

FIVE MEANINGS OF DIRECT INSTRUCTION

A VISUAL SUMMARY OF BARAK ROSENSHINE'S 2008 PAPER OF THE SAME TITLE

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Barak Rosenshine

Direct instruction has both a general meaning and a specific meaning. The different meanings of direct instruction create a problem when authors do not specify the form that they are referring to.

5 MEANINGS

1 THE TEACHER EFFECTS PATTERN

Direct instruction in this respect refers to the observed instructional procedures that were used by effective teachers in the teacher effects research:

Reduce difficulty of the task during initial practice

- State lesson goals
- Divide task into smaller parts

Use scaffolds & guidance during initial practice

- Teacher models
- Teacher thinks aloud choices made
- Anticipate student errors
- Check for understanding
- Obtain responses from all

Provide supportive feedback

- Provide corrections & feedback
- Provide check lists
- Provide models of completed task
- Provide fix-up strategies

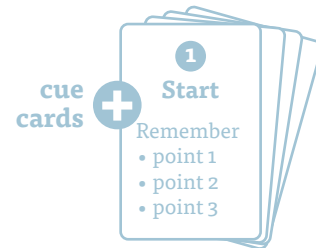
Provide for extensive student independent practice

I concentrate on the overlap in the approaches used between the meanings. Methods of direct instruction involve much more than passive lecturing.



2 THE COGNITIVE STRATEGIES MEANING

Cognitive strategies research used direct instruction as a summary term for the instructional procedures used to teach higher level cognitive tasks, such as comprehension, generalisation, summarising and question-generation. The results are identical to those of the teacher effects research, with one addition — provide students with cue cards during initial practice.



3 THE GENERAL TEACHER-LED MEANING

The term direct instruction is used to refer to any academic instruction that is led by the teacher. We assume that in direct instruction a teacher models and demonstrates a skill, but when direct instruction is used in this general sense, we are seldom given any instructional specifics, leaving the reader to infer what the term means.

4 THE DISTAR MEANING

Engelmann, developer of *Direct Instruction Systems in Arithmetic and Reading* uses the upper-case version to refer to Direct Instruction (DI). Critics of the DI approach frequently use the lower case and so the reader is not always sure whether direct instruction or DI is being criticized. Scripted instructional sequences and choral student responses are strongly associated with DI.

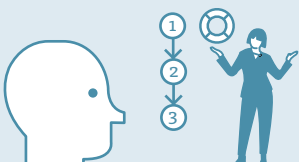
5 THE UNDESIRABLE TEACHING MEANING

Direct instruction has been described as *authoritarian* and *fact accumulation at the expense of skill development*.

Pouring of information from one container, the teacher's head, to another container, the student's head is another description used, despite a large evidence base that it is an effective teaching method for more cognitively demanding content, as well as basic skills.

4 COMMON INSTRUCTIONAL ELEMENTS

1 Reducing the difficulty of the task during initial practice



2 Providing scaffolds and support



3 Providing supportive feedback



4 Providing for extensive student independent practice

