the spot disappeared. That test showed the same old distribution of scores, with lots and lots of kids, especially in specific neighborhoods, making below-average height marks. But the village elders observing tutors who worked with the below-average height-marking students had really seen an improved effort lately. They noticed that there was no longer any fooling around during tutoring sessions, even if almost all the stretching exercises were centered on reaching a spot on the wall.

Other tutors in other neighborhoods found the spot test something of a joke, since nearly every one of their students could touch the spot the first time without stretching, aligning, or making any effort. Of course, those tutors probably had taller students, but no one knew for sure, because measuring would have been so rude and inappropriate. In fact, in comparisons with other villages on a varied set of stretching tests, the village didn't seem to be doing very well. Some tutors would say that they could do a better job of teaching stretching without the touching-the-spot test—if they were free to just teach stretching without measuring it. They knew that sounded irresponsible, but they also

knew the touching-the-spot test was not improving their teaching.

And even though those tutors were somewhat contemptuous of the touching-the-spot test, they rarely volunteered to work in the neighborhoods with the below-average height-touching students. Those teachers had heard that the job was very challenging even if the outcome was not very impressive. They suspected that the parents of the children in those neigh-

*As of yet, no one in the village has been able to overcome the taboo on talking about differences in height. Although no one will discuss it publicly, everyone in the village knows that differences in height contribute to differences in the touching-the-spot test.*

borhoods didn't properly instill in their children the importance of stretching in life. Why else would it be so hard for those students to reach the spot? Certainly it couldn't have been that they were (gasp) short!

The village tried a couple of innovative ideas designed to give parents more choice in tutors. One idea was to let parents choose whatever tutor they wanted, without regard to neighborhood. Another was to let parents choose tutors without requiring the tutor to get a license first. Parents who had children who went to a "failing" tutor would get the opportunity to go out of their neighborhood to a different tutor or choose a non-licensed person who may be a better tutor. Many villagers were certain these innovations would make a huge difference. After all, there were differences in skill levels among tutors. And parents ought

to be able to choose the best tutor for their child.

But the results of the choice innovations were oddly unclear—and no one really could say why, especially because height data wasn't collected. Sometimes children with below-average height-marking skills really hadn't been stretching themselves before, but with a new tutor they made great improvement. Other times, children with below-average height-marking skills didn't improve. Some children who changed to a tutor with a great track record made no improvement at all. A lot of times children did slightly better with unlicensed tutors, but many times they did not. The newer tutors did focus more of their efforts on the touching-the-spot test, and when measured by that test they did better. But when measured by the "How high can you reach?" test, there were not very significant differences—especially among tutors in the same neighborhoods.

One unfortunate side-effect of all the focus on the touching-the-spot test was really too shameful for the villagers to discuss publicly. There were actually some tutors who cheated in a variety of ways. Some put extra layers of carpeting directly under the spot. Others ignored when students stood on their tiptoes instead of flat-footed during the test. The village elders also turned a blind eye to these non-standard testing practices because they saw no benefit in causing an uproar over it. What would it accomplish to revoke the licenses of all the cheating tutors? No one knew where to get that many new tutors. And what good would that do? The record of the choice innovations showed that a different set of tutors would be unlikely to suddenly get significantly higher scores. If all the scores were reported accurately, if no one cheated, the scores would be much lower, and the problem would appear to be even worse than it appears now. More people would be upset, but what else could be done?



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Discussions in the village about how to improve the stretching of its children and the skills of its tutors continue to this day. Everyone is publicly certain that more can be done to fix this problem—especially because cheating is not acknowledged. The great differences among the children's ability to reach high or, lately, to touch a spot continue to concern the citizens of the village. More and more people are unhappy with how tutoring is going,

and it is getting harder to find good tutors, especially to replace the tutors who have the highest numbers of students who cannot touch the spot.

As of yet, no one in the village has been able to overcome the taboo on talking about differences in height. Although no one will discuss it publicly, everyone in the village knows that differences in height contribute to differences in the touching-the-spot test. But tutors simply do not measure

height, let alone compare that to student scores on the tests. Because this is just not done, no one in the whole village knows how much of the variation in student scores is due to height and how much is due to students not stretching themselves or tutors not working hard enough. Nor will they ever know. Until someone can break the taboo, the village will continue to be confused about the educational issues, don't you think? *ADI*

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## Success Stories

### Native American Eagles Soar

Arapahoe School is a K-8, public school located on the Wind River Reservation in rural Wyoming. Ninety-eight percent of the students at Arapahoe School are Native American. Arapahoe is a school-wide, Title 1 school, with 95% of the student body qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch. Chronic absenteeism, low vocabulary skills, limited background knowledge, and the lack of literacy in the home are characteristics that describe the majority of the students. Prior to the advent of Direction Instruction (DI) and the arrival of Educational Resources, Inc. (ERI) at Arapahoe School, less than 10% of third-grade students met the 2007 spring benchmark on DIBELS. The view from the upper grades was largely the same.

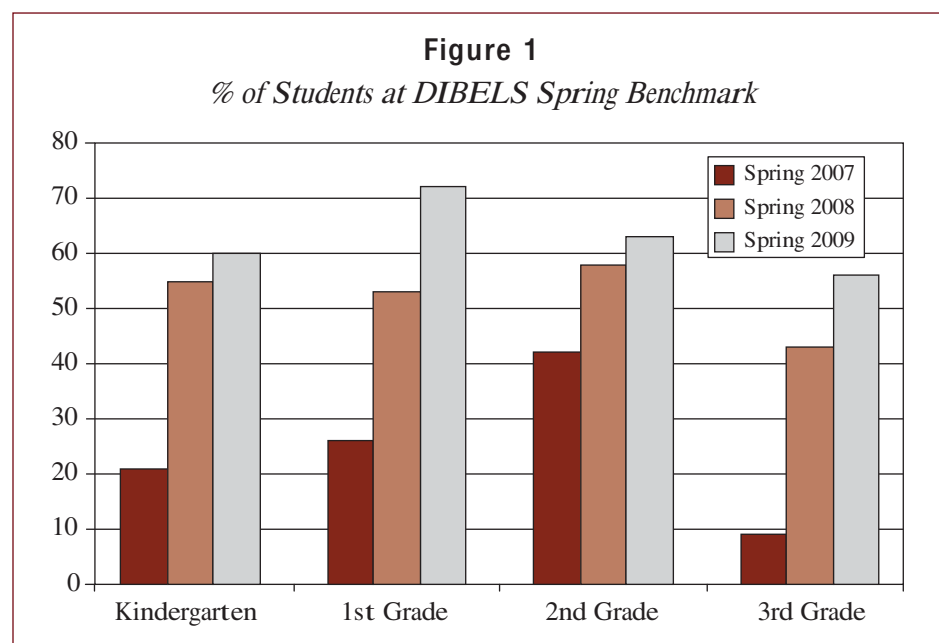
Determined to change this prevalent pattern of education for Native American children, the staff of Arapahoe School adopted a select group of DI programs in the spring of 2007. Additionally, they chose Educational Resources, Inc.—a highly experienced consulting group that provides professional development and hands-on training, coaching, and assistance to schools implementing DI programs—

to guide Arapahoe School's implementation of *Language for Learning, Reading Mastery*, and *Corrective Reading* (all published by SRA/McGraw-Hill, Inc.); *Reading Connections* (published by Educational Resources, Inc.); and *Series Launchers & Reading for Success* (published by Novel Ideas, Inc.).

Having wisely chosen research-based curricula, the leadership of Arapahoe School then directed significant

resources toward an effective, efficient, high-fidelity implementation of these programs. With the advice and assistance of ERI, initial and ongoing staff development and support became a high priority, to the point where instructional staff (both teachers and paraprofessionals) participated in side-by-side, in-class coaching 4 to 5 times per month!

Dramatic first-year results (2007-2008 school year) prompted Arapahoe School to extend DI programs through the eighth grade. Currently, all students at Arapahoe School participate in DI reading lessons. In addition, content area teachers incorporate DI techniques into their lessons. The school



board and administration increased the level of support for the staff and students during the second year (2008-2009) by offering additional professional development opportunities. This required teachers and paraprofessionals to return to school one month earlier than usual. The school

board provided funds to extend contracts for the instructional staff. The instructional staff arrived early with optimism and enthusiasm about the upcoming year.

By the spring of 2009, given only two years of DI and ERI, 60% of Arapa-

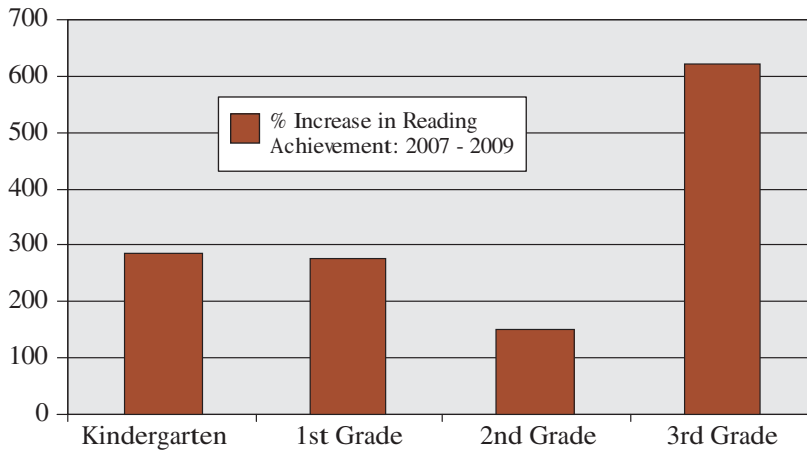
hoe's kindergarteners, 72% of first graders, 63% of second graders, and 56% of third graders met the 2009 spring benchmark on DIBELS, as shown in Figure 1.

Given the Spring 2007 DIBELS scores as a baseline, the Spring 2009 results yield an increase in reading achievement of 286% in kindergarten, 277% in first grade, 150% in second grade, and a whopping 622% in third grade, as shown in Figure 2.

The students and staff of Arapahoe School deserve high praise. They have achieved outstanding gains in reading achievement in a remarkably short period of time due to their "no excuses" vision of student achievement, and their "we need to teach harder, better, and faster" approach to curriculum, instruction, and staff development. Clearly, these are the signposts on the road to educational excellence! **ADI**

**Figure 2**

*% Increase in Reading Achievement: 2007 - 2009*





## Success Stories

### *Big Reading Success in a Tiny Community*

Coffeeville High School is a K-12 school located in rural Clarke County, AL, population 346. The estimated median household income in Coffeeville in 2007 was \$24,110, up from \$19,545 in 2000. Alabama's state median income for 2007 was \$40,554.

During the summer of 2006, Coffeeville High became an Alabama Reading Initiative school. After discussion and visits to other schools, it was decided to implement the *Reading Mastery* reading program using Direct Instruction strategies. Educational Resources, Inc. provided initial training and follow-up.

During the summer of 2007, K-3 teachers received intense professional development on the implementation of *Reading Mastery* from ERI. Throughout the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years, ERI continued monthly follow-up visits, which included conducting classroom coaching and one-on-one teacher follow-up.

When Coffeeville began implementing *Reading Mastery*, the majority of students were in *Reading Mastery Fast Start* or *Reading Mastery Plus Level 1*, below grade level. Now, more students are in groups reading above grade level.

The state of Alabama mandates the use of DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) for all kindergarten through second-grade students. DIBELS data further proves the reading growth occurring at Coffeeville:

- By the end of kindergarten in the 2007-2008 school year, 100% percent of all kindergartners reached benchmark scores on all DIBELS subtests.
- At the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year, the percentage of first-grade students testing at benchmark on the Nonsense Words Fluency subtest—correct letter sounds—was 70%. By the end of the year, that number had risen to 92%, with 100% of students reading the words on this subtest. Mid-year Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) in first grade in 2007-2008 was 27%. By the middle of the 2008-2009 school year, ORF had risen to 67%.

- In 2007-2008, the number of second-grade students reaching benchmark ORF was 50%. As of mid-year the following year, 80% of students had reached the benchmark score.

Each month teachers meet for data and planning meetings, led by the principal, and also continue to receive professional development through

monthly coaching from ERI, weekly coaching from the district reading coordinator, and daily coaching from the building-level reading coach.

In only one and a half years of implementation, tremendous growth has occurred. Most importantly, because of the success students have achieved in reading, they want to read to any-

one who will stop long enough to listen. Even the look of many students has changed—they walk taller and smile more because they know they can read well.

The current reading success of the students at Coffeeville will surely have a positive impact on this small rural town in the future. Stay tuned! ~~ADI~~

## Success Stories

### At-Risk Students Make Big Gains with Reading Mastery

Following the successful implementation of SRA/McGraw-Hill's *Reading Mastery* during a four-week summer school session with approximately 30 students in Grades K–3, teachers at S.W. Snowden Elementary School in Aurora, NC, decided to try the program with roughly 100 at-risk readers in those same grades during the 2007–2008 school year. Students in grades K–2 made the most progress during the seven months of instruction, as shown in Figure 1.

Reading coach Robin Ventura said when she compared student progress on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) with and without *Reading Mastery*, students who experienced the program during the 2007–2008 school year made more progress by the middle of that year than students made by the end of any recent school year.

“*Reading Mastery* helps us make instructional decisions,” she explained. “We collect and analyze student data to determine when to move students to the next level. For example, we advanced 35 of the 100 at-risk students to their appropriate grade level and beyond during the 2007–2008 school year.”

Ventura said she and her colleagues take the intervention acceleration approach to helping struggling students. They teach *Reading Mastery* to at-risk readers for 45 minutes each morning. Then students experience another 90 minutes of core reading instruction with their peers. The core reading program also from SRA/McGraw-Hill is *Open Court Reading*.

In addition to increasing reading scores, Snowden students have a decreasing number of discipline issues. Ventura said with the right delivery, *Reading Mastery* will hold students' attention.

**Figure 1**  
*Progress with SRA Reading Mastery*  
Source: ITBS

Kindergarten	13-month gain
Grade 1	10-month gain
Grade 2	8-month gain
Grade 3	6-month gain*

\*Students were one month short of growth due to loss of both teachers within the last quarter of the year.

“Students who struggle in reading sometimes have focus and attention issues. We watched the discipline issues dwindle in summer school and experienced the same phenomena during the school year.”

#### About S.W. Snowden Elementary School

Serving nearly 242 students in grades Pre-K–8, this elementary school's student population is 93% African American, 6% Caucasian, and 1% Hispanic. Ninety-eight percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. For more information, visit <http://Beaufort.K12.NC.US/sws>.

#### For More Information

To learn more about success with Direct Instruction or *Open Court Reading* programs in your school or district, contact SRA at 1-888-SRA-4543. **ADI**

#### *S.W. Snowden Elementary School, Aurora, NC*

##### About the School:

Grades:	PK-8
Test:	ITBS
Number of Students:	242
Reduced Price Lunch:	98%

##### About the Students:

AAfrican American:	93%
Caucasian:	6%
Hispanic:	1%
Asian:	—
Other:	—

# Martin's Musings

## *Fads and Flapdoodle vs. Serious Instruction*

### Fads and Flapdoodle

The *nonsense* below has for about 100 years been foisted on gullible education students and public schools by the *dominant* education *establishment*, run by so-called “progressive” educators in ed schools, state departments of public instruction, curriculum organizations (such as the International Reading Association and the National Council for Teachers of English), organizations that certify ed schools (such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education), and unions (including the National Education Association).

If you believe and act on this *baloney*, you'll be on the road to Stupidville. You'll struggle to be an effective teacher, or you'll delude yourself that you are an effective teacher. Your ineptitude will harm your students.

1. A bachelor's or master's degree in education prepares you to teach.
2. Education theorists—Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey, Gardner—provide useful information on how to teach.
3. Be guided by the following ideas: child-centered and student-centered, holistic, natural, authentic, learning styles, multiple intelligence, brain-based instruction, developmentally appropriate practices, best practices, etc.

### No Fads. Serious Instruction.

The *tested, true, and effective ideas* (the result of at least 3,000 years of careful study and experimental testing—from the ancient Hindus and Greeks to modern experimental psychology), below, are the *minority* position in the field of education and are advocated by the so-called *anti-establishment*, which supports traditional forms of instruction guided by scientific research.

If you believe and act on the following tested and valid ideas, you'll be on the road to Master Teacher; and you'll be a blessing to your students.

1. Wrong, Pilgrim!
  - Much of what you'll be taught is *not* supported by scientific research or even by common sense.
  - If you teach some subjects the way you're told, your students are *not* going to learn.
  - Almost everything you *need* to know you'll learn on the job—if you're lucky enough to find veteran teachers who are skillful.
2. Education theorists—Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey, Gardner—provide next to nothing useful on how to teach.

Their ideas are *vague* (it's not clear what you're supposed to do), *over-generalized* (don't apply to your students), plain *wrong*, or totally *insane*.

“What would Dewey do?”

Who cares?
3. *Do not* be guided by these ideas. *These ideas are loony*. They're one step away from *deranged*. In any other field they'd be considered *fraud*.

[See number 1 at the end, under “More About Fads and Flapdoodles.”]

For example:

- a. You should be child centered and student centered.
- b. Instruction should be holistic. For example, you should teach spelling, reading, and writing *at the same time*.
- c. Materials, activities, and assessments should be authentic and natural.
- d. You should adapt instruction to your students' learning styles.

- There is *no* credible scientific research to support them.
- They will be of *no* help at all to you.
- These ideas reflect the preferences (“philosophies”) of education professors—not science, not reality.
- The more you use these terms, the dumber you get and the less effectively you teach.

For example:

- a. These are just feel-good words.  
“I’m child centered.”

Good for you. What else could a teacher be? Desk centered?  
Blackboard centered?

- b. The word “holistic” is new-age fluff, like “holistic healing.”
  - Complex skills *do* consist of simpler skill elements. *It’s essential that students learn these first.*
  - You can’t solve math word problems if you don’t know the basic math operations, such as addition and multiplication.
  - You can’t write or spell if you can’t read words. So, what should you teach first?
- c. These words turn the *intellectually rigorous* and *morally serious* job of instruction into some kind of bizarre play therapy.
  - Persons who advocate so-called authentic and natural materials, activities, and assessments (such as teaching kids to read by reading to them, or teaching *basic* math skills through “fun” projects) do *not* care whether you become *technically proficient* (which *is* expected in *all* other professions). They don’t *know* that learning and instruction are matters of *logic*! They don’t even know what knowledge is.  
[See number 8 at the end.]
  - They don’t want to be held *accountable*. [It’s easy to develop “authentic” assessments that make *everyone* look skillful, e.g., portfolios.]
  - The words “authentic” and “natural” sound nice, but if you use them, you are a sucker. You should aim for technical proficiency! *Clear and logical communication.*
  - Sure, an authentic activity for learning how to skydive is to jump out of a plane. But isn’t it smart *first* to learn the elementary (part) skills on the ground? Or do you want to make a big splat after you tried to learn the elementary skills on the way down?
  - If materials aren’t natural, what are they? Supernatural?
- d. Unfortunately, *there’s no such thing as learning styles*.
  - No one *is* a “visual learner.”  
“Please write that tune on the board.” [Are you insane?]



e. You should design instruction to foster multiple intelligences.

f. Drill and kill. [Practice is boring.]

g. You can't transmit knowledge. Students must construct knowledge. Therefore, most learning and instruction should be in the form of inquiry and discovery.

- No one is an “auditory learner.”  
“Please sing that equation?”  
“I’m an olfactory learner. I need to smell the words.”
- Instruments for assessing/determining learning styles are invalid; they do *not* measure what they say they measure.  
“Which do you prefer: playing with Play-Doh or listening to music?”  
The answer to that question tells about recreational preferences, *not* about *how* a person learns.
- There’s *no* evidence that if you adapt instruction to learning styles it makes any difference. [Of course. Because there’s no such thing!]  
[See numbers 2 and 10 at the end.]

e. Another idea fresh from Moron City! See d. above.

- Replace “intelligence” with “skill” or “talent.” Does it make a difference?
- The *sane* idea is to teach in a way that best *presents* the *material*. Poems are to be *heard*. Plays are to be *acted*. Paintings are to be *seen*. Math problems [ $2Y = 12$ ] are to be *read*.
- Again, there’s no scientific evidence that if you design instruction to foster multiple intelligences students learn any better.

f. Do you know any dancers, painters, musicians, athletes, mechanics, parents, cooks, or persons who’ve mastered *anything* who *didn’t* become masters though practice, practice, practice?  
Anyone who tells you that practice is boring or kills creativity is a dolt and probably a master of nothing.  
[See number 3 at the end.]

- g. “The battles at Lexington and Concord were on April 19, 1775.”
- I believe I just transmitted knowledge.
  - Persons who talk about students constructing knowledge have no idea what this even means. Are they mind readers?
  - The *sane* way to look at learning is this: Teachers *present examples* and students *induce* (figure out) the *general idea* (concept, rule, routine) that is *revealed by the examples*. Teachers can also *tell* students a concept, rule, or routine, and then *substantiate* this with examples.  
[See number 8 at the end.]
  - There’s a lot of research showing that students learn *more* and learn *faster* when the teacher teaches in an explicit and direct way, rather than when students try to discover knowledge.
  - What does it even mean—discover knowledge?  
“Hey, guys, I discovered reading!!”
  - *Discovery and inquiry are the worst possible ways to teach essential skills (reading, math) to disadvantaged students.*  
[See number 4 at the end.]

h. You should teach with the brain in mind.  
Use brain-based methods.

i. You should use best practices and  
developmentally appropriate practices.

4. You should develop your own materials. You  
should *not* use commercial materials because  
(1) one size does *not* fit all and (2)  
commercial materials rob you of creativity.

h. “Brain-based instruction” is based on research with four rats—  
Willy, Billy, Vanilli, and Stinky. Besides, what *other* organ would you  
have in mind?

“Liver-based learning.” [Served with a nice Chianti.]

“At our school, we use intestines-based methods.”

[Oh, good. You go first.]

*Another stupid fad brought to you by bozos with too much time on  
their hands. Real neuroscientists laugh at this stuff.*

*Use published research that shows which teaching methods are most  
effective (e.g., regarding practice, sequencing, error correction, pacing,  
examples, review, fluency-building, generalization), and let the brain mind its  
own business.*

[See numbers 3 and 4 at the end.]

i. These are buzz words for *progressive piffle*, such as learning  
centers, teachers being guides and facilitators rather than teachers,  
inquiry and discovery methods rather than direct and explicit  
teaching, authentic assessment (which means nothing) rather than  
standardized (same routine for all) and quantitative (real  
numbers) assessment of what students *do*.

- Only the Good L-rd knows what’s “best.”
- It’s impossible to know what’s developmentally appropriate for *all*  
kids or even for *one kid before* you teach something.
- *Millions of children have been denied an education (and a life) because  
dreamy dap advocates said that methods and materials providing effective  
instruction are not developmentally appropriate.*

[See number 6.]

4. You are a *bonehead* if you *don’t* use *tested* and *effective* commercial  
materials.

- Do surgeons go home and invent procedures for tomorrow’s  
operations, or do they follow the *tested* procedures in surgical texts?
- Do musicians make their own instruments? Do carpenters make  
their own nails? Do dancers build the stage?
- *You will not have the skills to develop effective materials.*
- It would take many years to develop these skills. In the meantime,  
you will *harm* your students by misteaching them. [Real moral!]
- Do you want to go home every night and spend hours preparing  
lessons—when you don’t have to? [Are you *nuts*?!]
- If you use tested materials that have been prepared *for* you, it  
gives you time to think of how to *adapt* instruction to different  
students, and to develop *expansion* activities.
- Good materials do *not* try to “fit all” with “one size.” Good  
materials *tell* you how to use built-in assessments to adapt  
instruction.

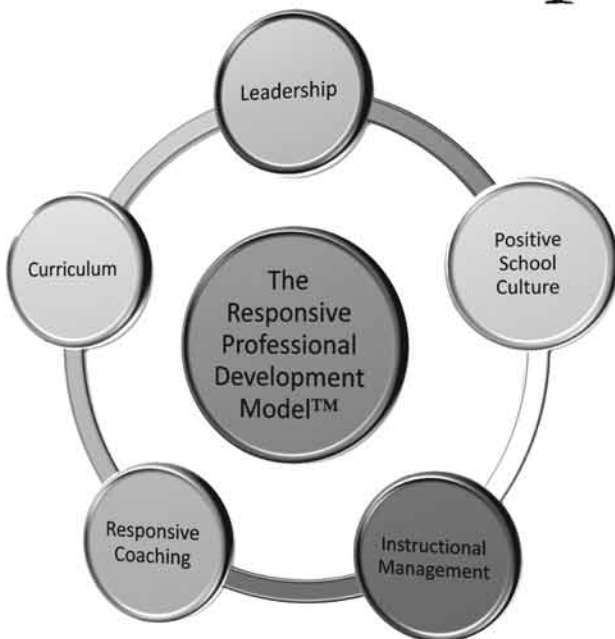
[See number 5 at the end.]



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Deserves a Highly  
Skilled Teacher



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5. *Scripted*, commercial materials rob you of creativity.

6. Your job is to promote social justice.

7. Celebrate diversity. Teach in a multi-cultural way.

5. Do dancers write the dance notation? Do actors write the play? Do musicians write the score? Does the building contractor draw up the blue prints? Do attorneys make the laws?

- No. These are complex activities. They require a *division of labor*.

Some persons do *research* on effective instruction. Other persons use this research to develop the *routines*; e.g., materials that tell you exactly how to teach and assess every reading skill. And still other persons *enact* the routines—use the materials to communicate effectively with students so that students “get” the general ideas from the examples.

- Do you think dancers feel *uncreative* because they follow the choreography? Their creativity is in the grace and perfection of the *delivery*.
- Do you think a martial artist feels robbed of creativity because Master Chen developed a kata (a form, a fighting routine) 1,500 years ago?

No, the martial artist feels *honored* to *enact* what Master Chen developed. Moreover, he or she does a better job *because* of Master Chen’s work.

- Learning the scripted routine teaches *you* how to design the *instruction* that is scripted. This enables you to do it yourself later.
- What’s the difference whether *you* write the script or *someone else* (a master of design) does?

Oh, you say you don’t want to use *any* scripts? So you’d rather wing it—standing in front of your class stuttering and stammering and rambling and making no sense. Good idea.

6. *No it isn’t, Dear Heart!* Your job is to educate kids so that (1) they won’t be ignorant morons; (2) they will internalize and pass on the best aspects of the culture/civilization; and (3) we can preserve our culture/civilization against time (entropy) and our enemies, both foreign and domestic.

The public has not asked us to be social reformers.

Anyone who tells you that your job is to promote social justice is trying to recruit you to *their* cause and agenda.

Are you going to let them treat you like a sheep? Are you going to “baaaaaa” as you are told?

7. *This is another con—brought to you by true authoritarians who call themselves as liberals.* In fact, these guys are the biggest *enemies* of minority and disadvantaged kids. How?

- First, multi-culti activities take time *away* from teaching the essential skills that disadvantaged kids need.

“Let’s discuss tacos!”

No, let’s review our history lessons. You can study tacos at home.

Figure it out. Twenty minutes a day taken away from serious instruction times 180 days. How many hours and days is it? You wonder why kids learn and retain so little?

- They advocate the *worst* forms of instruction—inquiry, authentic.

- They are *against* instruction that is *most* effective for minority/disadvantaged kids—systematic, explicit, direct, teacher-led instruction.

[See number 6 below.]

- They kill the life chances of kids in the service of their politics, preferences, and careers as self-appointed moral czars and social revolutionaries.

[See number 7 below. It is *worth* your time to instruct in a scientifically effective manner.]

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Note about these sources: A thorough review of the literature by Arter and Jenkins (1979) found *no consistent evidence for the idea that modality strengths and weaknesses could be identified in a reliable and valid way that warranted differential instructional prescriptions*. A review of the research evidence by Tarver and Dawson (1978) found likewise that the idea of modality preferences did not hold up to empirical scrutiny. They concluded, "This review found *no evidence supporting an interaction between modality preference and method of teaching reading*" (p. 17). Kampwirth and Bates (1980) confirmed the conclusions of the earlier reviews, although they stated their conclusions a little more baldly: "Given the rather general acceptance of this idea, and its common-sense appeal, one would presume that there exists a body of evidence to support it. Unfortunately... no such firm evidence exists" (p. 598).

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# Principles for Designing Effective Reinforcement Systems

When students are not easily managed due to immaturity, teachers need to add more structure and a system of reinforcement. Reinforcement systems can powerfully affect student behavior. However, if reinforcement systems are improperly designed they can be weak or ineffective. Attending to these basic principles when setting up the systems can make a big difference in whether or not the system works. All of these principles are important. The principles are listed in the order of need—that is, the most frequently violated principles are listed first. More detailed explanation follows.

## The 13 Principles

1. The student must always be “in the game.”
2. The students have to know (be able to see) the score all the time.
3. Points, like praise, should be paired with naming of the specific good behavior that earned the point.
4. A system should not punish students if the teacher forgets to give them praise and points.
5. Students should rarely reach the top of the system.
6. You can't punish students into good behavior—it is not motivating.
7. Students must be taught the behaviors we want *before* a reinforcement system can motivate them to do those behaviors.
8. The rewards can't be too far in the future.
9. The system can't be too cumbersome to administer, but some time must be devoted to running the program.
10. Choose the least cumbersome system that will do the job.

11. The goal should be to focus on praising the good behavior and stressing its value rather than focusing on the tangible reward.
12. The most powerful rewards can be social.
13. Rewards should be chosen from a broad menu with ideas and input from students.

## The Principles Explained

1. **The student must always be “in the game.”** The point of a reinforcement system is to motivate students to exhibit appropriate behavior. Therefore the student must always be in a position to earn a reward or earn their way out of trouble. A student who loses the end-of-the-day reward early in the morning—and has no way to earn it back—is not motivated to cooperate. The punishment that is guaranteed does not “teach him a lesson.” It only says to the student, “There’s no point in trying.” This is *not* a recipe to motivate a student. The student must have a way to earn a reward, or at least to reduce his or her punishment, at all times. Any system where students go “in the hole” without a way to earn themselves out is not going to be effective. Similarly, any system where the student has earned the maximum points or reward and can do no better also will no longer motivate behavior.
2. **The students have to know (be able to see) the score all the time.** The point is for the students to see how they are accumulating points (or losing ground compared to other students or groups) during the lesson. This is essential to motivate them to change their behavior *during the lesson*. Waiting until the end of the

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## Rubric for Identifying Authentic Direct Instruction Programs

Siegfried Engelmann & Geoff Colvin

The purpose of this document is to articulate and illustrate most of the major principles or axioms that are followed in the development of Direct Instruction programs. This information permits a critic to look at material and judge whether it is true Direct Instruction or some form of imitation that does not adhere to the full set of axioms that characterize true DI. It shows the level of detail associated with what students are told, how they are tested, what kind of practice is provided, and how the material is reviewed and expanded from one lesson to the next.

*Direct Instruction programs have an impressive track record for producing significant gains in student achievement for all children. This book provides the reader with an understanding of the critical details involved in developing these effective and efficient programs.* — Doug Carine, Ph.D., Professor, University of Oregon



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day or week to give them feedback and see their points is almost useless. You want students to keep getting the connection between the points and their behavior, over and over and over again. They have to see how they are doing this minute and know immediately when they are earning points and winning. It is the immediate, constant, and consistent feedback that says, "This is how I want you to behave," that teaches them to behave better.

3. **Points, like praise, should be paired with naming of the specific good behavior that earned the point.** Teachers are usually good about telling students what they are doing wrong when they are doing it—they need to be equally consistent about naming positive behaviors. The teacher should be saying things like, "Michael, you earned a point for having your eyes on the book." You are teaching behavior, so each time you give points you *need to name the behavior that you are rewarding*. You are teaching students—this is what I want you to do, this is what will help you be successful. You have to praise or give points for positive behaviors about three or four times as often as you have to correct or nag for misbehavior. As long as you are doing this, you want your reinforcement system to be based on these instances of praise. A system in which teachers evaluate students on, for example, a five-point scale at the end of the period is far less powerful in affecting behavior positively than a system where points are earned minute by minute during the period and the reason is articulated when it happens.
4. **A system should not punish students if the teacher forgets to give them praise and points.** When a lesson is going well, teachers may forget to praise good behavior and award points. That usually indicates that students are behaving. A system that says they should get a certain number of points each day

(say, 5 points a day) would be punishing to the students when the teacher forgets to give them points. The system should be such that whoever is getting the most points is the winner. The teacher–student game is a good example, where the students can "win" even if the teacher slows down on giving points. Or the system could work such that points just accumulate. Another system is one where students get most of their points automatically (say, 4 of 5) and then go up if the teacher notices them doing

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well and go down if they require a reprimand. In that system the students are not punished if the teacher does not notice them, but there is still room to motivate them to try harder.

5. **Students should rarely reach the top of the system.** A student who has received all the points possible is no longer motivated to try hard. A system where students can earn up to 4 points each day is limiting. On some days with some classes it is necessary for the teacher to frequently attend to appropriate behavior in order to motivate it. Under those circumstances it is a serious mistake for a bunch of students to have reached the top of the points system—so that the teacher is forced to stop recognizing and rewarding good behavior. Some days you may have to reward 50 times an hour. Other days or groups it may only require four or five comments each hour. The system has to accommodate both of those extremes and keep working. Often this can be accom-

plished by converting points to a scale. For example: "OK, kids, today you got 23 points and I got only 4. That's awesome. Everyone give yourselves a 4 for your behavior for today. You can't do any better than that!"

6. **You can't punish students into good behavior—it is not motivating.** At best, punishment can sometimes make students regret choices they made in the past. More frequently, punishment can make students hostile, angry, or sullen. While you are standing over them, threats of punishment can sometimes suppress behaviors you don't want. In the long term that's not what we want. Instead we want to motivate appropriate behaviors such as paying attention, trying to learn, wanting to be smarter, showing respect, trying their best. These cannot be motivated by punishment—only by positively rewarding these good behaviors. And if we motivate enough good behaviors they will crowd out the behaviors we don't want.
7. **Students must be taught the behaviors we want before a reinforcement system can motivate them to do those behaviors.** No reward system will work until students have a clear idea of what behaviors you want and when you want them. A teacher has a responsibility to figure out a workable way for her students to deal with the details of her classroom—sharpening pencils, getting paper, collecting assignments, going to the restroom, etc. Developing routines, explaining expectations, practicing how to do it the right way—these are all critical prerequisites for a reinforcement system to be effective. It is highly motivating to try to win a football game—but that doesn't mean you don't need to have practice before the game. Any motivation system will work better if you have practiced the desired behaviors ahead of time.

8. **The rewards can't be too far in the future.** A week is a long time for a child, and waiting until the end of the day requires a lot of faith. A reinforcement system is a lot stronger and more powerful the sooner and more frequently it pays off. Students who get or don't get a reward at the end of an hour are much more motivated than students who are working for a reward at the end of the week. Note: It is possible to pay off both immediately and long term. Students who earn 4 points during a period could receive a high five from the teacher, a cookie, or an "A" for the day—as well as accumulate the points they received toward a longer-range goal, such as a reward activity or a trip at the end of the month.

9. **The system can't be too cumbersome to administer, but some time must be devoted to running the program.** A good rule of thumb is that a teacher should spend at least the same amount of time rewarding behavior as he or she previously had to spend correcting misbehavior. If 10 minutes out of every hour had been taken up with correcting misbehavior, then the teacher should expect to spend that amount of time recognizing good behavior and recording points in the system to reward good behavior. Taking a few minutes at the end of each class session to award or total points—especially if paired with social praise—is a very valuable activity and is essential to making the system work.

10. **Choose the least cumbersome system that will do the job.** There are three basic levels of cumbersomeness—the choice depends on the size of the class and how needy they are: (1) The least cumbersome are systems that treat the whole class as one group: the teacher–student game, marbles in a jar, whole class points towards a goal. The teacher awards points for individual behaviors or for whole class on-task, but the whole group sinks or swims

together. Amazingly enough, it works much of the time. The whole group gets the reward from winning or reaching their goal. (2) The middle level is to have teams by table or row that compete against each other for tickets, points, privileges or glory. The teacher recognizes one or two teams that are doing the right thing, praises that group, and gives them points. Only the top teams get the reward. (3) The most cumbersome are systems where each student competes individually for points or grades or rewards.

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Only the top earners should get awards—or they can all accumulate toward rewards. The teacher has to have a ready system for keeping track of each individual and tallying points. Often the teacher will work out a way to give points to *all* the students when everyone is on task by marking a point in the *all* category, rather than having to mark by each name—and the *all* points get added to each student's total.

11. **The goal should be to focus on praising the good behavior and stressing its value rather than focusing on the tangible reward.** When giving tangible rewards, teachers should be stressing how proud they are, how impressive the accomplishment is, and how much this good behavior is leading to learning and getting smarter. "This is the kind of focus that will get you into college! That's what I'm talking about!" As the teacher's words help the students begin to see themselves as

successful and to feel pride in their accomplishments, the pride and honor of a job well done will come to mean more than the tangible rewards. This is not paying students for their cooperation—instead it is celebrating when they are making good choices and doing a good job. But teachers who focus on the reward—"C'mon, you could earn a cookie if you work hard"—are not teaching students the right reason to be behaving the right way. Instead, we want to focus on the benefits of doing the right thing.

12. **The most powerful rewards can be social.** Recognition from the teacher or the principal, phone calls to parents, certificates, names posted on the board—these are all social rewards. A medal at the Olympics is essentially a social reward (leaving aside endorsement contracts that only a few superstars get), and people work very hard for them. The glory of winning the teacher–student game is also social and is often enough motivation to keep a group aimed in a positive direction. When giving tangible rewards, the key to moving students toward social rewards is to pair the two in the beginning—focusing on the good behavior above.

13. **Rewards should be chosen from a broad menu with ideas and input from students.** A reinforcement system is useless if the students don't want the rewards. It is important to remember that positive reinforcement must increase the behavior that earns it—or it is not really positive or a reward for students. Time with teachers is often a powerful reinforcer for many students (which is why detentions are not effective as punishments). Opportunities to choose learning activities can be a great reward—even if the choices were all from a list approved by the teacher. Rewards that can be shared with a chosen friend are especially powerful for middle-school students. *ADI*