Differentiated and Direct Instruction: Background and Implications

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What is Differentiated Instruction?

• Teachers vary and adapt their approaches to fit the vast diversity of students in the classroom (Tomlinson, 1995, 1999a; Hall, 2002)
• Teachers who differentiate instruction realize that students differ in many ways
• Students can excel in school when their culture, language, heritage and experiences are valued (Klinger, Artiles, et. al. 2005)
What is Direct Instruction?


• A combination of small-group and face-to-face instruction using carefully articulated lessons in which cognitive skills are broken down into small units (Carnine, 2000; Traub, 1999)

• In the 1980s, teachers were trained to use particular instructional practices that were assessed for their effects on student learning

• Studies identified common "teaching functions" that had proved effective in improving student learning
History of Differentiated Instruction

Gundlach (2011)

• Dates back to the 1600s when one room school houses were the staple in education
• One teacher was responsible for educating students in a wide range of grades and ability levels without technology
• As the country transitioned to grading schools, it was assumed that all children could learn the same materials at the same pace
History of Differentiated Instruction (Continued)

- In 1899, Preston Search in Colorado worked to make it possible for students to work at their own pace.
- By 1912, with the introduction of achievement tests, there was evidence that the gaps in children's abilities were much greater than realized.
- IDEA, first enacted in 1975 (EAHCA), provides guidelines for teachers to differentiate instruction for both general education and special needs students.
Conceptual Framework

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning (Subban, 2006)

• Central to instructional enhancement, classroom change and redevelopment

• Based on the premise that the individual learner must be studied within a particular social and cultural context

• Necessary for the development of higher order functions which can only be acquired through social interaction
Conceptual Framework (Continued)

Zone of Proximal Development (Subban, 2006)

- Refers to a level of development attained when learners engage in social behavior
- To develop the ZPD, learners must actively interact socially with a knowledgeable adult or capable peers
- The teacher's role becomes one of purposeful instruction, allowing the learner to attain his or her zone of proximal development
Implications of Vygotsky’s Theory

• Sees the student-teacher relationship as collaborative, with the learning experience becoming reciprocal.
• The teacher designs the lesson so that instruction extends the student to just above his/her current developmental level.
• Scaffolding is an appropriate strategy to access the zone of proximal behavior.
Principles of Differentiated Instruction

New York University (2008)
• Assessment is ongoing and tightly linked to instruction
• Teachers ensure “respectful activities” for all students
• Flexible grouping is a hallmark of the class
A Model of Differentiation (Lawrence-Brown, 2004)
Lesson Planning Using Direct Instruction

Lawrence-Brown (2004)

- Desirable qualities for general education lessons include those that:

1. Promote active learning
2. Connect subject matter with students' interests
3. Incorporate multiple intelligences and learning styles.
Resources for Additional Supports

- Manipulatives
- Visual Aids
- Charts
- Summaries, Organizers, & Reading Guides
- Picture Cues
- Audio-taped Books
Enriched Curriculum

• Provides a more appropriate education for students with special gifts and talents within the general education classroom program
• They can be available even to students from traditionally marginalized groups
• Teachers are encouraged to think in broad terms when considering students in their classrooms who may be in need of enriched curricula
Prioritized Curriculum

- Allows students with severe disabilities to reap the benefits of general class placement while addressing individual needs
- IEP's for students with severe disabilities will often need to balance these goals with academics at the student's level
- Students with disabilities do not usually learn more in self-contained classrooms; equal or superior results are obtained when appropriate supports are provided in general education classrooms
Ten Effective Research-Based Instructional Strategies

Marzano (2000)

1. Vocabulary
2. Comparing, contrasting, classifying, analogies, and metaphors
3. Summarizing and note-taking
4. Reinforcing effort and giving praise
5. Homework and practice
Ten Effective Research-Based Instructional Strategies (continued)

6. Nonlinguistic representation
7. Cooperative learning
8. Setting objectives and providing feedback
9. Generating and testing hypotheses
10. Cues, questions, and advanced organizers
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<td>6. Cooperative Learning</td>
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<td>8. Generating and testing hypotheses</td>
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<td>9. Questions, cues, and advance organizers</td>
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Direct Instruction

• Effective teachers combine direct, explicit instruction of strategies and concepts with other teaching approaches (Graves, 2004; Langer, 2002)
• Provide students with content-rich materials, interact with them in meaningful discussions, and engage them in purposeful writing
• These afford students opportunities to explore how to use the strategies and clarify concepts across diverse contexts
Five Phases of Direct Instruction

• **Orientation**
  - Teachers activate students’ relevant prior knowledge and experiences and familiarize them with the focus of a lesson

• **Presentation**
  - Teachers identify a specific strategy for students, then model exactly where, how, and why to apply the strategy

• **Structured Practice**
  - Calls for teachers to begin the process of handing over to students the strategy or concept that they have modeled
Five Phases of Direct Instruction (Continued)

• **Guided Practice**
  ▫ Teachers give students increasing responsibility for applying a strategy or concept to more new material

• **Independent Practice**
  ▫ Students independently practice work with a strategy or concept, applying their new knowledge in unfamiliar situations
Applications of Direct Instruction

• Structured, Scaffolded Lessons
• Graphic Organizers
• Multi-level Teaching Strategies
• Structured Response Techniques
• Checking Understanding
• Immediate Corrective Feedback
• Additional Support
Implications of Differentiated and Direct Instruction

- A combination of both is necessary to spur academic achievement in the classroom
- Effective teachers differentiate their instruction to support their diverse student populations (special needs, ELL) while structuring lessons that engage student learning and check for understanding
- Teachers need opportunities to learn and practice differentiated and direct instruction techniques to reach all of their students
Implications for Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Students

• No two students enter a classroom with identical abilities, experiences and needs.
• Learning style, language proficiency, background knowledge, readiness to learn, and other factors can vary widely within a single class.
Theory to “Best” Practices

Santamaria (2009)

- Best teaching practices are those that consider all learners in a classroom setting paying close attention to differences in academic, cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Educators must determine what is appropriate for particular groups of students in particular classrooms.
Meeting Students Where They Are

- Culturally & Linguistically Diverse students are expected to master the same concepts, principles and skills as other students, regardless of their differences.
- In order to achieve academic success, all students need appropriate instruction, tailored to meet their specific needs.
Effective Instructional Practices for Diverse Student Populations

Garcia (2005)

Instructional practices should focus on:
1. High Levels of Communication
2. Integrated and Thematic Curriculum
3. Collaborative Learning Environments
High Levels of Communication

- Emphasis on functional communication between teacher and students and among fellow students.
- Teachers constantly check with students to verify the clarity of assignments.
- Classrooms may be characterized by high/noisy levels of communication emphasizing student collaboration.
- Provides diverse opportunities for speaking, listening, reading and writing with language scaffolding.
Integrated & Thematic Units

- Theme approach allows teachers to integrate academic content with the development of basic skills.
- Provide several options/different paths to learning which help students make sense of concepts and skills.
- Provide appropriate levels of challenge for all students.
Collaborative Learning

• Students interact with each other using collaborative learning techniques.

• Student-student interactions often generate higher order cognitive and linguistic discourse.

• Students are more likely to seek assistance from other students.
Determine Which Approach is Appropriate

- Direct instruction provides teachers with tools for presenting an instructional sequence that is highly effective with a full range of learners.

- Differentiated instruction allows all students to access the same curriculum by providing entry points, learning tasks, and outcomes that are tailored to students’ needs.
Barriers to Implementation

Teachers may be reluctant to implement differentiated instruction or strategies based on one or more of these factors:

- Teacher directed vs. student-centered learning
- Loss of teacher control
- Classroom management
References

References (Continued)


