When you give students a stronger foundation in learning skills and comprehension, you prepare them for a future without boundaries.

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Direct Instruction Methodology

What Is Direct Instruction?

Direct Instruction is an explicit, intensive instructional method that allows students of all abilities to become confident, capable learners. For nearly 50 years, **Direct Instruction** has empowered teachers to deliver consistently high levels of student achievement.

SRA/McGraw-Hill's **Direct Instruction** programs use common instructional planning and consistent classroom routines to boost student skill mastery in reading, spelling, language arts, and mathematics. The programs provide concrete, clear curricula that have been highly successful in a wide variety of instructional settings nationwide.

The system's highly interactive, research-proven methods help students from diverse backgrounds acquire the skills needed for academic success.

Direct Instruction goes far beyond memorization to:

- Emphasize priority concepts critical for student success
- Move from basic skills to integrated, sophisticated skills
- Develop learning strategies and their application in new situations
- Help you make a measurable difference in classroom achievement
- Create successful, confident learners!

"Your mission is to accelerate those kids as much as possible. I have high expectations because I know it's possible, it's achievable. When you work with low-performing kids, you turn them around. You make a big difference in their life. And you help them realize their potential."

—Siegfried "Zig" Engelmann
Senior Author
Direct Instruction Programs

Academic Achievement

The Direct Instruction Philosophy

Direct Instruction is based on two basic principles:

- All students can learn when taught correctly, regardless of past history and background.
- All teachers can be successful, given effective teaching materials and presentation techniques.

Many studies have proven that when **Direct Instruction** is implemented correctly, these principles can be realized in any classroom.

The **Direct Instruction** philosophy holds that the most important factor in students' performance is the quality of instruction they receive. **Direct Instruction** has made a positive, measurable difference in student achievement in thousands of classrooms.

"Teaching children to read is an exact science. It is not a mystery. We know if we follow certain steps, all children can learn. And with Direct Instruction, we have been able to bring our scores from the middle range of the fiftieth percentile to where our children now are scoring at the ninetieth percentile. All of our children are performing at very high levels and we're very proud of that."

—Maureen Berg, Principal
Louisa May Alcott Elementary School
Cleveland, OH

Quality of Instruction

The Three Keys to Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction sets itself apart from other teaching methods with its unique approach. Its design, delivery, and documentation make **Direct Instruction** work for all students and classrooms.

Design

Every **Direct Instruction** program applies purposeful instructional planning to give students extensive support as they practice and apply newly learned concepts and skills.

Direct Instruction programs:

- **Break concepts into manageable steps** to help students possess appropriate pre-skills and prior knowledge
- **Use clear, concise language** so students grasp concepts the first time they are presented
- **Model skills and steps** needed to complete tasks and ensure understanding
- **Give guided practice** to support student learning
- **Provide multiple examples** in a carefully planned sequence to build independence
- **Integrate previously learned knowledge** and skills for continual progress
- **Incorporate continuous assessment** to monitor student learning

Delivery

Presentation has a lot to do with how effectively students learn. In **Direct Instruction** programs, teachers:

- **Give placement tests** so students begin at an appropriate level
- **Follow scripted lessons** to ensure consistency
- **Use quick pacing and group responses** to keep all students engaged
- **Implement planned correction procedures** to prevent errors from becoming learned habits
- **Provide positive reinforcement** to motivate students

These presentation techniques allow lessons to flow smoothly, and for you to be immediately responsive to students' needs.

Documentation

After more than 50 independent research studies, the results speak for themselves. To view the wealth of research studies and articles on the effectiveness of **Direct Instruction**, visit **SRAonline.com/di_home_research.html**.

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The Tools for Success

To design a **Direct Instruction** program, the authors:

- First **identify the skills and concepts** students must learn to advance academically.
- Next, determine **the best way to teach** them so students can construct generalizations (or "big ideas").
- Finally, develop **broad-based strategies** to introduce to students, to ensure they learn content efficiently.

The strategies found in **Direct Instruction** programs:

- Allow all students to have access to the thought process, and make errors easy to correct.
- Keep students from getting the answers right for the wrong reasons; strategies have only one interpretation.
- Apply to a wide range of examples; requiring less time to teach.

Direct Instruction helps students concentrate on critical content and make connections among skills they are learning. In short, **Direct Instruction** helps your students learn how to learn.

How Students Learn the Skills They Need

Research shows that students retain new concepts better when they are learned correctly the first time, instead of having to relearn information later.

SRA's **Direct Instruction** programs are divided into small skills students can master easily, and any prerequisite skills are built right in.

Direct Instruction facilitates learning in a logical sequence:

- Pre-skills are taught before strategies.
- Examples consistent with a strategy are taught before exceptions to the strategy.
- Strategies or examples likely to be confused are introduced separately.

"The program is designed in a way that no matter what, you can be successful. You have all the tools. All the keys are there."

—Lori Lamprey, Grade 5 Teacher
Washington Elementary School

Early Support Leads to Later Success

Direct Instruction programs provide students with models and guided practice. The models are simplified forms that allow students to understand basic concepts. Once mastered, students can build on those models to develop more complex ideas.

When introducing a new concept:

1. **Teachers model** the same type of problems the students will be solving.
2. **The students apply** the same steps to a different but similar problem.
3. **The students use the concept** in varying contexts and with other skills.

These steps help students learn when to use specific strategies and provide them with guided practice until they can perform these skills independently.

Direct Instruction programs are designed to become more complex gradually. Each lesson presents a mixture of new and review material. In a typical lesson, only about 15% of the information is new. The rest is either review of content introduced in the preceding lessons or slight expansions that build on what was taught earlier.

The expectation is that:

- Students begin each new activity ready to achieve at least 80% accuracy on their first try.
- Students will work with 100% accuracy after error corrections and scaffolding have occurred.
- Students will be successful every day on every activity!

Direct Instruction allows students to work within their range of competence. The ability to apply newly learned skills is very rewarding and instills the desire within students to learn and achieve.

The Skills They Need

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Blueprint for Success

Using **Direct Instruction**, you implement explicit instructional routines to introduce new skills and strategies. In the following example, from *Reading Mastery*, the explanation and guidance you provide makes the steps students use to write a simile concrete and easy to understand.

As students advance through **Direct Instruction** programs, the amount of guidance and support you provide is gradually reduced. Carefully scaffolded examples help students use what they know to determine the correct answer without depending on you. Finally, students independently use the concept in an ever-widening range of applications and in conjunction with other skills.

Track Sequencing for Optimal Learning

Direct Instruction programs use parallel tracks to present skills that may extend across many lessons. With track sequencing, similar concepts are:

- **Introduced gradually**
- **Applied systematically**
- **Practiced continually**
- **Integrated easily**

Students master several skills at the same time. New skills are introduced alongside skills learned earlier. Students review what they know and integrate it with new information.

As your students move through a **Direct Instruction** program, you will see them:

- Combine individual pieces of information and link new skills to previously learned strategies
- Make the right connections between the facts and skills they are learning
- Realize that they are capable learners who are mastering the material
- Become increasingly self-reliant, confident learners

EXERCISE 4

Similes

1. Everybody, turn to part D at the end of today's story. ✔
- (Call on individual students to read several sentences each.)
- (At the end of each section, present the questions for that section.)

Write the answer to items 1–4.
    Here's how to write a simile. First make an accurate statement, such as *Her eyes were blue.* Then name something that could be as blue as her eyes.

- Name something that could be as blue as her eyes. (Ideas: *A cloudless sky; the ocean; a lake; robins' eggs; irises.*)

    Here's a simile that tells what her eyes were like: *Her eyes were like a cloudless sky.*

- Say the simile about her eyes. (Response: *Her eyes were like a cloudless sky.*)
- What color is a cloudless sky? (Response: *Blue.*)
- What color are her eyes? (Response: *Blue.*)

    Write a simile for this accurate statement: *The man ran fast.*
1. First name something that is fast.

- Name something that is fast. (Ideas: *Wind; rocket; deer.*)

2. Now make up a simile that tells how the man ran. Use the word *like* in your simile.

- What's your answer? (Ideas: *The man ran like the wind; the man ran like a rocket; the man ran like a deer.*)
- You'll write the answers later.

Example of an exercise on writing instructions in *Reading Mastery Signature Edition*.

Teaching to Mastery

One hallmark of **Direct Instruction** is its emphasis on teaching to mastery. Teaching to mastery ensures that students have a solid understanding of each of the concepts presented before moving forward.

Direct Instruction lessons are filled with opportunities for students to respond and demonstrate what they learn, including:

- Group responses and individual turns
- Independent work assignments
- Cumulative review activities

You use planned procedures to correct all errors as soon as they occur. You back up and restart the activity to allow students to practice the correct response again. And, you continue teaching until every student is able to perform the task independently without making any mistakes.

Continuous progress monitoring is provided through Mastery Tests that are administered regularly. The data provided through curriculum-based assessment helps you:

- Identify the need for additional instruction
- Provide differentiated instruction to address strengths and weaknesses
- Assess progress toward grade level goals
- Improve overall student achievement

Mastery communicates the idea that what is learned each day is important because it will be needed in later lessons. When you teach to mastery, students develop efficient learning strategies that help them acquire new information faster. You're also building the confidence needed to tackle increasingly challenging topics.

"Every child is capable of learning if we identify what they don't know, place them appropriately, and then take them a step at a time so that they're able to achieve mastery."

—Siegfried "Zig" Engelmann
Senior Author
Direct Instruction Programs

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Scripted Lessons Ensure Consistent Results

Direct Instruction incorporates an array of teaching techniques designed to produce results. Lessons are prescriptive and highly detailed. Each lesson has been extensively field-tested for maximum clarity and effectiveness.

With the carefully scripted lessons used in **Direct Instruction** programs:

- Activities are timed so that a range of skills are mastered
- Instructional language is consistent and easy to understand
- You are able to communicate clearly and concisely
- Your students are able to concentrate on learning

Group Responses Engage All Students

All **Direct Instruction** programs have a high level of interaction between teachers and students. You constantly give directions, offer think time, elicit student responses, provide praise for correct responses, and provide corrective feedback for errors.

Signals

In **Direct Instruction**, the basic routine for each activity includes unison responses followed by individual practice. Visual and auditory **signals** are used to initiate whole-group responses. Using signals is an effective technique to get students to initiate their own response, and helps you control pacing and provide appropriate think time before students answer.

Unison oral responding:
- Makes all students active participants in the learning process
- Provides maximum practice as skills are taught
- Gives students sufficient repetition in a short period of instruction
- Promotes fluency and automaticity in all aspects of skill learning

Pacing

In **Direct Instruction** programs, you maintain a fast pace throughout each lesson and transition seamlessly from activity to activity. Briskly paced lessons keep students focused and involved. Students pay close attention to the material being presented and off-task behavior is minimized. Students receive more practice time and have an increased opportunity for achieving success.

Error Correction Leads to Superior Outcomes

In **Direct Instruction**, all errors are corrected as soon as they occur. You make immediate judgments about why errors occur and focus on those aspects when providing corrective feedback.

As soon as a mistake happens, you:

- Model the correct response
- Lead *all* students in the correct response using words specified in the script
- Return to the beginning of the task to put the response into context

Error corrections are taught to the entire group. All students repeat the steps required to arrive at the correct answer. This helps keep your students focused and engaged, and ensures long-term effectiveness of the correction.

Positive Reinforcement

You are the leading influence in shaping your students' attitudes about learning. **Direct Instruction** teachers present achievable goals and provide immediate, positive feedback as students demonstrate mastery. Praise is specific and relevant to the task at hand, offering useful information to the student. Students know what they did correctly so they can apply that information to the next task to achieve success again.

"Walk into a classroom that *doesn't* have Direct Instruction and take a look at the engagement of the students. You'll see two or three sitting in front, paying attention to the teacher. In a Direct Instruction lesson, the teacher makes a point to give turns to the children who need the turns, so you'll see everyone on task. Direct Instruction has really changed my mind about teaching. Once I taught it and felt that engagement and saw that excitement in the eyes of students who'd been turned off for so many years, it was really a no-brainer: *This* is how I'm going to teach reading from now on!"

—Bernadette Halloran, Literacy Specialist
Milwaukee Public Schools
Milwaukee, WI

Direct Interaction

Accurate Placement for Accurate Results

Direct Instruction helps you build confident learners from the start, with Placement Tests that organize student groups according to skill level, not grade level.

This way, your students:

- Possess all the prerequisite skills for a particular level
- Will have to learn most of the skills to be taught at that specific level

Ensure Students Are at the Appropriate Level

Direct Instruction gives you a variety of ways to assess student progress and regroup students based on their understanding of concepts.

These include:

- **Informal Assessment** performed through daily activities
- **Independent Work Activities** of increasing complexity that shape your student's ability to work alone
- **Rate and Accuracy Checks** measure reading accuracy and fluency, and reveal hidden mistakes made during group activities

"It's so exciting for us to see that finally our son can be successful — since he has struggled so long with reading. Direct Instruction works!"

—Linda Lupien, Parent
Carroll Middle School Student
Wake County Public Schools
Raleigh, NC

Direct Instruction Transforms

Direct Instruction provides the framework for success. Its structure allows clear communication during lessons, adequate time for on-task work, and on-the-spot feedback on student comprehension. It also incorporates a structure for addressing problems early, and methods for progress monitoring.

With **Direct Instruction's** research-based curricula and classroom proven methods, students of all abilities receive the structure they need to succeed. **Direct Instruction** curricula give you the power to make the difference in your students' lives, and gives students the tools for a brighter future.

"A couple of my kids, who were classified as mentally handicapped when they came to me, made such tremendous growth with Direct Instruction, that I said there's no way this child is as limited as this IQ suggests. They were actually reevaluated and dismissed from the mentally handicapped programs, which means that they have a typical IQ. The implications for that are huge, because it opens a whole new door of possibilities to children who, through the proper intervention, can succeed."

—Jennifer Michaels
Varying Exceptionalities Teacher
Bonneville Elementary
Orlando, FL

Build Confident Learners
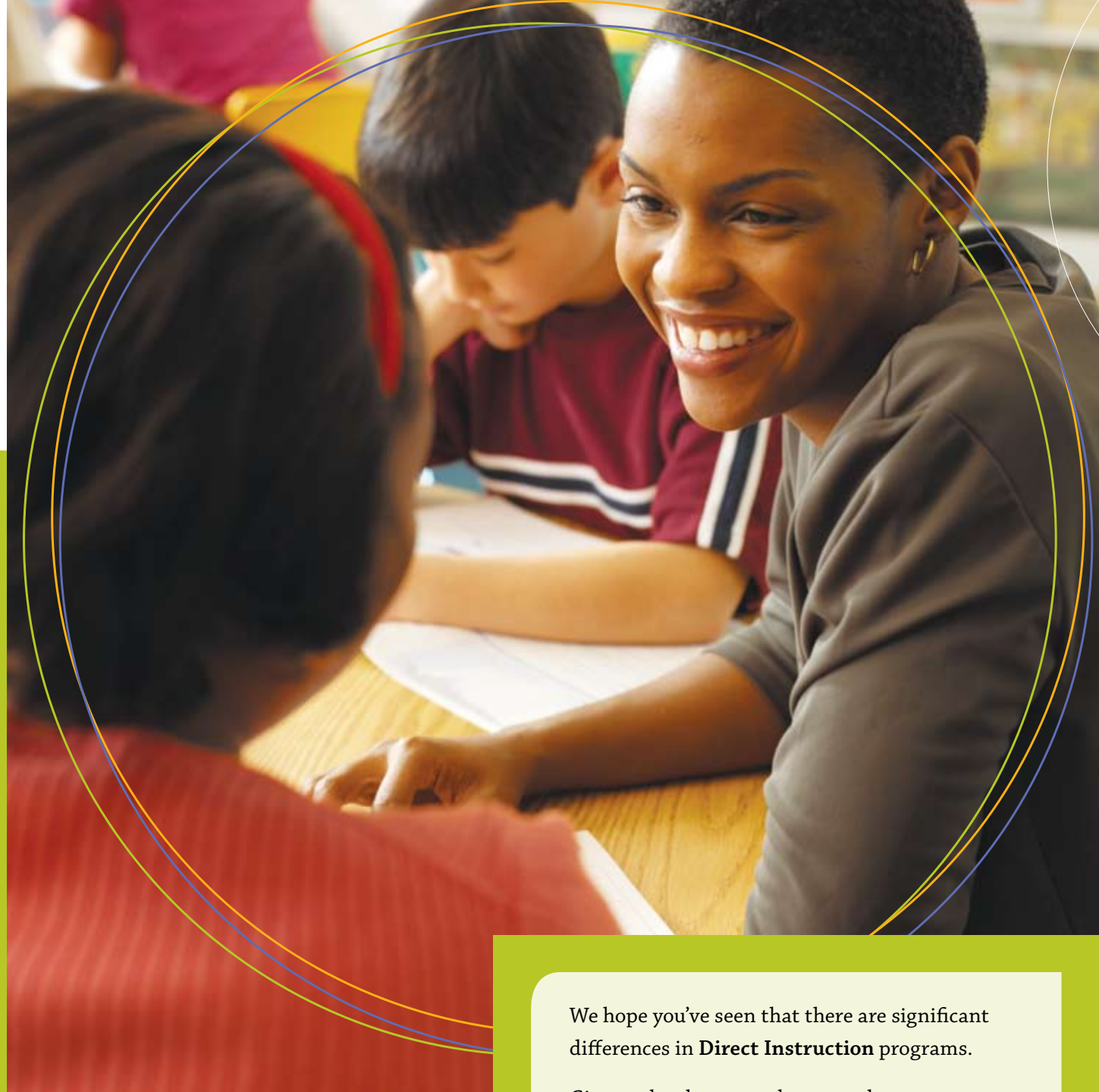
What Does Implementation Look Like?

- Conduct placement testing
- Group students according to test results
- Acquire and distribute materials
- Provide appropriate teacher training
- Support teachers with coaching
- Monitor student progress

We hope you've seen that there are significant differences in **Direct Instruction** programs.

Give us the chance to show you these programs firsthand. Call your SRA sales representative or **1-888-SRA-4543** for more information, complimentary product samples for review, or a full presentation.

Visit **SRAonline.com** for more details on the research base validating **Direct Instruction's** effectiveness.

Making the Difference ℠

1-888-SRA-4543

Resources and ordering information at SRAonline.com

Direct Instruction Methodology

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