

# EXPLICIT DIRECT INSTRUCTION

# EDI

The Power of  
the Well-Crafted,  
Well-Taught Lesson

John Hollingsworth • Silvia Ybarra

A Joint Publication



First Edition

# Study Guide

A guide for conducting a group study of  
the bestselling educational book.

**DataWORKS**  
Educational Research

Updated 2017

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# About this Study Guide

## Welcome to the Explicit Direct Instruction Study Guide

This Study Guide is a companion to the 2009 edition of *Explicit Direct Instruction: The Power of the Well-Crafted, Well-Taught Lesson* by John Hollingsworth and Silvia Ybarra.

Published by Corwin Press, this book quickly became an educational bestseller. In fact, the authors recently received an award from Corwin for “Helping Educators Make the Greatest Impact”.

Over the years, many teachers and administrators have asked for a Study Guide to use with their book study groups or in their professional learning communities, so due to these requests, Hollingsworth and Ybarra have published this companion Study Guide to accompany the book.

This Study Guide is designed to lead your staff through each chapter of the book and help to engage your team in some rich, academic discussions. It features questions to analyze, activities to explore (usually in small groups), and looking ahead questions to prepare for the next chapter.

In addition, the authors would like to announce that they have recently finished the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Explicit Direct Instruction: The Power of the Well-Crafted, Well-Taught Lesson*, and the new book has been sent off to the publishers for final review. The new edition contains five new chapters with classroom-tested refinements for EDI, many new teacher tips, and new classroom stories that teachers have told us they love to read! This book will be released in Fall of 2017, so watch for it. A new Study Guide will also be made available on our website to accompany the new book!

We wish you great success with EDI,

**DataWORKS Educational Research**

# Before you Read

## Analyze

1. What do you think is the #1 thing that needs to be done today to improve education?
2. Focusing on classroom instructional methods, list three successes and three areas of need at your school site.
3. There are many new educational approaches such as:
  - Project-Based Learning
  - Flipped Classroom
  - Discovery/Inquiry
  - Blended Learning
  - Personalized LearningHave you had success with any of these approaches? Explain.

## Looking Ahead

1. What are your expectations/connotations when you hear the phrase Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI)? Explain.

# Chapter 1 - Students Say, “I Can Do It!”

## Analyze

1. Describe a time when your students were not able to comprehend something. How did that make you feel? What did you do to help them?
2. The authors say the missing school activity is “a relentless focus on improving how students are taught in the classroom, the first time.” They claim the answer is the well-crafted lesson. Discuss how this would make a difference in your school.
3. In your own words, explain what the authors meant when they said, “It’s better inputs that produce better outputs.”

# Chapter 1 - Students Say, “I Can Do It!”

## **Analyze (cont.)**

4. The authors say that there are many different interpretations of what each teaching technique looks like and wide variations of implementation in the classroom. Why do you think this is the case?

## **Looking Ahead**

1. Before reading the next chapter, describe the instructional approach you were trained to use in college. List a few of the strategies you were taught to use.

# Chapter 2 - What Is Effective Instruction?

## Analyze

1. The authors give you two strategies that you can use right away before finishing the book -- 1) asking a question to the whole class before selecting a student to answer, and 2) pausing several seconds before making the selection. How could you use these in your class tomorrow? And why do you think they could be effective strategies?
2. The authors say that 21st century schools are in the talent development business not talent discovery. What does this mean if applied in your classroom?
3. The authors point out that, as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, the country has shifted from equal access in education to equal outcome. How do you see this impacting your classroom and school?
4. As a teacher, how do you cover all of the standards and still take the appropriate time to insure that students are really learning the information you present? In other words, how efficient are you in your daily teaching?



# Chapter 2 - What Is Effective Instruction?

## Analyze (cont.)

5. Which educational philosophy do you tend to use more often? Direct instruction or progressive? Why?
6. The authors say that Rosenshine & Stevens have identified nine teacher behaviors (p. 12) that characterize good lessons. How many of these do you currently use in your classroom?
7. EDI involves both lesson design and lesson delivery strategies. Why do you think teachers have to consider both?

# Chapter 2 - What Is Effective Instruction?

## Activity

1. The authors give five criteria for an effective instructional approach (pp. 9-10). Rate your class (on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being excellent) on each criterion, and then discuss.
2. On a graphic organizer, analyze how much time you spent on various classroom activities during one week. Use these categories: Delivering new content, Independent practice work (such as worksheets), small group work, organizational activities, assessments, other.

## Looking Ahead

1. The authors say EDI is metacognitive teaching. That means you know **what** all the instructional practices are, you know **when** to use them, you know **why** you use them, and you know the **expected results** of using them. How do you think that could make a difference in your teaching?

# Chapter 3 - Checking for Understanding (CFU): Verifying That Students Are Learning

## Analyze

1. How do you currently check for understanding? How often? In what manner?
2. The authors state that CFU is the “backbone of effective instruction,” and that “this one strategy alone could revolutionize education” worldwide. Discuss the four reasons they give for this.
3. The authors say there are three critical components to CFU -- ask the whole class, provide wait time, and call on random non-volunteers. Explain why they think each one is important.
4. Why is it important to teach before you ask a question? Why is asking a question first not effective for the teacher or the students?

# Chapter 3 - Checking for Understanding (CFU): Verifying That Students Are Learning

## Analyze (cont.)

5. Quite often, teachers ask general questions, such as “Any questions?” “Do you understand this?” “What do you think about this character?” Why should teachers not be interested in hearing students’ opinions when learning new content? What kind of questions should teachers ask?
  
6. The authors recommend using pair-share as part of the wait time after asking a question. How does this help learning for regular students and English learners?
  
7. Explain why it’s not so useful to call on students who have their hands up. Why is it a good reason to use non-volunteers?
  
8. Discuss methods of choosing non-volunteers -- popsicle sticks, digital apps, numbered rings, labeled ping pong balls, etc. Why do different teachers like each one? Which is easiest to set up?

# Chapter 3 - Checking for Understanding (CFU): Verifying That Students Are Learning

## Analyze (cont.)

9. Describe the three types of effective feedback teachers can give to a CFU answer - echo, elaborate, or explain.
10. Why is CFU really a cognitive teaching strategy that helps the students learn?
11. Why are whiteboards an effective CFU strategy? Discuss the kinds of questions that can be asked with whiteboards.

## Activity

1. The authors say that doing CFU every 2-3 minutes will make all your lessons better because they become interactive. In order to do this (at least in the beginning), you need to prepare CFU questions in advance for each part of your lesson. Take one of your lessons and write CFU questions for each part of it. Then, discuss why it was easy or hard.

# Chapter 3 - Checking for Understanding (CFU): Verifying That Students Are Learning

## **Activity (cont.)**

2. Practice asking CFU questions amongst colleagues. One person teach a chunk of information, and then ask CFU questions of the group. Assign numbers to each person so people can be randomly chosen. This will give each person the direct experience of using and receiving effective CFUs.

## **Looking Ahead**

1. What is the method you have used up to now for writing Learning Objectives?

# Chapter 4 - Learning Objective: Establishing What Is Going to be Taught

## Analyze

1. Explain how content standards are different from learning objectives?
2. How does having a good Learning Objective help you produce a great lesson?
3. Explain what Concept, Skill, and Context are in terms of a Learning Objective. Give examples of each.
4. Why is it better to teach objectives rather than standards?
5. Why is it important for the Objective's skill to be on grade level?

# Chapter 4 - Learning Objective: Establishing What Is Going to be Taught

## Analyze (cont.)

6. Why is it important to teach the same grade-level content that state tests assess?
7. Why is it important to present the Learning Objective to the students?
8. The authors identify six other ways to encourage interaction in class (pp.71-73). Discuss how you could use each one.

## Activity

1. Each person take one standard from your grade and write at least one clear learning objective from it. If you're using Common Core, you can compare your answers with the DataWORKS objectives in Common Core Learning Objectives booklets posted at the [Eduleri.com](http://Eduleri.com) site.

## Looking Ahead

1. Do you ever review previously learned concepts or skills before teaching something new?



# Chapter 5 -Activating Prior Knowledge: Connecting to What Students Already Know

## Analyze

1. What is the purpose of APK? How does it help students learn?
2. What is the difference between universal experience APK and subskill review APK?
3. How does subskill review help fill in some gaps in student learning?
4. What are the four possibilities (p. 87) for what to activate for the students? How do you decide what to use?
5. Why is it important to NOT use the new lesson vocabulary in APK?

# Chapter 5 -Activating Prior Knowledge: Connecting to What Students Already Know

## **Activity**

1. Each person take a learning objective and analyze it to determine what prior knowledge you can activate in APK. Do one that requires universal experience and one that requires subskill review.

## **Looking Ahead**

1. What methods do you usually use to deliver your lessons to your classes?

# Chapter 6 - Delivering Information to Students: Explaining, Modeling, and Demonstrating

## Analyze

1. What is the difference between procedural knowledge and declarative knowledge?
2. What are the EDI definitions of Explaining, Modeling, and Demonstrating?
3. How is DataWORKS definition of modeling different from other educators?
4. The authors consider Demonstrating to be the use of a physical object. Give an example of when you did such a demonstration, or when you could do one for your class.

# Chapter 6 - Delivering Information to Students: Explaining, Modeling, and Demonstrating

## Activity

1. With a partner, review a lesson and write three CFU questions you would use when you model your thinking.
2. Most teachers are good at Explaining. But now, find a concept from one of your lessons and practice modeling it with a colleague. Be sure to reveal your thinking as you discuss the concept.
3. Next, find a lesson where you can use a physical demonstration. Practice with a colleague doing the demonstration. Consider using gestures too.
4. In a group, brainstorm ways to add demonstrations to some of your most difficult lessons.

## Looking Ahead

1. Do you focus on concepts or skills in your lessons? Why?

## Chapter 7 - Concept Development, Skill Development, and Lesson Importance: Presenting Content

### Analyze

1. What are the differences between concept, skill, and importance? How would you define them?
2. How do you identify the concepts to teach?
3. Discuss the three reasons why Concept Development is important (pp. 116-117).
4. Describe three examples of ineffective concept development.
5. Why is it important to have a written definition for each concept?
6. Why is it important to have clear examples, and sometimes non-examples, for each concept?

## Chapter 7 - Concept Development, Skill Development, and Lesson Importance: Presenting Content

### Analyze (cont.)

7. Explain the Restate-Apply-Justify method for checking for understanding in Concept Development.
  
8. What is the difference in Skill Development between a Procedural Knowledge lesson and a Declarative Knowledge lesson?
  
9. Why is it important to provide a series of steps (or process) for each Skill Development?
  
10. What type of CFU questions are best during Skill Development? Why?
  
11. How is Skill Development different for Declarative Knowledge lessons?
  
12. Why is it valuable to use a graphic organizer with Declarative Knowledge lessons?

## Chapter 7 - Concept Development, Skill Development, and Lesson Importance: Presenting Content

### Analyze (cont.)

13. Why is Lesson Importance important to teach?
14. Describe the three types of importance that you could provide.
15. Describe different types of CFU questions you can use for Lesson Importance.

### Activity

1. Pick one textbook from your subject or grade and analyze if concept development is there and whether it is effective or not.
2. Go to [Educeri.com](https://www.educeri.com) and pick lessons for your grade level or subject. Look at the Concept Development slides and identify the written definitions, labeled examples, non-examples (if there), and CFU questions.
3. Now look for the same lesson or concept in your current instructional materials. Can you locate these items? If not, can you add them?

## Chapter 7 - Concept Development, Skill Development, and Lesson Importance: Presenting Content

### Activity (cont.)

4. Given a Learning Objective and bulletproof Concept Definition, take one of your lessons, and write out the steps for executing the skill.
5. Last chapter, you modeled a concept; now this time sit with a partner and model your thinking for skill development. Discuss how it's different.
6. Look at your textbook and locate skill development steps in it.
7. Look at EDI lessons for your grade at [Educeri.com](https://www.educeri.com), and identify the steps, matched problems, and CFU questions.

### Looking Ahead

1. How have you guided your students in working problems in the past?



# Chapter 8 - Guided Practice: Working Together With All Students

## Analyze

1. Define Guided Practice in your own words.
2. Why is walking around the room helping students or assigning Guided Practice problems from the textbook NOT effective Guided Practice?
3. What are the three phases of implementing Guided Practice?
4. Why is it a good idea to have extra problems/examples for students to work with you?
5. Why is it important to teach all variations of the problem during Guided Practice?

# Chapter 8 - Guided Practice: Working Together With All Students

## **Activity**

1. Each person in the group think of a skill you teach that has multiple variations. Share them with the group (and take notes on examples you hear from others).

## **Looking Ahead**

1. How do you know that your students have learned the concept or skill before you assign homework?

# Chapter 9 - Closing the Lesson: One Final Check

## Analyze

1. What is Lesson Closure and why is it important?
2. Why is it better to teach to 80% success in Closure?
3. Describe the three types of closure questions -- concept, importance, and skill.
4. The authors say teachers can increase student success by 1) designing the lesson effectively, and 2) anticipating difficult areas for students. Explain what they mean by this.
5. Explain how you can modify the lesson before, during, and after it's taught to add to your success.
6. Explain how you would handle in-class interventions and when.

# Chapter 9 - Closing the Lesson: One Final Check

## Looking Ahead

1. What do you consider to be the purpose of homework or review?

# Chapter 10 - Moving to Independent Practice: Having Students Work By Themselves

## Analyze

1. How do the authors define Independent Practice? Give three examples.
2. Why is giving students a quantity of problems to work usually not good Independent Practice?
3. What is the real purpose of Independent Practice? (or even homework)
4. Explain the value of automaticity in learning.
5. What is the best way to get students to do homework?
6. How can teachers give a structure to Independent Practice to make it more useful?

# Chapter 10 - Moving to Independent Practice: Having Students Work By Themselves

## **Activity**

1. Look at homework assignments you've given in the last week, and analyze how you could have introduced them more effectively or included different problems.

## **Looking Ahead**

1. Which way will you adopt EDI in your class-- by fitting it around your textbook or by writing your own EDI lessons?

# Chapter 11 - Putting It All Together: Creating Well-Crafted Lessons

## Analyze

1. What are some of the problems with textbooks that the authors have identified? What components of a good lesson are often missing?
2. Why is it important to modify the textbook to fit the EDI components?
3. When you design a lesson from a textbook, you first check for worksheets or problems for the Independent Practice, and then look for the standard. Why is this important?
4. Explain why you need to deconstruct a textbook standard into proper learning objectives.
5. What are some criteria for developing a good concept for your lesson?
6. Why should remedial time be separate from grade-level lessons?

# Chapter 11 - Putting It All Together: Creating Well-Crafted Lessons

## **Analyze (cont.)**

7. Why is it often better to write Independent Practice after the Learning Objective, and the APK after Skill Development, even though they aren't taught in that order?
  
8. Why is it easier to use a streamlined lesson plan for writing your own EDI lesson?
  
9. Why should EDI lessons be used for two thirds of the class time?
  
10. Describe some ways you can use EDI strategies even if you don't have a fully developed EDI lesson for your class.
  
11. According to the authors, what is the secret to school reform?



# Chapter 11 - Putting It All Together: Creating Well-Crafted Lessons

## Activity

1. As a group, make a 3-column list for: 1) each EDI component, 2) how it might be listed in a textbook, and 3) how you might need to adapt or rewrite it.
  
2. Make a list of which EDI strategies you can adopt in your class right away, and which strategies you will adopt within one month. Discuss with others what steps you have to take to achieve both goals.

# Next Steps

## Activity

1. Study the chart of Direct Instruction models on pp. 244-245. Note how different researchers have essentially identified the same 7-9 steps for a good lesson.
2. List your Top 3 or Top 10 insights gained from studying this book. Identify what changes you can make in your classroom based on this book.

## Further Options

- Sign up to use [Educeri](#) in your classroom.
- Request a [webinar or demonstration](#) from the authors.
- View [videos of EDI in action](#) on the DataWORKS website.
- Organize for a schoolwide or districtwide [training in EDI](#).

*"EDI changed how we teach! Designing and delivering EDI lessons and strategies helped teachers meet the needs of all learners. We are now a California Distinguished School and Title I award winner. Our students know they can succeed!"*

—Susan Fitzgerald, Principal  
Del Rey Elementary School, CA

## A proven method for **BETTER TEACHING,** **BETTER LEARNING,** and **BETTER TEST SCORES!**

Explicit Direct Instruction® (EDI), an approach based on the premise that *all* children can learn, helps teachers deliver effective lessons that can significantly improve achievement for all learners, including English language learners and students with special needs.

In this teacher-friendly book, the authors combine educational theory, brain research, and data analysis in a step-by-step guide for implementing the EDI method in diverse classrooms. Written in an entertaining easy-to-read style, this resource provides elementary and secondary teachers with concrete strategies, detailed sample lessons, and scenarios that illustrate what EDI techniques look like in the classroom. Components of EDI include

- Checking for understanding
- Setting lesson objectives
- Activating prior knowledge
- Developing students' skills by explaining, modeling, and demonstrating
- Presenting content
- Using guided practice

Ideal for all content areas and grade levels, *Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI)* shows teachers how to use this highly effective approach to improve instruction and achievement for every student.



**CORWIN PRESS**

A SAGE Company  
2455 Teller Road  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91320  
(800) 233-9936 Fax: (800) 417-2466  
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