

# Direct Instruction

## A NOTICEABLE SHIFT FROM FADS TO EVIDENCE

*An Educators' Guide to School-wide Reform*, a 141-page report from American Institutes for Research, found that only the programs **Direct Instruction**, **High Schools That Work**, and **Success for All** had adequate evidence for effectiveness in reading instruction. Commissioned by five education groups-including the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers

The report is also available on the World Wide Web at [www.aasa.org/Reform/index.htm](http://www.aasa.org/Reform/index.htm).

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

A report from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation supports the Direct Instruction model as a viable approach to schoolwide reform. "DI has, in fact, never caught on widely despite consistent proof of effectiveness". Traub, J. (1999). *Better by design: A consumers' guide to schoolwide reform*. The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. [On Line]. Available: [http://www.edexcellence.net/library/bbd/better\\_by\\_design.html](http://www.edexcellence.net/library/bbd/better_by_design.html)

Another report, *Reading Programs that Work: A Review of Programs for Pre-Kindergarten to 4<sup>th</sup> Grade* (Schacter, 1999 Available at: <http://www.mff.org/publications/publications.taf?page=279>) similarly includes **Direct Instruction** among six school-wide effective reading models. These reports have been influential in drawing attention to the large corpus of supportive research developed over the years indicative of the effectiveness of the Direct Instruction model across a wide range of educational settings. The model is now being implemented with varying degrees of fidelity in increasing numbers of school settings. In the USA, this interest has been furthered by the impact of the **Reading Excellence Act** (1998

<http://www.ecs.org/html/offsite.asp?document=http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/REA/overview.html> and the **Elimination of Reading Deficit Act (2000)**

(<http://edworkforce.house.gov/press/press106/hr4307intro41300.htm>) with their emphasis on empirically supported programs as a requirement for federal funding. As a consequence, there has been a very rapid rise in interest within the educational community. As an indication, the number of educational web pages that now make reference to Direct Instruction has increased dramatically in the past 18 months as the use of any search engine will attest.

The *U.S. Department of Education's Joint Dissemination Review Panel* validated various education programs as exemplary and qualified them for national dissemination. All the submitted Direct Instruction projects were certified as exemplary in reading and math for the primary grades across the full range of students in large urban and rural districts and various ethnic populations.

Block, J.H., Everson, S.T., and Guskey, T.R. (1995). *School improvement programs: A handbook for educational leaders*. New York: Scholastic.

Numerous evaluations have been conducted on the effects of Direct Instruction, in the form of small- and large-scale, longitudinal follow-up and short-term studies. These studies have found significant positive effects on student achievement in reading, language arts and/or mathematics. Some high-poverty schools report average test scores at or above grade level -- in a few cases, several grades above.

Education Commission of the States. (2001). *Programs & Practices: Direct Instruction*. [On-Line]. Available: [www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org)

Follow Through is a large compensatory education program that operated in scores of communities across the United States throughout the seventies and that continues, on a reduced scale, today. During its most active phase, it was conducted as a massive experiment, involving planned variation of education approaches and collection of uniform data at each site. (Carl Bereiter and Midian Kurland.)

Grossen, B. (Ed.). (Winter 1995-6). Focus: What was that Project Follow Through? *Effective School Practices*, 15, [On-Line]. Available: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~adiiep/ft/grossen.htm>.

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

Adams, G., & Engelmann, S. (1996). *Research on Direct Instruction: 25 years beyond Distar*. Seattle, WA: Educational Achievement Systems.

"Direct Instruction is consistent in every way with what we know of developmental appropriateness" Kozloff & Bessellieu argue in:

Kozloff, M.A. & Bessellieu, F.B. (2000). *Direct Instruction is developmentally appropriate*. [On-Line]. Available: <http://www.uncwil.edu/people/kozloffm/didevelapp.html>.

"Direct Instruction holds strong promise for improving the teaching of early reading in Wisconsin. If more children were taught to read well early in their schooling, fewer children would require special education and other remedial services later on." See their report:

Schug, M. C., Western, R. D., & Tarver, S. G. (2001). Direct Instruction and the teaching of early reading: Wisconsin's teacher-led insurgency. *Wisconsin Policy Research Institute*, 14(2). [On-Line]. Available: <http://www.wpri.org/Reports/Volume14/Vol14no2.pdf>

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

The Association for Direct Instruction <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~adiiep/>

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

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

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

## **DI Program Information**

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

Some other references are:

Adams, G., & Engelmann, S. (1996). *Research on Direct Instruction: 25 years beyond DISTAR*. Seattle, WA: Educational Achievement Systems.

Allan, P. (1993). *A case study of the efficacy of the Corrective Reading program with a nine-year old girl*. RMIT. Unpublished manuscript.

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- Darch, C. (1993). Direct Instruction: A research-based approach for designing instructional programs. in R. C. Eaves, & P. J. Laughlin, (Eds.), *Recent advances in special education and rehabilitation*. Boston: Andover Med. Publishers.
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- Holdsworth, P. (1984). Corrective Reading tested in U.K. *ADI News*, 4(2), 1-4.
- Kassendorf, S. J., & McQuaid, P. (1987, Fall). Corrective reading evaluation study. *Direct Instruction News*, 9.
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- Noon, L., & Maggs, A. (1980). Accelerating written language processes in normal and gifted children: Direct instruction strategies and sequences. *Reading Education*, 5(1), 11-26.
- Polloway, E. A., & Epstein, M. H. (1986). The use of Corrective Reading (SRA) with mildly handicapped students. *ADI News*, 5(2), 2-3.
- Polloway, E. A., Epstein, M. H., Polloway, C. H., Patton, J. R., & Ball, D.W. (1986). Corrective Reading program: An analysis of effectiveness with learning disabled and mentally retarded students. *RASE*, 7(4), 41-47.
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Vitale, M.R., Medland, M.B., Romance, N., & Weaver, H.P. (1993, Winter). Accelerating reading and thinking skills of low-achieving elementary students: Implications for curricular change. *Effective School Practices*, 26-31.

Westworth, I. (1998). Evaluation of a Corrective Reading Program: The effects on comprehension and decoding skills. Australia: RMIT. Unpublished manuscript.

White, W. A. T. (1988). A meta-analysis of the effects of Direct Instruction in special education. *Education & Treatment of Children*, 11, 364-374.

The placement test for the Corrective Reading program can be located at:

[http://www.sra4kids.com/teacher/reading/cr/decode/test\\_1.html](http://www.sra4kids.com/teacher/reading/cr/decode/test_1.html)

A school evaluation including the Corrective Reading program **can be located at:**

<http://www.uoregon.edu/~bgrossen/GoetheYear1Eval.pdf>

Information on the **Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons** program can be located at:

<http://www.uoregon.edu/~phyllis> and at [www.startreading.com](http://www.startreading.com)

The article: **The Research Base for Reading Mastery by Bonnie Grossen** is at:

<http://www.uoregon.edu/~adiiep/rdgtxt.htm>

### **View reports supportive of Direct instruction:**

*Six Promising Schoolwide Programs For Raising Student Achievement* Direct Instruction (DI). At:

<http://www.aft.org/edissues/whatworks/six/di/index.htm>

*An Educators' Guide to School-wide Reform*, a 141-page report from American Institutes for Research, at

[www.aasa.org/Reform/index.htm](http://www.aasa.org/Reform/index.htm).

*Reading Programs that Work: A Review of Programs for Pre-Kindergarten to 4<sup>th</sup> Grade* (Schacter, 1999)

Available at: <http://www.mff.org/publications/publications.taf?page=279>

Traub, J. (1999). *Better by design: A consumers' guide to schoolwide reform*. The Thomas B. Fordham

Foundation. [On Line]. Available: [http://www.edexcellence.net/library/bbd/better\\_by\\_design.html](http://www.edexcellence.net/library/bbd/better_by_design.html)

Education Commission of the States. (2001). *Programs & Practices: Direct Instruction*. [On-Line].

Available: [www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org)