DI–EDI Comparison:
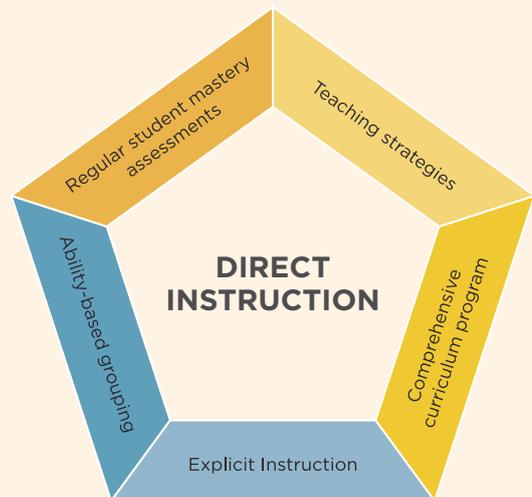## Comparing Direct Instruction and Explicit Direct Instruction

Background to Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction (DI) was developed by Dr Siegfried 'Zig' Engelmann in the 1960s. It combines well-crafted explicit instruction pedagogy, with a comprehensive curriculum and student assessment, and scripted instruction on how to deliver it. The program covers literacy and numeracy from Foundations to Year 5 and aligns to the Australian Curriculum.

The National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI) is the leading provider of implementation support to schools in the United States. They pioneered a 'full fidelity' model for implementing Direct Instruction that is designed to maximise student gains.

The term direct instruction (lowercase) was used by Dr Barak Rosenshine in his 1976 teacher effectiveness research to describe a set of teaching practices found to be significantly related to increasing student achievement. Many programs have been developed based on key pedagogical principles and techniques of the DI program, often collectively referred to as direct instruction or explicit instruction.

Direct Instruction is an integrated curriculum and pedagogy

Pentagon diagram with **DIRECT INSTRUCTION** at centre, surrounded by: Regular student mastery assessments, Teaching strategies, Comprehensive curriculum program, Explicit Instruction, Ability-based grouping

Background to Explicit Direct Instruction

Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI) was developed by John Hollingsworth and Dr Silvia Ybarra in the early 2000s. It is based on educational theory, brain research, direct instruction and classroom observations. EDI combines a set of instructional practices to produce well-crafted and well-delivered lessons, designed to help students learn more the first time they are taught. EDI includes continuous 'Checking for Understanding' to measure student mastery of the concept taught.

DataWORKS Educational Research, which is led by Hollingsworth and Ybarra, is the leading provider of EDI professional support to teachers, schools and school systems in the United States.

Comparison between GGSA's DI and EDI models

Curriculum and lesson design

Area	GGSA Direct Instruction	GGSA Explicit Direct Instruction
Scope	Reading, language, spelling, writing and comprehension from preschool to Year 5	Foundation to Year 6 literacy lesson plans with strategies across subject areas and school levels
Teacher materials	Teacher presentation books and guides (including scripts)	Teacher guides and materials
Student materials	Student textbooks, workbooks and readers for preschool to Year 6	Student workbooks for literacy
Framework	Design principles: • Clear, unambiguous instructions • Efficiency • Mastery learning • Constant practice • Detailed correction procedures • Promoting self-confidence by achieving success	Design components: • Learning Objective • Activate Prior Knowledge • Concept Development • Skill Development • Guided Practice • Relevance • Closure
Targeted learning	Designed to students current instructional level, with progression based on theories of how students acquire knowledge	Designed to meet the standards at each grade level, and are differentiated for high, low, or second language learners using specific strategies
Lesson content	10% of each lesson is new material and remaining 90% is review and application of skills students have already learned but need practice in order to master	Lessons are 75–80% new content and 20–25% review of prior knowledge and sub-skills
Classroom management strategies	Embeds a number of positive behaviour management strategies in lesson delivery scripts and techniques. All students placed at appropriate instructional level so engaged in the material	The teacher uses a suite of general classroom management strategies, lesson design and delivery engages students constantly
Australian content	Materials adapted to Australian context, with teachers adapting content during lesson delivery	Designed based on the Australian Curriculum using Australian content

Lesson delivery

Area	GGSA Direct Instruction	GGSA Explicit Direct Instruction
Pedagogy	Explicit, teacher-led strategies with tightly scripted lessons	Explicit teacher-led strategies with structured lessons as a framework for the teacher to apply
Pacing	Fast paced lessons where students master content before continuing and the teacher decides when to repeat sections of lesson (firming procedures)	The teacher makes most decisions about lesson pacing using Checking for Understanding techniques
Scheduling	Highly structured schedule of classroom activities and transitions in teacher presentation guides	A schedule of lessons is provided which includes a weekly catch-up day to allow for flexibility in teaching

Student assessment, data analysis and feedback

Area	GGSA Direct Instruction	GGSA Explicit Direct Instruction
Assessment	Mastery tests every week	Unit tests every five weeks
Data analysis	Every week	Every five weeks
Feedback	Every week for every student	Every five weeks for every student

Great Teachers. Effective Instruction. Every Child.

Student grouping and engagement		
Area	**GGSA Direct Instruction**	**GGSA Explicit Direct Instruction**
Student grouping (school)	Flexible, personalised ability-based grouping, with initial and ongoing testing to determine appropriate student placement	By age-based grade with in-classroom support provided to students who need extra assistance
Student grouping (classroom)	Small instruction groups from P–2; one group instructed by teacher, one supported by teaching assistant and one on independent work. Whole-class instruction above Year 2 of DI programs.	Whole-class instruction with differentiated learning. Smaller instructional groups as required in F–2 levels with teaching assistants providing instructional support.
Student-teacher interaction	Students expected to respond chorally following a signal from the teacher. Teachers repeat the question until the answer is 'firm'. Scripts ask for teachers to call on individual students so each is mastering the content.	After each question, students 'pair-share' with a partner to discuss the information and prepare correct response. Teachers call on non-volunteers for accountability and to measure student learning. Students write answers on whiteboards and are asked to defend, interpret, or justify answers.
Lesson delivery		
Area	**GGSA Direct Instruction**	**GGSA Explicit Direct Instruction**
Teacher training	Annual formal training in instruction and behaviour management, with regular in-services and weekly supervised partner practice	Annual formal training in instruction and behaviour management with regular in-services and weekly practice
Coaching and feedback	In-classroom coaching and feedback based on classroom observations, weekly student data and expert feedback	In-classroom coaching, feedback and lesson demonstrations based on classroom observations and five-weekly unit tests

Where DI is most effective

DI is particularly effective for schools with a large number of students below grade level or with learning difficulties, or who have special needs or English as a second language. Students are taught at their instructional level rather than by age, and those with low literacy receive intensive support in small group instruction. Student progress is monitored weekly and students are continually placed in new groups as they master the content, thus ensuring they are always progressing.

DI is beneficial where schools have high numbers of graduate teachers or teachers less experienced with low-literacy or disadvantaged students. DI coaching is designed to constantly build on a teacher's practice repertoire so they are continually learning and perfecting a range of techniques and strategies so they can focus on delivery and how their students are responding.

Where EDI is most effective

EDI is effective across the spectrum of student abilities from high to low performing students as well as English Learners and students with special needs. Students are taught in their age-based grade levels so they are constantly being challenged with material at their grade level. The lessons are designed with a strong focus on continuously developing student literacy.

EDI is beneficial for teachers with any level of teaching experience, from graduates to experienced teachers. Teachers appreciate the specific teaching practices, including student engagement, modifying instruction through Checking for Understanding, and implementing classroom management techniques.

With the literacy program, EDI has a full suite of lessons so the teacher can focus more of their time on instruction delivery. There is less student data monitoring than DI, but there are sufficient levels of coaching observation and feedback to the teacher.

GGSA's Great Teaching Program

Good to Great Schools Australia (GGSA) has partnered with NIFDI and DataWORKS to develop a customised DI and EDI implementation model for its Great Teaching Program. GGSA has delivered the base models of DI and EDI and, through firsthand experience, customised what teaching teams and school leaders need to embed exemplary practice in Australian schools.

Both models suit the unique needs of Australian schools including the requirements of the Australian Curriculum, legislation and system policies, local teaching and learning contexts.

The strength of GGSA's Great Teaching Program is the quality support it provides to schools, particularly the training and coaching which ensures that schools can deliver with fidelity and maximise the learning outcomes for their students and enrich the professional practice of their teaching staff.

Key features

The key features shared across EDI and DI relates to the levels of support provided to schools:

- Sequenced curriculum and structured lessons.
- Published curriculum materials.
- Teacher-directed lesson delivery strategies.
- Regular student assessment.
- Training and coaching for the teaching team and school leaders.
- In-school program monitoring and data based decision making.

Literacy in the Great Teaching Program

A literacy program is the first offering under the Great Teaching Program.

DI teaching materials are commercially available through McGraw-Hill publishers. GGSA, in partnership with McGraw-Hill, have designed an Australian Supplements Kit to enable Australian teachers to replace any unsuitable content like imperial measures – which are used in the US and the UK – with metric measures which are used in Australia. Although the majority of content in the DI books is universal, there are discussions underway to consider the development of a full Australian version of the programs.

With EDI, GGSA has partnered with DataWORKS to develop a full F–6 Australian Literacy Curriculum that is fully customised to the Australian Curriculum and NAPLAN. This curriculum is available to all schools who participate in the literacy offering.

Schools choose the literacy program to suit their need

Both DI and EDI models are based on years of research on what works in schools to improve student learning.

The program a school should use depends on the context of a school and the needs of their students. GGSA may recommend certain models to schools, but ultimately it is the school's choice as to which implementation model is most effective for their needs.

Further reading

- Barbash, Shepard 2012, *Clear Teaching: With Direct instruction, Siegfried Engelmann Discovered a Better Way of Teaching*, Education Consumers Foundation (http://education-consumers.org/pdf/CT_111811.pdf)

- Clark, Richard E., Kirschner, Paul A., & Sweller, John, **'Putting Students on the Path to Learning: The Case for Fully Guided Instruction'**, *American Educator*, vol. 36, Spring 2012 (http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ971752)

- Engelmann, Siegfried, **'The Basic Philosophy of Direct Instruction'** (http://www.nifdi.org/what-is-di/basic-philosophy)

- Hollingsworth, John & Ybarra, Silvia 2009, *Explicit Direct Instruction: The Power of the Well-Crafted, Well-Taught Lesson*, Corwin Press (http://www.corwin.com/books/Book230288)

- Hollingsworth, John & Ybarra, Silvia 2013, *Explicit Direct Instruction for English Learners*, Corwin Press (http://www.corwin.com/books/Book235076)

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Learn more about DI and EDI

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