

What does Direct Instruction look like?

- 1) **Students have many opportunities to participate actively.** Teachers and students are involved in instruction that is highly interactive where the teachers ask many questions to introduce or review new material, repeat important vocabulary or concepts, check for understanding of academic procedures, or to check for engagement. Research has shown that the more **active student responses** learners have, the more . . . they stay **engaged and interested** in what they are learning.
. . . the more they **can retain in their working memory**.
. . . the better they can learn for **long-term retention**.

(Students who do not stay actively involved soon forget what a teacher presented. They also can become disruptive and interfere with the learning of others. This is a common occurrence in too many of our schools in the United States.)

- 2) **Students are given many opportunities to learn, review, and apply their new skills or knowledge.** Students benefit from having an abundance of different kinds of review and practice. Many **meaningful repetitions of new concepts, ideas, vocabulary, and facts** are essential for students to learn, assimilate, incorporate, and apply their learning in more situations.

(Teachers have known since ancient times the value of many meaningful repetitions. *Clear Teaching-With Direct Instruction* by Shephard Barbash, explains: “Repetition is the mother of learning, a Latin proverb says. At risk students rarely are given enough practice to master the skills they need. That’s because most of us forget how much time and effort it takes to learn and remember new things.”) Assessments have shown over and over that the majority of American students do *not* retain what they “learned” in school. In fact, they never fully **learned to mastery**. This is a waste for *everyone*.)

- 3) **How do students participate actively?**
 - Most often, this happens with the class or group answering orally as a group: everyone gets to be involved, not just the one or two students with their hands up.
 - To allow students to retrieve the information asked in the question, the teacher will give students momentary “think time” and then a simple signal for the students to answer together, much like a musical director.
 - Teachers will also ask individual students questions after the students have had a number of opportunities to answer chorally. Some questions may have numerous possible answers, and teachers will ask one student to give her or his answer. Sometimes a teacher will want to “check for understanding” or give a student a chance “to show what you know” by asking an individual student to answer.
 - Active participation may **also** include: responding with gestures (i.e., a thumbs up “I’ve got it!”), writing answers (problems, sentences, etc.), doing appropriate movements directly involved with learning the content, or doing movement breaks in order to get the heart pumping and brain refreshed.

- Parents are amazed at how much their children learn so quickly: we call it ***“learning more in less time.”***

- 4) **What curricula are used?** Teachers use curricula that are either specifically designed using Direct Instruction (DI) principles, or curricula that can be used as adapted to the general DI methodology. Teachers are given extensive training and coaching using the curricula. They are also trained in positive classroom management, which receives a powerful boost from DI’s high level of student engagement.

What is the research for Direct Instruction? Very deep and VERY strong!

- In answer to the question, “‘what has the greatest influence on student learning?’” foremost research analyst, John Hattie, cites ***very strong effect size*** for Direct Instruction (.82 – almost a full standard deviation):

“‘Direct instruction’ is a strategy that includes active learning, structured reviews after one hour, five hours and 20 hours study. There is also immediate feedback for the learners, and some corrective work if this is necessary.”ⁱ

- The Australian Center for Evidence-Based Teaching also quotes Hattie’s seminal meta-analysis of education:

“John Hattie reviewed over 300 research studies exploring the impact that Direct Instruction has on student results. He found that Direct Instruction brought about **above-average gains**:

- In both surface and deep learning
- For kids of all ages and all abilities

“Other research has shown that the benefits of Direct Instruction are long lasting, with students in DI schools:

- Still achieving higher than students of similar ability several years later
- More likely to graduate and gain entrance into universityⁱⁱ

How can I learn more about Direct Instruction?

1) You can download the free book from ECF – Educator Consumers Foundation:



“Clear Teaching: With Direct Instruction, Siegfried Engelmann Discovered a Better Way of Teaching

Written by veteran journalist Shepard Barbash over a period of 10 years, *Clear Teaching* is a well-researched, highly readable introduction to Direct Instruction (DI). [Click here](#) to download this book in PDF format along with a host of support materials, including directories of resources, a list of trainers, and much more; those wanting print copies can order them from [Amazon](#) or can [contact ECF](#) for bulk orders.”

<http://education-consumers.org/research-areas/policy-leadership/direct->

[instruction-resources/clear-teaching/](#)

2) You can refer to the National Institute for Direct Instruction: <http://www.nifdi.org/>

3) Come observe our classrooms!

ⁱ Cambridge Regional College: http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/T_effect_sizes.html

ⁱⁱ Australian Society for Evidence Based Teaching, 7/7/2014 Blog, retrieved 2/16/2016:
<http://www.evidencebasedteaching.org.au/direct-instruction-facts-myths/>