Some Big Ideas from Direct Instruction Reading
Douglas Carnine et. al. (2004/10)
From Preface to Chapter Five
Assembled by Charles Arthur

Preface

In April of 2000, the National Reading Panel, a panel of scientists charged by the U.S. Congress with the responsibility of reviewing research in reading instruction and identifying methods that consistently relate to reading success, issued its long-awaited report. The direct instruction approach is highly congruent with the findings of the National Reading Panel.

Direct Instruction Reading presents information on

how to provide success to students
through structuring initial teaching procedures
so that the presentation is clear:

- using language and demonstrations that can be understood by all children;

- sequencing the content to be sure that all essential skills and knowledge are taught in an aligned and coherent manner;

- using teacher presentation techniques that foster a high degree of interaction between teacher and student; and

- providing adequate practice and review to develop high levels of fluency and accuracy.

The approaches described in this text have been shown to benefit all students, but are especially powerful with the most vulnerable learners, children who are at risk because of poverty, disability, or limited knowledge of English. We have incorporated the research findings of the National Reading Panel in chapters throughout the text.

Chapter One, Perspective

To teach reading effectively and efficiently
teachers must be knowledgeable in several areas.

They must know…

1. The essential skills or objectives that make up the reading process and the procedures for teaching those skills;

2. The Sequence in which the essential skills can be introduced;

3. The procedures for evaluating, selecting, and modifying reading programs to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms;

4. The techniques for effectively presenting lessons, including techniques for pacing tasks, motivating students, and diagnosing and correcting their errors;

5. The types of assessments to use during the school year;

6. How to use the information from assessments to inform instruction;

7. How to organize classrooms to maximize the amount of time students spend engaged in reading instruction.

Two Questions

Is reading, like speaking, natural?

No. Speech is primarily biological. Humans possess a predisposition to develop speech. However, learning to read is gaining knowledge of and practicing an agreed-upon convention for the written representation of language, and it is not genetically inherent in human development. (Liberman and Liberman 1990)

What is required if a child is to read and write?

(A child needs) well-developed phonological awareness skills and alphabetic understanding as prerequisite and corequisite requirements in learning to read and write and the need for explicit and systematic instruction in teaching these skills. (Liberman and Liberman 1990)

Reading is the most studied of the academic subjects.

Strong support for direct- reading instruction comes from the mainstream of reading research. More than forty years of substantial and coercive research now supports the proposition that if students are taught fundamental reading skills directly, explicitly, strategically, and thoughtfully, they will learn to read (Adams, 1990; Becker&Carnine 1980; Forman, 1995; Kame'enui & Simmons,1990: Lyon, 1995: National Reading Panel, 2000; Smith, Simmons.& Kame'enui. 1995).

In the largest, most comprehensive evidence-based review ever conducted of research on how children learn reading, the **National Reading Panel (2000)** concluded that effective reading instruction includes:

- teaching children to break apart and manipulate the sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- teaching them that these sounds are represented by letters of the alphabet which then can be blended together to form words (phonics)
- having them practice what they've learned by reading aloud with guidance and feedback
  (guided oral reading)
- applying reading comprehension strategies to guide and improve reading comprehension

Direct Instruction emphasizes all of these essential reading skills. Furthermore, direct-instruction procedures for teaching the skills effectively and efficiently are validated by scientific research and are consistent with the recommendations of the National Reading Panel. (2004 p.7)

That is why we have adopted the report of the National Reading Panel as the research base for this textbook.

The research base for direct instruction is solid. (2004)

It includes research which supports the approach as a whole, as well as research that supports the components that make up the whole.

It includes large scale experimental studies conducted in the real world of schools and classrooms, as well as small- scale experiments conducted in more highly controlled settings.

It includes studies with students of all income levels, all grade levels, and a wide range of ability levels.

It includes studies with both special- education and regular-education students.

It includes studies using norm-referenced as well as criterion- referenced assessment instruments.

It includes studies which investigated the characteristics of effective teachers.

As much as we would like to see socioeconomic conditions improve, we reject the assumption that improvement in reading achievement is not possible unless there are changes in the children's economic and social environments. Educators cannot use social and home environments as excuses for the poor performance of some students.

Chapter Two, A Model of Reading Instruction
Systematic and Explicit Instruction (2010)

The National Reading Panel provided valuable information on how to teach. The terms systematic instruction and explicit instruction appear throughout the National Reading Panel report.

Most importantly, the direct-instruction model goes further to:

- Sequence the components and subcomponents to produce a seamless progression from beginning to advanced reading skills.
- Specify effective and efficient teaching techniques and procedures to ensure that students acquire components skills and strategies and progress from beginning to advanced reading.

What is Direct Instruction?

Direct Instruction is an approach to teaching.

It is skills-oriented, and the teaching practices it implies are teacher-directed.

It emphasizes the use of small-group, face-to-face instruction by teachers and aides

using carefully articulated lessons

in which cognitive skills are broken down into small units,

sequenced deliberately, and taught explicitly.

These skills provide the intellectual substance of Direct Instruction programs. In the case of reading, it is substance found in the sound system of spoken English and the ways in which English sounds are represented in writing. That is why Direct Instruction is associated with phonemic awareness, or phonics. Direct Instruction to date is represented most clearly and extensively in instructional programs authored by Engelmann and published by SRA/McGraw-Hill.

STAGES OF READING INSTRUCTION (2010)

The focus of reading instruction evolves over time from an initial emphasis on breaking the code (learning how to translate the printed squiggles [letters] on a page into oral language) to a later emphasis on using reading as a tool to gather new information (reading to learn).

The **beginning reading stage** refers to the time when children learn to "break the code." They learn the relationships between letters and the sounds that they represent, and they learn to apply this knowledge to read words. The beginning reading stage is absolutely critical. .. During this time, instruction includes carefully coordinated interweaving of phonemic awareness and phonic skills that prepares a child to read

words. Children learn the relationships between individual letters and the sounds the letters represent and learn how to use this information to accurately read individual words and then words in text.

The latter part of the beginning reading stage refers to the time when phonics instruction expands from a focus on individual letters that make up a word to groups of letters. Students learn the relationships between letter combinations (e.g., ai, ou. est, tion. ly, ite. ate) and the sounds they represent, and they learn to read words formed by a base-word and one or more affixes (e.g. handed. better. careful, sadly, refill).

Passages that students read increase in length. Fluency instruction begins. The joint development of fluent and accurate reading is stressed. Vocabulary and comprehension instruction remain a priority and gradually become more text related as students are able to read longer text with a greater range of vocabulary… Children who develop efficient decoding processes quickly and easily find reading enjoyable because they can concentrate on the meaning of the text. They read more; the additional exposure and practice further develops their reading abilities.

Our direct-instruction model encompasses all of the NRP components and emphasizes different components at different times as students progress from naive to mature readers. In our model, components and subcomponents are sequenced and coordinated very carefully to ensure smooth transitions from phase to phase. Careful coordination of the various components and subcomponents also facilitates application and generalization to a broad range of reading assignments (Kame'enui & Carnine, 1998; Tarver, 2000).

The major difference between our direct-instruction model (and others) is…

> We specify in much greater detail both the what and the how of reading instruction. The sequencing and coordination of components (i.e., curriculum design) is the what of instruction. What teachers do to ensure that students really do learn the components as they proceed through the curriculum is the how of instruction. In the remaining chapters of this book, we describe in great detail the what and the how that we believe to be essential to effective reading instruction.

At this point in time, there is little room for doubt that the components of reading identified by NRP, Chall, and numerous other reviewers are non-negotiable components of reading instruction. Those who value scientifically-based research findings **agree, for the most part, on what must be taught when we teach reading. There is less agreement (p. 4) about how to teach the identified components.**

Chapter Four,
Delivery of Instruction:
Program Design and Teacher Presentation

Teachers musts be able to design lessons for teaching specific skills. **Six aspects** of direct instruction program design are relevant when selecting a reading program, writing lessons plans, and modifying reading programs.

The Six Aspects of Design (that enable explicit and systematic teaching)
> Specified Objectives, Instructional Strategies, Teaching Procedures, Selection of Examples, Sequencing of Skills, and Providing Practice and Review.

Strategies provide efficiency (teach more within a given time) and generalization (can be applied again-and-again). (see chapters six through twelve for examples) Chapter Six and Chapter Eight)

Sequencing skills tend to reduce error rates. It affects the difficulty or ease students have when learning new skills. The most critical sequencing principle is teaching components of a strategy before the entire strategy is introduced.

Sequencing involves….
- Pre-skills of a strategy are taught before the strategy itself is presented.
- Instances that are consistent with strategy are introduced before exceptions.
- High-utility skills are introduced before less useful ones. (teaching progressions)
- Easy skills are taught before more difficult ones. (word selection)
- Strategies and information likely to be confused are not introduced at the same time. (see Chapter Seven, Letter-Sound Correspondences)

Practice and Review, within each lesson and across lessons, provides Mastery. A pattern of massed practice in the first several lessons and systematic review later is critical for developing accuracy, fluency, and retention.

Presentation Techniques: Teachers teaching beginning reading skills must be proficient in presentation techniques (that) maintain student participation in highly-interactive oral exchanges between teacher and students. Teaching techniques include: unison oral responding, signaling, pacing, monitoring, correcting errors and teaching to mastery, diagnosing, and developing student motivation. The potential advantages of adequate time (through program design) and a teacher who presents well (through skillful delivery) will not be realized if the reading program is too difficult or poorly designed.

Chapter Five,

Overview of Beginning Reading

Phonics Instruction (The *WHAT* of instruction)

> Phonics instruction teaches the relationships between the letters of written language (graphemes) and the individual sounds of spoken language (phonemes)(they represent). It also teaches how these relationships are used to read and write words. The goal of phonics instruction is to help children learn and use the alphabetic principle- the understanding that written letters correspond to spoken sounds and that the correspondences are systematic and predictable. Knowledge of the alphabetic principle helps children to (a) recognize familiar words accurately and automatically, and (b) decode new words independently.

Word Selection

> Code-emphasis programs initially select words (for teaching) made up of letters and letter combinations representing the same sound in different words. This consistency between letters and their sound values enables students to read many different words by blending the sounds for each new word. For example, the word sat is sounded out as "sssaaat" and pronounced "sat." The word land is sounded out as "laaannnd"and pronounced "land." The letter *a* represents the same sound in *sat* and *land*, as well as in other words initially appearing in a code-emphasis program. In code-emphasis programs, a new word generally is not introduced until students have mastered the letter-sound correspondences that make up the word. For example, the word *mat* is not introduced until the students know the sounds for the letters *m*, *a*, and *t*. (2004)

In a well-designed code-emphasis approach, the emphasis changes overtime. For example, the initial emphasis on oral reading shifts to an emphasis on silent reading after students can read passages fluently. The initial emphasis on sounding out words shifts to an emphasis on automatic recognition of words; however, students are taught to sound out words that they do not recognize automatically throughout all stages of instruction.

The National Reading Panel specifies that the phonics instruction that is most beneficial to children is both explicit and systematic. In the National Reading Panel report, systematic phonics instruction was contrasted with instruction that is not systematic:
Systematic phonics instruction typically involves explicitly teaching students a prespecified set of letter-sound relations and having students read text that provides practice using these relations to decode words. Instruction lacking an emphasis on phonics instruction does not teach letter-sound relations systematically and selects text for children according to other principles. (pp. 2-92).

Benefits:

National Reading Panel findings reported that effective programs offer phonics instruction that…

- Help teachers explicitly and systematically instruct students in how to relate letters and sounds, how to break spoken words into sounds and how to blend sounds to form words.
- Help students apply their knowledge of phonics as they read words, sentences, and text.
- Help students apply what they learn about sounds and letters to their own writing.
- Can be adapted to the needs of individual students based on assessment.
- Include alphabetic knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, and the reading of text, and systematic phonics instruction.

Instruction is humane when students encounter a high degree of success. Code-emphasis programs more readily allow the teacher to provide each student with a higher degree of success in the reading process. When word reading is introduced in a code-emphasis approach program, **..students are taught an overt strategy-saying the sounds for each letter in the word in a left-to-right progression, then saying the blended sounds (at a slow rate, then) at a normal rate.** The code-emphasis approach facilitates the use of simple teaching procedures and allows for effective corrections. **The students learn a strategy that is used again and again**. (see chapter 8)

> During the beginning stage, the major part of instruction revolves around teaching students how to decode regular words. We recommend teaching students an overt strategy of sounding out words. **In sounding out**, the students start at the beginning of the word and say the sound corresponding to the first letter. **They then advance in a left-right progression, saying the sound for each successive letter and blending the sounds without pausing**. The blending results in a word such as Sam being sounded as "Sssssssaaaaaammmmmmm." Finally the blended word is said at a normal rate "Sam."

The following are preskills that help students to sound out words:

1. A knowledge of letter-sound correspondences in the word. (Note that word reading can begin as soon as the students know enough sounds of letters to form words. The students need not master all letter-sound correspondences before word reading begins.)
2. The ability to orally blend a series of sounds in which each sound is held several seconds with no pause (e.g., the teacher says "mmmaaannn" and the student says "mmmaaannn").
3. The ability to translate a series of connected sounds into a meaningful word (e.g., the teacher says "mmmaaan" and the student says "man").

It's Progressive. A gradual transition is made over a period of weeks from sounding out to sight-word reading in which the students do not vocally sound out a word before saying it at a normal rate. The imitating and translating skills are auditory skills. They can be presented verbally without any reference to printed material. The first week of instruction will consist primarily of letter-sound correspondence and auditory-skill training.

> **In summary**, decoding instruction begins with the teacher presenting component skills that students will need when reading words. The teacher presents letter-sound correspondences and auditory skills that students will employ when reading words. The initial word-reading instruction involves the teacher instructing the students how to sound out regular words. A gradual transition is made from exercises in which students vocally sound out words with a good deal of teacher prompting to later exercises in which students read words independently without vocally sounding them out. The key teacher behavior is to provide students with adequate practice to facilitate high accuracy before proceeding to new steps. (2004)

Comprehension: Comprehension instruction on a wider range of topics can and should be presented verbally. All students can benefit from oral instruction in a wider range of comprehension and vocabulary skills than can be presented in written exercises… To prepare (at-risk) students for the tasks they will encounter, a teacher should provide instruction in basic language and vocabulary.

Finally…

> The translation of research into practice is still in an early stage. While the findings of the National Reading Panel have provided general guidance on teaching reading, the research findings do not yet provide specific guidance regarding how to put together all the elements that constitute a reading program that can bring success to all children. Just because a program is based on scientifically based reading research does not mean that the authors have put these elements together in a manner that will provide success to all children.

For Big Ideas in chapters Six through Twelve, read the full chapters. These chapters are full of details on how to teach. Highlighting Big Ideas in these chapters is impossible.

For additional in-depth information, like: Phonic Analysis, Structural Analysis, Fluency and Passage Reading, more on Comprehension, and Content-Area Reading, see entire book of 23 chapters.