Dr. Nancy Fordham, Advisor

The purpose of this study was to research the perceptions and experiences of educators who use Direct Instruction (DI) to teach reading in an urban elementary classroom. Drill, rhythm and repetition are the pillars of Direct Instruction. Research has indicated that Direct Instruction is effective in urban elementary schools.

This research involved interviewing four elementary educators within the same urban school. The subjects were a second grade teacher, a fourth grade teacher, a sixth grade teacher/Direct Instruction Coordinator, and the school’s principal. They were interviewed separately. A total of eight interview questions were asked of each participant. The interview responses revealed four resounding common themes: the educators’ belief in the effectiveness of the Direct Instruction program, the value of the program’s emphasis on structure and script, the built-in classroom discipline components, and the educators’ enthusiasm toward the use of Direct Instruction and how it enhances their classroom environments. The educators’ common responses to the interview questions brought validity to their claims, which were supported by education research literature.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Many schools today are struggling when it comes to educating young children in America’s urban communities. The leaders of these schools are demanding more funds, while claiming to be doing the best with what they have. Many believe that the answer is financial, and some solutions are indeed costly. Are there efficient strategies and solutions available that can meet the needs of these children now?

Statement of the problem

At the core of the struggle is the school’s inability to teach each and every child to read. Frustration can be found at all levels, from administration, to teachers, to parents, and most damaging, to the children. It should not be said that schools are not trying. Many schools are implementing new, innovative programs created by education specialists and researchers. However, teachers are not seeing the improvement they had anticipated. In spite of the frequent use of group discussions and creative test-taking strategies, some teachers are realizing that their students still are not able to comprehend what they have read, communicate what they have heard, or show what they have learned.

Statement of the thesis

In terms of early childhood learning and academic development, learning to read is a key component. For our children to become more successful in reading, it is important to explore the efficacy of many methodologies, include important keys in the
implementation of drill, rhythm, and repetition in the elementary curriculum. Drill, rhythm, and repetition are the pillars of a teaching strategy called Direct Instruction (DI). “If the child hasn’t learned, the teacher hasn’t taught” (Lindsay, 2002, para 1). Therefore, this study examined the perceptions of 3 educators and the principal, all advocates of Direct Instruction, in one urban school regarding the value of this teaching methodology.

The researcher chose this site because it was a Direct Instruction school. When she contacted the principal, she informed her of this study and the principal then chose three teachers who were proponents of Direct Instruction.

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What are these educators’ perceptions of Direct Instruction?
2. How does Direct Instruction impact their students’ reading in the areas of fluency and comprehension?
3. What suggestions do these educators offer regarding Direct Instruction?

Rationale

This thesis will allow for this future reading specialist to gain theoretical knowledge needed to effectively serve today’s underprivileged children. Direct Instruction has been boasted by several of the researcher’s colleagues as a tool to consider throughout this process. During the eight years that this researcher has taught in urban classrooms, she has been exposed to several different curriculums, ideologies,
and methods, in terms of reading instruction. Direct Instruction is an important, but controversial method of reading instruction. This thesis was designed for the researcher to gain understanding of why these educators are such strong advocates of this approach. It provided an up-close, in-depth understanding of its advantages and/or disadvantages through interviews with four Direct Instruction proponents.

Some of the schools that use this teaching method have had to face criticism for its tightly scripted teaching lessons (Viadero, 2002). However, some studies of Direct Instruction have found many positive effects on student achievement in reading, language arts, and mathematics. The schools that extensively use this program have mainly been schools in high poverty areas. This researcher believes it is important to listen to the voice of those educators who have had positive experience with Direct Instruction in such settings. Their insights can be valuable in framing policy and curriculum.

Definition of Terms

**Direct Instruction** (DI)-A teaching method in which the academically focused classroom is teacher-directed. The teacher uses sequenced and structured materials to facilitate learning. The teaching activities used are those in which there are clear goals for the students, instruction time is sufficient, content is extensively covered, students' performance is monitored, and they receive academically-oriented feedback (Rosenshine, 1979).
Sing-Along-Songs - Educational, rhythmic songs which foster language, memory, musical development, and pleasure. These songs are led by the teacher (Moomaw, 1997).

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study included the location of the school, which is adjacent to several housing projects and includes families of lower income. Education may not be the first focus in these families. As a result, students may be academically under-prepared. Finally, the teachers selected were all proponents of Direct Instruction. This could be viewed as possible bias. All of these things can prove to either be advantages or limitations in proving the effectiveness or validity of this research.

Contribution to Theory and Practice

The philosophy behind Direct Instruction is “If the child hasn’t learned, the teacher hasn’t taught” (Lindsay, 2002, p. 1). This philosophy is embraced by the writer/researcher who, for over seven years, has practiced this technique that seems to show that even the most disadvantaged children can excel in reading.

This study is qualitative in nature, while most information educational researchers have gathered is not. This study provides a closer look at the opinions, viewpoints, and attitudes of Direct Instruction practitioners.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce Direct Instruction (DI) as one model for teaching reading. This chapter is divided into six different sections. The chapter begins with the definition of Direct Instruction. The second section discusses the teaching methodology embedded in Direct Instruction and the importance of drill, rhythm, and repetition. The third aspect of this chapter discusses the characteristics and principles of Direct Instruction. The next section explains why Direct instruction is used in schools nationwide today. The fifth section describes the various studies related to Direct Instruction. The last section highlights the results of selected studies and the effectiveness of Direct instruction.

The Definitions of Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction grew out of the work of Siegfried Engelmann and Carl Bereiter in 1996 (Kozloff & Bessellieu, 2000, para 1). Direct Instruction was later launched as a teaching methodology in 1968 (Borsuk, 2001, p. 1). It was originally called DISTAR - Direct Instruction System for Teaching Arithmetic and Reading- and was targeted at at-risk early learners (Education Digest, 1997, p. 59). Even though this was the case, all children, gifted to average, developmentally delayed and disadvantaged, have excelled in the program, according to this source.
The DISTAR curriculum materials used in this approach are designed to explicitly teach general principles of reading and problem solving strategies. Teachers and paraprofessional aides are trained to teach these programs in a fast-paced, dynamic fashion with high frequencies of unison group responses and systematic correction of student errors (Becker & Gersten, 2001, para 3). Over the past three decades the original curriculum has been revised numerous times and the new curriculum has developed starting at the pre-kindergarten level through the sixth grade.

A comprehensive school reform model known as the Direct instruction model was developed from the Direct instruction curriculum. The Direct Instruction model represents a highly structured approach to early-childhood education with an emphasis on high levels of academic engaged time through small group instruction in reading, oral language, and arithmetic (Becker & Gersten, 2001, para 3). This model has also implemented remedial and science programs, which are used for the higher grades. Several other disciplines have implemented Direct Instruction, including reading, language, math, writing, social studies, and legal concepts (Kosloff & Bessellieu, 2000).

This model has been implemented in some 150 schools nationwide, and it is one of only a handful of comprehensive school reform models cited for having a solid research base (Viadero, 2002). The model emphasizes small group, face-
to-face instruction by a teacher using carefully sequenced, daily lessons, which utilize modern learning principles and advanced program strategies (Becker & Gersten, 2001, para 12). The major goal of the Direct Instruction Model is to improve the basic education of children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and thus increase their life options (Becker & Gersten, 2001, para 12).

Borsuk (2001) defines Direct Instruction as "a method that relies heavily on drills, repetition, and scripted materials that dictate almost exactly what both teachers and students are supposed to say" (p. 6). Direct Instruction favors a teacher-directed approach to instruction with explicit step-by-step instruction and mastery of each step. Direct Instruction has also been coupled with systematic and explicit phonics instruction (Hayden & Anderson, 1997). In Direct instruction, the teacher, in a face-to-face, reasonably formal manner, tells, shows, models, demonstrates, and teaches the skill to be learned (Kameenui, Jitendra, & Darch, 1995, p. 7). This highly vigorous, fast-paced method of teaching is viewed as a “hot topic “in education today.

The Teaching Style of Direct Instruction and the Importance of Drill, Rhythm and Repetition

Direct Instruction is a specific teaching style that has the following attributes:
• Homogeneous Skill Grouping: Children are grouped according to their levels of ability, rather than according to age or other factors. The belief is that children benefit most if they are grouped by ability and are able to follow the material.

• Scripted Class Sessions: Teachers use pre-designed scripts when teaching. The scripts are based on extensive research regarding student retention, and every aspect of every script is based upon results that were demonstrated through research. The great advantage of this approach is that every teacher using the script becomes the beneficiary of that research and will probably teach much more effectively than if left to his or her devices.

• Intense, Constant Student Interaction: The scripted sessions of stimulus/response pairings, wherein the teacher stimulates the class with a description of a concept, an illustration of the concept through an example, and finally a request that the class repeats the example. The class responds orally, usually as a group.

• Teaching to Mastery: The group does not move on until everyone in the group understands the material (WWW.Projectpro.com/ICR/Research/DI/Summary.htm).
Every day at schools that use Direct Instruction, students can be heard performing in "rapid-fire question-and-answer exchanges" with their teachers (Borsuk, 2001, p. 1). By clapping his hand or tapping a book, the teacher starts and maintains the beat or pulse at all times. This is the pulse of the learning activity. According to Borsuk, "each beat is followed by the sound of children’s voices in unison, providing a word, a phrase, or an answer" (p. 3). This is the sound of drill, rhythm, and repetition, which are the key components of Direct Instruction and, and according to some researchers, the keys to these children’s learning success. It is the teacher who is in command, as opposed to the instruction coming directly from a worksheet (Kameenui, Jitendra, & Darch, 1995, p. 7).

The above describes an example of spoken Direct Instruction. Music and singing are also effectively used in Direct Instruction. Composers of educational music materials have contributed for several decades to the education of young children. Rhythmic songs have been ingrained in the minds of students through the use of drill and repetition. Some of the best examples can be found on an ABC Television network educational series called “Schoolhouse Rock” (Disney, 2002). This series, created 30 years ago, sets educational songs to animation. Each song is of average length. The melodies are so catchy that one would find himself
humming or singing-along. Because of the repeated showings of each of these educational songs, rote memorization is the result.

According to Handy (2001), when reading patterned selections, "children rarely read haltingly in a word-by-word manner as they are able to process phrases and sentences as chunks of meaning" (p. 1). This explains why children love popular music and learn songs such as those in the Schoolhouse Rock series so quickly. Rhythmic speaking (rap) and songs indeed allow children to do this. Referring to the “Schoolhouse Rock” (Disney, 2002) series examples, songs like “Conjunction Junction, What’s Your Function”, “I’m Just a Bill”, “Three is a Magic Number”, and “A Noun is a Person, Place or Thing,” are memorized by children not just for their catchy, sing-along melodies, but also because of the beat, rhythm and repetition.

Handy (2001) also points out that children "role-play" themselves as successful readers by using patterned language materials found in songs. This process is enhanced by the teacher’s, and later the parent’s, use of repetition. Numerous experiences with patterned text facilitate the development of a dependable sight vocabulary through repeated exposure to that vocabulary in a dependable context. Favorite songs and chants, which are patterned and rhythmic, become a valuable resource when made a part of the daily classroom experience. Song lyrics become so much more when teachers make a connection
between singing and reading. Handy adds that the words provide clues that help children unlock text in other contexts (Handy, 2001).

Characteristics and Principles of Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction is successful because of its explicit rule-based instructional approach (Yu, Darch, & Rabren, 2002). Some specific features of Direct Instruction are:

- Presentation of an explicit problem-solving strategy
- Mastery teaching of each step in the strategy
- Development of specific correction procedures for student errors
- A gradual switch from teacher-directed to independent work
- Built-in cumulative review of previously taught concepts (Yu, Darch, & Rabren, 2002, p. 2)

There are also several commercial programs based on Direct Instruction prototypes implemented by the University of Oregon, such as the Reading Mastery, Expressive Writing, and Connecting Math Concepts from Science Research Associates, that are very popular and are used today (Education Digest, 1997). According to this source, these Direct Instruction prototypes usually require teachers to ask 300 or more questions in six small group sessions daily. Teachers must perform reading checks every five or ten lessons to ensure
students achieve 100% mastery. This technique allows the teacher the
opportunity to make sure each student is accurately on task with the lesson that
is being taught.

In the daily lessons of Direct Instruction, the program is comprised of
activities and features such as:

- Unison oral responding, that requires signals from the teacher and
  allows for wait or think time.
- Appropriate pacing to engage attention and reduce oral responding
  errors.
- Careful monitoring of students’ oral responses and independent
  seatwork
- Strategic diagnosing and correction of incorrect responses (Kameenui,

Planning and Preparation

The responsibilities of Direct Instruction teachers are indeed extensive,
making professional development and staff training necessary. The role of the
teacher in the implementation of Direct Instruction cannot be stressed enough.
The success of the model is directly related to the careful analysis and
organization of the instructional content (Stein & Carnine, 1998). It all sounds like
hard work, but the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards such as teacher satisfaction and overall academic improvement school-wide is a definite benefit.

As mentioned earlier, the classroom teacher serves as a conductor. The technique used by the teacher is highly interactive and energetic. A major factor in this is the teacher’s planning; which happens before the teaching. Although the planning process is not visible to the children, the product is effective interaction between the teacher and the students, along with the students’ mastery of each task (Kozloff & Bessellieu, 2000). According to Kameenui, Jitendra & Darch (2001), the following Direct Instruction program ideas must be used during the teacher’s planning: specifying objectives, devising strategies, developing teaching procedures, selecting examples, sequencing skills, and providing practice and review (p. 13). Kozloff and Bessellieu (2000) provide a step-by-step framework for planning and organizing Direct Instruction:

- The teacher will give “brief five-minute placement tests daily for each curriculum to ensure that each child begins with lessons for which he or she is prepared” (para. 4).

- Teachers spend time organizing the instruction in a logical-developmental sequence, in which “all of the concepts, rules and strategies that students need in any lesson have already been taught” (para. 5).
“Daily lessons should consist of short exercises from different strands” (para. 5).

“Instruction should move in a planful way from more teacher-guided to a more student-guided format” (para. 6).

“Short proficiency tests should be used about every ten lessons to ensure that all students have mastered the material and to determine which skills need firming. Frequent evaluation sustains the quality of instruction and students’ education” (para 7).

“As children’s capabilities develop and become more fluent, instruction will turn from a central focus on helping children learn to read and write to help them read and write to learn” (para. 7).

In terms of the physical classroom environment, Direct Instruction teachers group the students in six small groups. “This provides children with a high rate of opportunities to participate, to interact with peers, and to receive individual attention from the teacher” (Kozloff & Bessellieu, 2000, p. 2). This can also be viewed as clusters or stations, unlike the traditional authoritarian-teacher-styled desk setting of straight desks and chairs into rows throughout the classroom.

The most important organizational feature of Direct Instruction is scheduling time so that it is used efficiently and effectively. Researchers
Kameenui, Jitendra & Darch (1995) note that teachers must carefully schedule activities so that time isn’t spent on settling students down, transitioning between activities, or explaining rules. The length of the Direct Instruction lessons is commensurate with the activity levels and attention spans of children of different ages. “For example, a lesson from the Language for Learning curriculum in pre-K or kindergarten might be only twenty minutes long; however, a reading lesson in grade two might be thirty-five minutes long” (Kozloff & Bessellieu, 2000, para 2). Direct Instruction is consistent with the research literature on how to design instruction so that the children are able to construct (induce) concepts and generalizations” (Kozloff & Bessellieu, 2000, para 3).

Direct Teaching Behaviors

Direct Instruction’s (DI) recent research has found that teachers who produce more learning in students consistently use direct teaching behaviors. In providing Direct Instruction, more effective teachers tell the students what will be learned. They clearly identify the reason for each lesson and they go on to explain how the goal relates to the previous lessons. Direct Instruction teachers provide information about the nature of the skill or strategy to be learned. This is explained in terms of what a person does when using the skill/strategy. Direct
Instruction teachers then demonstrate or model the desired skill or strategy. A teacher’s thoughts while using the skill or strategy are verbalized and explained.

In terms of monitoring and assessment, Direct Instruction teachers actively monitor and give feedback to students during seatwork. They also provide ways for students to assess their own work performance so they learn to self-monitor. Direct Instruction teachers provide meaningful practice using a skill or strategy until a student can use it independently. These features are almost entirely teacher-based and are utilized only during a portion of a lesson when students are receiving the actual instruction (Kameenui, Jitendra & Darch, 1995).

Why Direct Instruction is Used

Among educators and administrators, reactions to Direct Instruction are mixed. In many schools, Direct Instruction seems to be popular and successful, prompting principals seeking school improvement to implement Direct Instruction in their schools. Yet, there are principals and school administrators spending more and more money to implement forms of “affective” and “cognitive” educational programs, while continuing to turn away from anything resembling Direct Instruction. Educational research indicates that children receiving Direct Instruction are much more likely to graduate from high school and to be accepted into college and to show long-term gains in reading, language and math scores (Stein & Carnine, 1998).
Two issues that have always been of great concern to administrators and teachers is classroom management and staff development. Direct Instruction has proven to be a useful tool in terms of classroom management. The high level of activity and interaction has enhanced the teacher’s ability to effectively manage the classroom (Stein & Carnine, 1998). New teachers entering the classroom have to deal with the task of classroom management. In terms of evaluation of teacher effectiveness, classroom management is a very important aspect. Teachers lacking the strategies needed to manage a classroom can find built-in strategies in the Direct Instruction program.

The Studies Related to Direct Instruction

Kozloff and Bessellieu (2000) conclude that as children advance developmentally, instruction moves from more explicit (teacher directed) to more implicit (discovery) learning formats. A basic principle in Direct Instruction is to provide only as much teacher structuring as children need. Studies have shown that choral reading (another feature of Direct Instruction) enhances children’s reading ability. According to Kozloff & Bessellieu, when teachers engage students in choral readings of rhymes and rhythms, students are able to associate the symbols with the sounds they hear in these words. These researchers also suggest four reasons for the use of choral reading:

- “Each child is able to learn from both hearing and speaking.”
• “Each child has more opportunities to experience the material.”
• “The teacher can move easily monitoring the proficiency of each child.”
• “Each child learns that individual achievement contributes to group achievement” (Kozloff & Bessellieu, 2000, p. 6).

The Results and the Effectiveness

When Engelmann started Direct Instruction in 1968, he used it to help inner-city children learn and excel, but it has proven to be successful for children regardless of economic level (Borsuk, 2001). Borsuk’s research shows that numerous studies of Direct Instruction have found significant positive effects on student achievement in reading, language arts, and mathematics. Other studies and research from Borsuk have proven that Direct Instruction has out-performed all other models in language, math computation, reading comprehension, and math problem-solving.

A study by Viadero (2002) focused on Baltimore, where six of the city’s lowest achieving schools began using Direct Instruction programs the fall of 1996. The number of schools using the program in that city grew from six in the fall of 1996 to twenty three in 2002.

As more and more schools used Direct Instruction, the evidence has proven to be very convincing. One large program is Project Follow Through.
completed in the 1970s. This project examined a variety of programs and educational philosophies including Direct Instruction to learn how to improve education of disadvantaged children in K-3. The program that generated the best results in general was Direct Instruction (Faro, 2001).

The other program types, which closely resemble today’s educational strategies and have labels like “holistic,” “student-centered learning,” “learning to learn,” “active learning” were inferior. Students receiving Direct Instruction did better than those in all other programs when tested in reading, arithmetic, spelling and language. In terms of higher-order thinking and self-esteem, Direct Instruction improved students’ cognitive ability dramatically and also showed the highest improvement in self-esteem scores (Faro, 2001).

Direct Instruction teachers set the stage for their students’ success. “If a child hasn’t learned, then the teacher hasn’t taught”(Lindsay, 2002, p. 1) is the philosophy behind this educational technique that, according to advocates, challenges students and shows that even the most disadvantaged children can excel. According to Faro (2001), an inner city San Diego teacher named Fazio, who taught immigrant adults and kindergarteners, states that the Direct Instruction method allowed her at-risk students to perform far above grade level in both reading and math. One Hispanic English language-learning student of Fazio’s taught her preschool son to read fluently. When that boy became a
kindergartener, Fazio volunteered daily in his class to train and assist the teacher with the Direct Instruction method, which Fazio utilizes. By the end of that school year, all of the multi-ethnic kindergarteners and first graders were reading above the grade level.

Educators are continually searching for effective instructional tools and techniques to serve their academically low performing students and students with special needs. Direct Instruction is an effective approach to teaching academic skills and strategies to students with learning and behavior problems (Yu, Darch, & Rabren, 2002). This study investigated the effectiveness of a pre-correction procedure in teaching decoding skills to students with learning and behavior problems. Six students with learning and behavior problems from a public school in southeast Alabama participated in this study.

A multiple-baseline single subject research method was used. In the baseline phase, Direct Instruction was the primary teaching method. In the treatment phase, pre-corrections were added to evaluate their effects, i.e., correcting a student so mastery of the skill can be achieved prior to assessments of accuracy in reading, retention, and on-task behavior. Experimentation lasted for twenty-one days. The results indicated that using pre-correction as an intervention improves students’ accuracy in reading sounds and words and increases on-task behavior (Yu, Darch, & Rabren, 2002).
Milwaukee’s Siefert Elementary is a school that uses Direct Instruction. As a result of the implementation of Direct Instruction, the school’s results on test scores skyrocketed in just three years in reading, math and social studies (Borsuk, 2001). The results of a study done at this school show that the percentage of Seifert fourth graders who scored proficient or better in the reading on the state’s standardized test rose from 22% in 1997 to 57% in 1999-00. According to Borsuk, in math, the proficient or better score rose from 11% to 48% over the same period. In social studies, the increase was from 13% to 61%. In 1999-2000, 57% of the fourth graders scored proficient or better after DI was adopted.

In another study, the researchers found that the students who started in the Direct Instruction program as kindergarteners that year were reading on grade level by the end of third grade, and children who came to DI in second grade were reading close to grade level by the fifth grade (Viadero, 2002).

Schools using Direct Instruction, according to Videro’s (2002) research, are generally seeing gains in students’ learning according to a new package of studies that tracked the program in Florida, Maryland, and Texas. These studies looked at districts in four locations: Baltimore, Broward County in Florida, Fort Worth, and Houston, Texas, in which anywhere from 6-30 schools began using the programs in 1990.
In Broward County, Florida, Direct Instruction programs have been used as part of a broad strategy to help schools identified by the state as critically low performing. Six of the initial schools involved in the district’s assistance program since 1994-95 have improved sufficiently to be removed from the list. At these schools, the percentage of reading below grade level dropped from 37% in 1995 to 30% last year in 1996, and the average number of office referrals was trimmed by about one third (Education Digest, 1997).

In Baltimore, an alliance of six schools in 1997 began using Direct Instruction in combination with Core Knowledge - -an effort to identify and detail a rigorous, coherent body of knowledge that all elementary school children should learn. As a field-tested proven strategy for students in reading, writing, and math, Direct Instruction is a successful tool for accomplishing the goals of Core Knowledge (Education Digest, 1997).

Researchers documented similar gains in Fort Worth, where 61 schools in 1998 adopted either Direct Instruction reading programs or the Open Court reading program, a commercial program that also teaches reading systematically. Compared with the students in more traditional reading classes, the study found kindergarteners and first grade students in both new reading programs did better on nationally-normed reading tests (Education Digest, 1997).
In Houston, some of the district’s most disadvantaged schools began using Direct Instruction reading techniques with pupils in the kindergarten, first, and second grades through a program called "Rodeo Institute for Teacher Excellence" or RITE. The numbers of schools using the program in that city grew from six in the fall of 1996 to 20 in 2001 (Viadero, 2002).

The conclusion drawn by the researchers was that RITE accelerated the pace of students’ prereading and reading skills in kindergarten and first grade. What is more interesting is the students whose scores improved the most were those who had been in the program the longest (Viadero, 2002).

The above examples paint the same story. They indicate that Direct Instruction works, providing rapid gains in reading, gains that are persistent, and gains that increase the students’ self-esteem, because children notice that they have a real skill of which they can be proud (Borsuk, 2001).

Summary

The above examples also provide data of a more quantitative nature. This qualitative study will examined Direct Instruction teachers’ perceptions of the method. The purpose of this chapter was to introduce Direct Instruction as one model for teaching reading. The studies show that Direct Instruction is a method that is productive. For review, the guiding questions are:
1. What are these educators’ perception of Direct Instruction?

2. How does Direct Instruction impact their students’ reading in the areas of fluency and comprehension?

3. What suggestions do these educators’ offer regarding Direct Instruction?

Direct Instruction involves homogeneous skill grouping, scripted class sessions, intense contact interactions, and Direct Instruction teaches until the skill is mastered. In addition to the attributes listed above, music and song are utilized to teach students to read. One example of the integration of music and song as a medium is the highly successful “School House Rock” television series. This program was a practical application of one component of Direct Instruction.

Direct Instruction is successful because it employs a rule- based instructional approach to pedagogy. For example, Direct Instruction gradually switches from teacher directed instruction to independent student directed learning. Regarding planning and preparation, Direct Instruction teachers are given extensive training and are expected to be sources of information for their students. In addition to being sources of knowledge, Direct Instruction teachers are effective because they tell the students what they are expected to learn. Teachers clearly identify the reason for each lesson and explain how the goal relates to the previous lessons. Teacher assists students in monitoring and
assessing their work performance. Direct Instruction is used because research has proven that children receiving Direct Instruction are much more likely to graduate from high school and to be accepted into college. Studies have shown that the Direct Instruction method of choral reading enhances student reading abilities. Choral reading engages students’ in reading rhymes, and rhythms. This method helps students’ associate symbols with the sounds that they hear.

Finally, research has proven that instruction based on the Direct Instruction method was extremely successful in urban schools and that it even helped students in language, math computation, reading comprehension and math problem solving. Also, Direct Instruction helped students in the areas of higher order thinking, self esteem, and cognition. The Direct Instruction method has been implemented across the United States and has proven to increase students’ performance on standardized tests. The next chapter will explore the methods and procedures of Direct Instruction.
CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this investigation was to determine educators’ perceptions of Direct Instruction in the elementary reading curriculum. Drill, rhythm, and repetition are the key components of Direct Instruction (DI).

The use of open-ended interview questions was the method used with four participants—- a second, a fourth, and a sixth (also the DI Coordinator for the school) grade teacher, and the building principal - - to explore the success of the implementation of Direct Instruction in the elementary curriculum. Research was compiled and organized to demonstrate the effectiveness of Direct Instruction in one urban school. The participants were interviewed to determine their perceptions of the effectiveness of the Direct Instruction reading program.

The interview questions were derived from the study’s guiding questions in order to ascertain the reasons participants were so enthusiastic about Direct Instruction of this study, in order to gather the information to bring validity to their claims. The results of the interviews were audio taped and transcribed and then grouped into themes, to better organize the information that was gathered.

Research indicates that Direct Instruction is successful because of its explicit rule-based, drill-like instruction (Handy, 2001). Direct Instruction provides students the opportunity to learn “the fast way.” This chapter describes
the research design, selection of the participants, data sources, and data analysis.

The research questions that guided this study are:

1. What are educator's perceptions of Direct Instruction?
2. How does Direct Instruction impact reading in the areas of fluency and comprehension?
3. What suggestions do educators offer regarding Direct Instruction?

Methods

Research Design

Qualitative research was utilized in this study. According to Creswell (1998), "qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting" (p.21). Creswell (1998) describes the process a researcher uses when choosing a qualitative study, which is as follows:

- He/She selects a qualitative study because of the nature of the research question.
- He/She chooses a qualitative study because the topic needs to be explored.
• He/She uses a qualitative study because of the need to present a detailed view of the topic.

• He/She chooses a qualitative approach in order to study individuals in their natural setting.

• He/She selects a qualitative approach because of interest in writing in a literary style.

• He/She employs a qualitative study because of sufficient time and resources.

• He/She selects a qualitative approach because audiences are receptive to qualitative research.

• He/She employs a qualitative approach to emphasize the researcher’s role as an active learner who can tell the story from the participants’ view rather than as an “expert” who passes judgment on participants (p.21).

Setting and Participants

Setting

One elementary school in Northwest Ohio was selected for this study. This public school has been open since the early 1900’s. It serves K-6 grades with two classroom teachers per grade level. This school was selected primarily because it is a public Direct Instruction children school, populated by urban
children. When she contacted the principal, she informed her of this study and the principal then chose three teachers who were proponents of Direct Instruction. This school has adopted the Direct Instruction program exclusively as its reading program and has been an advocate of Direct Instruction for several years. All of its teachers are required to complete an extensive week-long Direct Instruction training facilitated by an accomplished DI coach.

Participants

The researcher contacted the principal by phone to inform her of the study and that she would like to collect data from teachers in the building. According to the principal, all teachers on site were Direct Instruction advocates and she selected three whom she felt would be willing to participate in the interview process. In addition, she agreed to be interviewed herself. The principal chose the first participant, a second grade teacher, had seven years experience. The next participant, a fourth grade teacher, was a first year teacher. Finally, the sixth grade teacher, who was also the Direct Instruction Coordinator, had three years experience. The principal selected these female teachers and the other staff member based on their years of experience with Direct Instruction in this urban school. The researcher visited the school to introduce herself to the principal and participating teachers. During this visit, the interview date and times were scheduled. It was determined that 45 minute interviews would take place across
four days the following week during teachers’ planning time. As DI instructors, each participant underwent an annual one-week training session prior to the school year, as well as follow-up sessions on a monthly basis. After the approval of Human Subjects, the researcher returned to begin data collection.

Data Sources

Four individual interviews were conducted. Each took place in the interviewee’s classroom or office at a pre-arranged time based on their convenience. The second, fourth and sixth grade teachers, along with the principal, participated in this study. The teachers were asked eight open-ended interview questions, which were derived from the three research questions that are guiding this study. Patton (1990) describes open-ended questions as those in which the respondent is free to choose how to answer the question. Due to the nature of roles, the questions asked of the principal and Direct Instruction Coordinator varied slightly from those that were asked of the second and fourth grade teachers. (See Appendix B.) The responses from all of them formed the primary data generated in this study. Each interview began with a general question that probed participants’ thoughts about Direct Instruction. Subsequent questions dealt with their perceptions of the positive and negative aspects of Direct Instruction, how Direct Instruction compared to other reading programs,
and how Direct Instruction impacted both the students’ and teachers’ academic success. The remaining questions were designed to determine these educators background with Direct Instruction. The interview questions were developed based on the major sections discussed in the Review of Literature found in Chapter II of this paper. Questions covered the design and arrangement of the teaching style of Direct Instruction, as well as the characteristics and principles of Direct Instruction. (See Appendix A.)

Data Analysis

The open-ended interview questions were conducted over a four-day period, accompanied by an audio tape recorder. All interviews were transcribed immediately following the interviews. The researcher then examined and sorted the responses for recurring themes. Using the constant comparative method suggested by Glaser & Strauss (1967). During the analogies, the researcher highlighted key categories that related to the study’s guiding questions and later formally linked responses to each question. These are detailed in Chapter four. After reviewing both the audio recordings and the transcribed notes of the interviews, the researcher found the responses from all data sources to fall into four dominant themes/categories. The themes were then given a number, corresponding to the number with which they were originally listed. In cut-and-
paste fashion, the contents of the transcripts were re-organized and pasted onto colored poster board.

Summary

The interview questions were developed based on research of the effectiveness of Direct Instruction. The information gathered from the interviews served as a way to gain knowledge about Direct Instruction. Each questioned asked allowed the researcher to become more knowledgeable of Direct Instruction as a reading program in an urban school. Educators are always trying to find effective ways to teach today’s children.
CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Educators in urban settings are constantly searching for ways to teach children how to read successfully. Many administrators, teachers, and parents are working overtime trying to implement reading programs that will enhance each student’s comprehension level as well as their fluency. However, teachers are becoming very frustrated and this affects the children.

This chapter, explains how Direct Instruction has been successful in one urban public school, according to the educators who were interviewed for this study. Each participant was asked eight questions (See Appendices A&B) that were extensions of the three research questions that guided this study:

1. What are these educators’ perceptions of Direct Instruction?
2. How does Direct Instruction impact their students’ reading in the areas of fluency and comprehension?
3. What suggestions do these educators offer regarding Direct Instruction?

In answering the research questions, the findings of the study were divided into four categories (themes):

1. The effectiveness of the Direct Instruction reading program.
2. The value of the program’s structure and scripted method.
3. The program’s built-in discipline component.
4. The participants’ enthusiastic perceptions of the program and how it has enhanced their classroom environment.

The interviewees consisted of a second, fourth, and sixth grade teacher, along with their building principal. They were all interviewed over a four-day span in their respective classrooms or offices.

The Effectiveness of the Direct Instruction Reading Program

The interview questions that pertain to this theme are one, two, three, five, seven, and eight: (See Appendix A.)

1. What do you think about Direct Instruction?

2. Describe some positive and negative points about Direct Instruction.

3. Does Direct Instruction help an urban child learn to read better than other programs?

5. In terms of students’ progress in reading, have you noticed any changes? Explain.

7. How does the Direct Instruction reading program impact your effectiveness as a teacher?

8. How well do early elementary students adapt to this reading program? How can you tell?

In the interviews, the researcher found a consistent belief among the participants that the Direct Instruction reading program was effective in each
classroom. The participants were asked to discuss whether they had noticed any progress or changes in their students’ reading abilities due to the use of Direct Instruction. The fourth grade teacher stated:

    In January/February I noticed the biggest changes. The students started off by reading 55 words a minute. Now, most of them are reading 130 words a minute with two mistakes. All of my high students passed the proficiency. I broke down in tears when I saw the result. Compared to last year, when I didn’t use Direct Instruction, the results are great. It makes a difference to me.

    The second grade teacher stated:

    Halfway through the year, my students went into the third grade reading book because of Direct Instruction.

    The second grade teacher not only saw improvement in reading ability, but also in self-esteem. She shared:

    I just remember that kids would really get frustrated – -kick the chair- - and they were very vocal about the fact that they couldn’t sound out the word. Whereas, now they aren’t intimidated by the word. They sound it out. I’m talking about words that are not typical 2nd grade words. If they can’t, they aren’t devastated by it, so their self-esteem is higher.
The sixth grade teacher also serves as the Direct Instruction Coordinator for the school. Her responses reflected not just her classroom, but also the school as a whole:

You can see how much they are improving and how their fluency is flowing and how well their vocabulary enhances. Our kids can read a lot better than they could in the beginning of the school year. As the Direct Instruction Coordinator, I have not used any other programs other than the basic phonics - something similar to Direct Instruction, but not Direct Instruction - but I have found Direct Instruction to be much more effective.

She goes on to provide a helpful statistic:

In terms of effectiveness, our scores have increased from 13% to 31%.

One interview question asked each participant to describe both positive and negative points about Direct Instruction. None of the participants offered negative points. The positive points supported their strong beliefs in the effectiveness of Direct Instruction.

The fourth grade teacher pointed out a positive, stating:

It’s easy to individually assess students. It is a more individual approach when you are grading, because you hear everyone. The students get a
chance to read on their own and answer comprehension questions on their own.

The second grade teacher pointed out:

Direct Instruction makes sense to my students, so I very much like that. The kids seem to pick it up easier and much faster than the year before, when I wasn’t teaching Direct Instruction.

The principal offered some insight about reading materials the school’s teacher had formerly used:

We used the Silver Burdett Ginn reading materials, which do not give the kids a solid phonics base. I would say the real plus with Direct Instruction is the kids are getting a phonics foundation. If they get the phonics base, they will be great readers. Direct Instruction gives them a phonics base so that they can learn to decode and to blend. Because they don’t have the experience or the home training with literature, they can start off more by having that base and go on to build on it.

When asked if grasping the phonics base in kindergarten would indeed result in second graders reading at the third grade level, the principal responded:

Definitely, which means reading comprehension is up, fluency is up, and everything just starts flowing.
The sixth grade teacher was the veteran Direct Instruction instructor of the three teachers. She mentioned that in her three years of teaching Direct Instruction, she had not found any negative points. She stated positive points to be:

Students can read 100 words in less than one minute, two hundred words in less than two minutes — without making more than three errors. Also, it teaches students to spell correctly and develop skills to have better memorization of phonics, sounds, prefixes, affixes, and also suffixes.

The Value of the Program’s Structure and Scripted Method

The interview questions related to this theme are:

2. Describe some positive and negative points about Direct Instruction.
3. How does Direct Instruction help an urban child learn to read better than other programs?
5. In terms of students’ progress in reading, have you noticed any changes? Explain.
7. How does the Direct Instruction reading program impact your effectiveness as a teacher?
8. How well do early elementary students adapt to this reading program? How can you tell?
Direct Instruction is a method that relies heavily on drills, repetition, and scripted materials that dictate almost exactly what both teachers and students are supposed to say (Borsuk, 2001). Each participant in this study embraced the importance of the teacher’s role in Direct Instruction. Consistent in all of the interviewees’ responses was the value that was placed on the program’s structure, most importantly, its scripted method. The sixth grade teacher stressed the importance of the scripted method stating:

“If you do anything that is different from the script, it will not be effective.”

The principal echoed this sentiment stating:

If Direct Instruction is not directly implemented, the scores will not be the same because of the way they have it scripted; the guarantee is to do it the way they have it. So if you follow everything, which includes the behavior end of it all, you will have great outcomes.

The fourth grade teacher addressed other purposes for the scripted method stating:

Because the school is so proficiency-based, the scripted lessons are necessary. It isn’t always fun, but it serves its purpose. Yet, it is not so scripted that you can’t use materials outside of the curriculum. If you just read the script, you will be fine. It’s pretty easy and self-explanatory.
In terms of Direct Instruction’s structure, many of the interviewees pointed out that they are not the only benefactors; the students seem to need and even embrace the presence of structure in this program. The second grade teacher pointed out that the structure of Direct Instruction allows her students to learn it quickly:

They catch on so fast, even the new students - - if they see the other students answering together, they just chime in. This is all “gotten” within the first day. There are no surprises. The students know what is expected and what they have to do. My students learn through that rhythmic structured technique.

The fourth and sixth grade teacher both unknowingly made the same statement:

“These kids need structure in order to know where they are going.”

The principal felt that this program reflects a deeper need for structure with these students:

Children in the urban schools really need structure because they don’t have that. Direct Instruction offers every amount of structure possible. They want it. They want to know what is happening next. You can tell the difference in a Direct Instruction classroom compared to a
regular classroom. If you go to one of our regular 6th grade classrooms, you would definitely see a difference.

**The Program’s Built-in Discipline Component**

The interview questions that relate to this theme are: two, three, and seven.

2. Describe some positive and negative points about Direct Instruction.

3. Does Direct Instruction help an urban child learn to read better than other programs?

7. How does the Direct Instruction reading program impact your effectiveness as a teacher?

According to Stein and Carnine (1998), two issues that have always been of great concern to administrators and teachers are classroom management and staff development. Direct Instruction has proven to be a useful tool in terms of classroom management. The high level of activity and interaction has enhanced the teachers’ ability to effectively manage the classroom. In schools where students’ classroom behavior was once a problem, Direct Instruction has helped it diminish greatly. Discipline, or classroom management, has always been a major issue within the teaching profession. An advantage of Direct Instruction, that each of the study participants pointed out, was the built-in discipline component. The second grade teacher stated:
I think it helps me as a teacher; it has given me tools for discipline in my classroom—without standing there and yelling all day. One other thing about Direct Instruction is that classroom discipline seems to be built into it. I like the fact that you are not just sitting there trying to call on one or two students. Everybody gets a chance. They all get to answer. There is no one person answering, they all get a turn. That took care of all of that “edginess”—kids saying “that’s not fair,” or I raised my hand first—which decreases behavior problems in the classroom.

The fourth grade teacher adds:

I like the discipline part of it. I like the way they all answer together like the repetition part of it. They have to stay together, which cuts down on a lot of the discipline. These kids scream for structure. They like it. When I say “get ready,” they all snap to attention.

The sixth grade teacher loves the way that the discipline is built right in.

She adds:

Discipline is another important factor. Direct Instruction implements discipline into the curriculum via STAR

S- Stay in your seat
T- Stay on task
A-Answer on the signal

R- Respect others’ turns

This is a classroom rule that we use as the basics of teaching this program. So if you just follow those rules, then it works.

The principal loved the fact that Direct Instruction has the discipline part so embedded into the curriculum. She adds:

If you use Direct Instruction and you do it the way that they say with the praise instead of “no,” you will see a big difference in behavior in the classroom because teachers aren’t being negative; they are being positive and kids love that and they need that reinforcement. In my second grade class - - the low functioning - - what we call Title 1, Integrated Language Arts classroom, a new teacher implemented Direct Instruction. At the beginning of the year, these kids had a lot of behavioral problems. In their math class, they have two different teachers, but when the other teacher had those same kids in reading - - using Direct Instruction - - I didn’t see any problems. That is another piece to show you - - that she was using the right kind of praise, pacing, and holding their interest. I could just stand at the door and hear it. They are all participating, so the children are into it. They like the
structure. If it is set in the beginning of the school year, it is easier for them to get used to it.

The Participants’ Enthusiastic Perceptions of the Program & How Direct Instruction Has Enhanced Their Classroom Environment

The interview questions that relate to this theme are: one, two, five, and seven.

1. What do you think about Direct Instruction?

2. Describe some positive and negative points about Direct Instruction.

5. In terms of students’ progress in reading, have you noticed any changes? Explain.

7. How does the Direct Instruction reading program impact your effectiveness as a teacher?

It is always important to teachers that they feel good about themselves as teachers. Direct Instruction has proven itself to do just that. The sixth grade teacher states:

I had students who would ask questions in the beginning of the year and now they are answering their own questions because they feel better and they feel more confident. They are more eager to read. They enjoy checking out books—chapter books from the library. Their book
reports are more detailed, both orally and written. They all want to read. I feel bad when I can’t get to everyone.

The fourth grade teacher agrees with the sixth grade teacher, stating:

The parents are pleased and excited for their children and the students enjoy reading at home. The students’ confidence is higher and parents are much happier. Students felt good. There is a lot of reading in the fourth grade, and the students are totally comfortable. Students really see their own improvement. It has also made me feel better about my teaching ability and I can actually see it on paper. I can see the students in the classroom performing better in all areas; so do the students. I try to pump them up as much as I can in the classroom and then the principal will come in and see how well they are doing. It just makes them feel good, and I feel better.

The second grade teacher is the veteran of the group:

I have been teaching for 13 years - - seven of those years have been Direct Instruction. I would say that all of my beneficial years have been in the years that I have taught Direct Instruction. I like the fact that students have to answer back to you after you have asked a question from the story. It has made me a much happier teacher because I haven’t yelled and the kids know what is expected of them. The program builds in what you
need to verbalize to them, so that they know what to do. So I think it has made me an even more effective teacher, because it has everything lined up for you, it cuts out the guesswork for you as a teacher, so you are “boom” ready to go. I can actually teach.

The principal adds:

Last year, we had a lot of feedback from parents of the fourth and second graders. They were happy about the Direct Instruction reading program, because they noticed the change in their kids. Their kids would never have books at home, and now they want to go to the library and they want to read on their own. The fourth grade teacher was very impressed by the outcomes that she had with her class by teaching Direct Instruction.

Educational research demonstrates that children receiving Direct Instruction are much more likely to graduate from high school, be accepted into college, and show long-term gains in reading, language and math scores (Stein & Carnine, 1998). Principals and teachers embrace Direct Instruction for it provides a rationale for the integration of curriculum principles with effective teaching practices along with criteria for evaluating and selecting curriculum materials based on those principles (Stein & Carnine, 1998).
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to research the perceptions of advocates who use Direct Instruction to teach reading in one urban elementary classroom. Drill, rhythm, and repetition are the pillars of this program that research has indicated are effective in urban elementary schools.

Direct Instruction is an essential reading program that research shows to be effective and beneficial to administrators, teachers, and students. The results of this study show that Direct Instruction works when used properly, at least among the teachers interviewed. This chapter summarizes the results of this study in which participants were interviewed regarding their perceptions of Direct Instruction. This chapter also contains conclusions drawn from the data analysis. Recommendations are also provided based on the scholarly research and data results.

Summary

The research questions guiding this study were illuminated through participants’ responses to the interview questions.

Research Question 1: What are these educators’ perceptions of Direct Instruction?

Research Question 2: How does Direct Instruction impact their students’ reading in the areas of fluency and comprehension?

Research Question 3: What do these educators offer regarding Direct Instruction?
The results from the teacher interviews acknowledged the importance of Direct Instruction as an enhancement of urban children’s reading education. All participants interviewed gave very positive feedback about Direct Instruction as a reading program and also stated that Direct Instruction enhanced their teaching abilities. The literature reviewed prior to conducting this study was indeed in alignment with the interviewees’ responses. From the interview responses, the researcher gleaned positive perceptions of Direct Instruction from these educators, who cited students’ increased comprehension and fluency reading levels, and learned disciplinary component, as value aspects of this methodology.

The interviewees embraced the idea of participating in this study. Teachers reported more overall teaching enthusiasm which had a great effect on the overall classroom learning environment. All noticed a change in their instructional effectiveness, in comparison to years prior (when other reading methods were taught). They all seemed anxious to share their experiences with Direct Instruction as if it was a secret of which only few were aware.

The most surprising aspect of the findings was how each interviewee found a dual purpose/outcome in implementing Direct Instruction: the improvement of student behavior in the classroom. This aspect provided even more reason for the instructor to continue using this method.
A highlight of the data collection experience was the initial observation of Direct Instruction in the same urban setting as the interviews. Going into this observation, the researcher prepared by reviewing literature on Direct Instruction. The literature seemed to glorify this program, making it seem too good to be true. The researcher expected to find holes and glitches in either the program design, or the skill of the facilitators.

The interview questions were aimed at eliciting both the positive and negative aspects of Direct Instruction. It was important for the researcher to find out how other teachers felt about Direct Instruction. Many times, teachers only reflect on their own instructional effectiveness when failure is present. The researcher of this study feels that is not just negative experiences that invoke reflection. Positive experiences can also cause one to consider other possibilities. This research experience was so positive that it was very easy to develop recommendations for further study/research.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of urban educators currently using Direct Instruction as an effective model for teaching urban children to read. Direct Instruction is a method that relies heavily on drills, repetition, and scripted materials that dictate almost exactly what both the
teachers and students are supposed to say (Borsuk, 2001). In the researcher’s observations, along with the interview responses, this method appears to be quite effective in the school site studied. The teachers involved in this study embraced the scripted component to the Direct Instruction method. Each of them pointed out that following the script was vital. It was indeed exciting and enlightening to view the process firsthand.

A program that proves to be effective in an at-risk environment should indeed be embraced and implemented. However, Direct Instruction is still absent in many of America’s urban schools. Even though it was targeted for at-risk learners, all children, gifted to average, developmentally delayed and disadvantaged have excelled in the program (Education Digest, 1997).

**Recommendations**

Teachers

The teachers in this study noted Direct Instruction to be an effective tool in their classrooms. In each class, improvement was found. They all made the choice to implement Direct Instruction into their curriculum. In spite of the success of these individuals, Direct Instruction has not been implemented in the school as a whole. Why now though, maybe- Politics? Resistance to change? Ignorance? Regardless of professional pre-service training, and the policies within each district, teachers who are employed to serve in urban schools should
attend local Direct Instruction training sessions. Yearly Direct Instruction conferences are held in Seattle and Portland. The cost for week-long training is reasonable and beneficial.

Being properly trained to teach Direct Instruction is essential. Direct Instruction is a very scripted method of teaching. Teachers must follow it accurately in order to generate the desired outcomes. Trained Direct Instruction instructors understand the process and the product. The challenge many people face as they go into training is the demanding pace and structure. Teachers who have taught longer would have the most problems adjusting to this new method, with the curriculum being so scripted.

Teachers in the urban environment must always embrace the belief that all students can learn, in spite of their home environments and cultural backgrounds. Teachers who hold on to biases related to urban children could allow those biases to affect their expectations of student achievement. New early childhood teachers who are placed in an urban school setting should be trained to teach Direct Instruction. It reinforces the belief that all students can learn. Indeed no child would be left behind.

Teacher Educators

Teacher educators should include Direct Instruction and it components in their pre-service training curriculum. The degree of inclusion could range from
overview to discussion, to research assignment, to practice. Many teacher educators teach courses that they are interested in, both in theory and practice. The more teacher educators complete the formal training in this method, the more courses could be developed in colleges and universities across the country.

Teacher educators should encourage pre-service teachers to investigate how effective Direct Instruction could be in schools nation-wide. By providing pre-service teacher with the recommendations made by the research, they will be aware of the appropriate techniques and methods for the use of Direct Instruction. Teacher educators should understand Direct Instruction enough to explain its unique components. Students preparing to do field experiences, methods, or student teaching should be able to obtain assistance if they are interested in learning more about Direct Instruction.

Educational researchers must continue to investigate the effectiveness of Direct Instruction in today’s schools. Longitudinal studies on the effects of a child’s early literacy training on academic achievement would be beneficial. Comparative studies on the effects of Direct Instruction in the urban, rural and/or suburban settings would be valuable. Studies on schools that have implemented DI instruction school-wide could prove the effectiveness of this method, along with pointing out any negative points that this method has to offer. None grew from this study.
References


Disney, Walt (Producer), (2002). The best of school house rock [Video]. United States: Walt Disney Buena Vista Home Entertainment


Appendix A

Open-ended questions for teacher
1. What do you think about Direct Instruction?

2. Describe some positive and negative points about Direct Instruction.

3. Does Direct Instruction help an urban child learn to read better than other programs?

4. How many years have you taught Direct Instruction?

5. In terms of student progress in reading - have you noticed any changes? Explain.

6. How much Direct Instruction training did you go through for you to become a DI instructor?

7. How does the Direct Instruction impact your effectiveness as a teacher?

8. How well do early elementary students adapt to the program? How can you tell?
Appendix B

Open-ended questions for Direct Instruction Program Coordinator and Principal
1. What do you think about Direct Instruction?

2. Describe some positive and negative points about Direct Instruction.

3. Does Direct Instruction help an urban child learn to read better than other programs?

4. How long has the school been open? How long have you been using Direct Instruction?

5. Did you try any other programs before Direct Instruction? If yes, how did they compare to Direct Instruction?

6. How was the decision made to implement Direct Instruction here at this school?

7. How does Direct Instruction impact the effectiveness of the teachers? How can you tell?

8. How much Direct Instruction training did you go through for you to become a DI instructor?
Appendix C

Consent Letter
Consent Letter
Administered to Teachers and Other Staff Members

Dear Participants:

You have been invited with no obligation to participate in a Qualitative Research Study conducted by Marla J. Berry-Johnson. The purpose of this study is to understand the process of Direct Instruction and its effectiveness. Fellow colleagues suggested that I contact this school site for insight and input.

Many American urban schools today are struggling to find effective ways to educate young children. At the elementary level, a key to a child’s academic development is learning to read. For children to become more successful at this endeavor, it is important and beneficial to explore the implementation of drill, rhythm, and rote in the elementary curriculum.

Data will be collected from a 2nd, 4th, and 6th grade teacher in your building, along with the DI Program Coordinator and the Principal. If you choose to participate, I would like you to join me in one interview with 8 open-ended questions. This process should last no longer than 45 minutes. This interview session will be audio taped with your permission and transcribed for further analysis.

Do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study either before participating or during the time you are participating. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. I would be happy to share my findings with you after the research is completed.

All the information pertaining to the information you provide will be kept confidential and will only be reported in qualitative analyses with no specific connections made to you. Any quotes will be identified by a fake name, not your actual name. At this point will your identity be revealed. All data will be stored in a locked personal file cabinet accessible only to me, the principal investigator. I will turn in raw data (with your identity removed) and analyses to my thesis committee chair. Original audiotapes will be destroyed after transcription is complete.

If further questions arise, contact below- (* please contact Chair of HSRB with questions or concerns about rights as a research participant).

Marla Berry-Johnson  Dr. Nancy Fordham  BGSU’s HSRB
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419 372-7334  419 372-9819  419 372-7716

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures

________________________________________  _______________________  Signature of
Participant  Date