

Introduction to a Special Issue of the Journal of Direct Instruction: A New Textbook and Reference for Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction is, of course, all about learning. But how do we learn about Direct Instruction? A wide range of resources are available for those who are interested in Direct Instruction. These resources include

- the programs themselves and their teachers' guides;
- training provided by the Association for Direct Instruction (ADI), Science Research Associates (SRA), implementation consultants, school district personnel, university professors, and others;
- websites, print materials, and training videos developed by ADI, SRA, implementation consultants, school district personnel, university professors, and others;
- video documentaries such as the Primetime coverage of the Wesley school and *The Battle of City Springs*;
- the *Journal of Direct Instruction* and *Direct Instruction News* published by ADI;

- articles in educational research periodicals such as *Education and Treatment of Children*, *Exceptional Children*, *Remedial and Special Education*, and others; and
- books such as Carnine, Silbert, and Kameenui's (1997) *Direct Instruction Reading* and Stein, Silbert, and Carnine's (1997) *Designing Effective Mathematics Instruction: A Direct Instruction Approach*.

However, at least one key element is missing. Currently, there is no single resource that provides an overview of Direct Instruction including rationale for instructional techniques, research results, analysis of various content areas, and a description of published programs in each content area. This is about to change. In August, Allyn and Bacon will publish *Introduction to Direct Instruction* edited by Marchand-Martella, Slocum, and Martella. This textbook is intended to provide an introduction to the Direct Instruction approach and its application to a variety of curricular areas.

The book's first section consists of two chapters that introduce the Direct Instruction model. The first chapter, by Kerry Hempenstall, describes the importance of high quality instruction and the need for an effective research-based approach to instruction. The second chapter, by Watkins and Slocum, (reprinted in this issue) describes the critical elements of Direct Instruction and discusses some of the main research findings regarding its effectiveness.

The second section of the book includes six chapters, each of which describes the Direct Instruction content analysis, specific Direct Instruction programs and extensions, and

research on Direct Instruction programs in a specific curricular area.

- Chapter 3, by Stein and Kinder, summarizes the Direct Instruction analysis of reading curriculum and describes the three main series of Direct Instruction reading programs, *Reading Mastery*, *Horizons*, and *Corrective Reading*, as well as several programs that are narrower in scope.
- In Chapter 4, Waldron-Soler and Osborne cover the Direct Instruction approach to basic language skills and the programs *Language for Learning* and *Language for Thinking*.
- Chapter 5, by Fredrick and Steventon, explains the Direct Instruction analysis of writing. This chapter describes the *Reasoning and Writing* and *Expressive Writing* series as well as the numerous narrowly focused Direct Instruction writing programs.
- In Chapter 6, Simonsen and Dixon delve into spelling. They analyze the structure of spelling and describe the practical approaches to systematic instruction in spelling as well as describing the *Spelling Mastery* and *Spelling Through Morphographs* programs.
- Mathematics instruction is the focus of Chapter 7 by Snider and Crawford. This chapter explains the importance of high-quality math instruction and some of the big ideas in elementary mathematics. They describe the *Connecting Math Concepts* series and several other Direct Instruction math programs.
- In Chapter 8, Harniss, Holenbeck, and Dickson cover Direct Instruction in content areas such as social studies and sciences. They describe big ideas and strategies in these areas. They also describe the Direct Instruction textbook on U.S. history and the numerous videodisc-based programs in the sciences.

The third section of the text takes on issues that extend beyond specific programs. In Chapter 9, Lignugaris/Kraft provides a system for applying Direct Instruction principles to new content. This chapter helps to bridge the gap between professionally developed Direct Instruction curriculum and the diverse curriculum that must be addressed in classrooms across the country. Chapter 10, by Marchand-Martella, Blakely, and Schaefer, describes techniques for successful implementation of Direct Instruction programs. This chapter puts Direct Instruction in the larger framework of effective schools and examines training, coaching, supervision, and use of Direct Instruction programs in tutoring systems.

This issue of *JODI* includes a reprint of Chapter 2 of *Introduction to Direct Instruction*. We hope that re-publication of this chapter will make its overview of the Direct Instruction model accessible to a larger readership. In addition, this issue also includes two articles that were originally developed for the book but could not be included due to space limitations. We believe that they will be of interest to the Direct Instruction community and that by publishing them here, they will be accessible to those who would like to use them as supplemental chapters for the textbook.

The article by Slocum examines issues related to the evaluation of Direct Instruction implementations. This article is intended to provide a useful reference for teachers and administrators who are involved with the implementation and evaluation of Direct Instruction. One of the central points of the article is that successful evaluation begins with successful implementation. Thus, implementers and evaluators are well served by actively and thoughtfully using the many forms of informal assessment that are built into the programs. In addition, this article explains fundamental concerns of validity and research design as they apply to evaluation of Direct Instruction implementations. It describes how these issues, though they often appear to be theoretical and

removed from practice, are understandable and critically important.

The article by Martella and Nelson describes an approach to classroom behavior management that builds on the Direct Instruction model. Just as Direct Instruction assumes that lack of learning is a result of imperfect instruction, this behavior management approach assumes that problem behavior is a result of imperfect instruction and management techniques. The analysis of student behavior begins with instruction. The authors describe the important role that instruction plays in motivating various kinds of student behavior. Inappropriate behavior can be seen as an opportunity to instruct, just as an academic error is seen as an opportunity to provide additional instruction in the form of a correction. Discussion of behavior management is divided into three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention techniques include effective rules and routines, effective instruction, and classwide motivation systems (e.g., praise, point systems, and contracts). Secondary techniques are used to address the needs of groups of students when primary prevention is not enough. Secondary techniques include precorrection and self-management strategies. Tertiary strategies focus on the needs of students who require more individualized and intensive intervention. Tertiary strategies include individually focused precorrection and self-management techniques as well as functional analysis of problem behaviors and the application of precisely focused interventions that address the functions of problem behavior. This article will be an excellent resource for teachers and supervisors. It will help them integrate the Direct Instruction instructional approach with a systematic positive behavioral support program.

We hope that these articles will be useful to our readers and that they contribute to the large and ever-growing body of literature that describes DI programs and procedures as well as their rationale.

References

- Carnine, D. W., Silbert, J., & Kameenui, E. J. (1997). *Direct Instruction reading* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Marchand-Martella, N. E., Slocum, T. A., & Martella, R. C. (2004). *Introduction to Direct Instruction*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Stein, M., Silbert, J., & Carnine, D. (1997). *Designing effective mathematics instruction: A Direct Instruction approach* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

