

# Explicit Instruction:

## Effective and Efficient Reading Instruction in the Elementary School

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(Note: This presentation is based on the research summarized in the following book. The videos can be viewed or downloaded at [www.explicitinstruction.org](http://www.explicitinstruction.org).)

Archer, A., & Hughes, C. (2011). *Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching*. NY: Guilford Publications.

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## What is Explicit Instruction?

- Explicit instruction is a **systematic instructional approach** that includes a set of **delivery and design procedures** derived from effective schools research.....

*Ideas that Work*

- ...unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that incorporates instruction design and delivery.

Archer & Hughes, 2011

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## Explicit Instruction is

- Systematic
- Relentless
- Engaging

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## Explicit Instruction is

- **Systematic**
- **Content**
- **Design of Instruction**

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## Explicit Instruction is systematic. Content

- **Instruction focuses on critical content.**

Skills, strategies, vocabulary terms, concepts, and rules that will empower students in the future are taught.

- **Skills, strategies, and concepts are sequenced logically.**

- Easier skills before harder skills.
- High frequency skills before low frequency skills.
- Prerequisites first.
- Similar skills separated.

- **Complex skills and strategies are broken down into smaller (easy to obtain) instruction units.**

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## Break down complex skills.

Example - Common Core Standards

- English Language Arts Standards Writing Grade 5  
(Example - Final Outcome Only)

**Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.**

- Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer's purpose.
- Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.
- Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *consequently*, *specifically*).
- Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

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## Break down complex skills.

Example - Common Core Standards

### Body of Opinion Paper

#### Transcription

1. When given a reason and related facts and details, can write a paragraph with a topic sentence stating the reason.
2. When given a reason and related facts and details, can write a paragraph with a topic sentence stating the reason followed by sentences containing facts and details, connected with transition words and phrases.
3. When given three reasons and related facts and details, can write three paragraphs each containing a topic sentence stating the reason followed by sentences containing facts and details, connected with transition words and phrases.

#### Planning

4. When given a position on a topic, can generate reasons to support that position.
5. When given a topic, can generate a position and reasons and details to support that position.
6. When given a topic, can generate a position and reasons to support that position, and details to logically support each reason.
7. When given a topic, can generate a plan for the body of an essay (the position, the reasons, details to support each reason) and transcribe the plan into three coherent paragraphs.

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## Break down complex skills.

Example - Common Core Standards

### Introduction

8. For previously formulated opinion papers, writes an introduction that: a) grabs the attention of the reader, b) states the writer's opinion, and c) introduces reasons to support the writer's opinion.

### Conclusion

9. For previously formulated opinion papers, writes a short conclusion "wraps it up" the essay by: a) summarizing the opinion and reasons, b) calling for some action to be taken, or c) explaining the outcomes of not following the writer's suggestions.

### Opinion Papers

10. When given a topic, can plan, write, and edit an opinion paper that includes: a) an effective introduction, b) a well structured body with logically organized reasons and related facts and details, linked with appropriate transition words and phrases, and c) a short conclusion that "wraps it up".

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## Explicit Instruction is systematic. Design of Instruction

### Lessons:

1. Are **organized** and **focused** lessons.
2. Begin with a statement of **goals**.
3. Provide review of **preskills** and **knowledge**.
4. Provide **step-by-step demonstrations**.

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## Explicit Instruction is systematic. Design of Instruction

5. Use **clear** and **concise** language.
6. Provide **guided** and supported **practice**.

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## Explicit Instruction is systematic. Design of Instruction

### opening

- attention
- review
- preview

### body

### closing

- review
- preview

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## Explicit Instruction is systematic. Design of Instruction

### Instructional routines are used.

- Instructional routines allow the students to focus on the content rather than the task.
- Teachers can master the instructional routines and increase the pace of lessons.
  - More content will be introduced and practiced.
  - Students will be more attentive.
  - Management challenges will be reduced.

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## Explicit Instruction is systematic. Design of Instruction

### Explicit Instruction of Skills/Strategies

Model I do it. *My turn.*

Prompt We do it. *Let's do this together.*

Check You do it. *Your turn.*

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## Explicit Instruction is systematic. Design of Instruction

### Explicit Instruction of Concepts(vocabulary)

1. Introduce the word.
2. Provide a "student-friendly explanation."
3. Illustrate with examples.
4. Check understanding.

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## Explicit Instruction is

### ■ Relentless

- Practice
- Practice
- Practice

- Tier 3 students may require 10 to 30 times as many practice opportunities as peers.

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## Explicit Instruction is relentless. Judicious Practice

1. Initial practice.
2. Distributed practice.
3. Cumulative review.

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## Explicit Instruction is relentless. Judicious Practice

### Initial Practice

- Occurs under watchful eye of the teacher
- Provide numerous practice opportunities within the teacher-directed lesson to build accuracy. Provide immediate feedback after each item.

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## Explicit Instruction is relentless. Judicious Practice

### Distributed Practice

- Studying or practicing a skill in short sessions overtime.
- Distributing practice overtime (versus massing practice in one session) aids retention in a variety of academic areas.

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## Explicit Instruction is relentless. Judicious Practice

### Cumulative Review

- Provide **intentional review** of previously taught skills/strategies/concepts /vocabulary/knowledge.
- Goal is to increase long-term retention.

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## Explicit Instruction is relentless. Judicious Practice

It is not: Drill and Kill

It is: **Drill and Skill**

Perhaps: **Drill and Thrill**

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## Explicit Instruction is

- **Engaging**

- **Delivery of Instruction**

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

- 1) Frequent **responses** are elicited.
- 2) Student performance is carefully **monitored**.
- 3) **Feedback** is provided including: praise, encouragement, and corrections.
- 4) The lesson is delivered at a **brisk pace**.

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

### Frequent responses are elicited. (Verbal Responses)

- **Choral Responses**  
The teacher asks a question, provides thinking time, and signals for all students to say the answer.
- **Partner Responses**  
The teacher assigns students a partner placing lower performing students with middle performing students. The teacher asks a question, provides thinking time, asks partners to discuss their ideas, and then has a number of students share their ideas with the class.
- **Team Responses**  
The teacher establishes teams of four by combining two partnerships. The teacher poses a question. Students share with team members until all agree on an answer. One member of each team reports to class.
- **Individual Responses**
  - a. **Partner First.** Teacher poses a question. All students think of the answer. The teacher asks partners to share answers and then calls on an individual.
  - b. **Whip Around or Pass.** (Example procedure.)

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

**Frequent responses are elicited.** (Verbal Responses)

### Whip Around or Pass

- This strategy is best used when there are many possible answers to a question.
- Ask the question.
- Give students thinking time.
- Start at any location in the room. Have students quickly give answers going up and down the rows without commenting. Students are allowed to pass if they do not have a response or someone has already shared the same idea.

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

**Frequent responses are elicited.**(Written Responses)

### Written Responses

- During the lesson, the teacher requests that students write answers on: paper, post-its, graphic organizers, transparencies, whiteboards, slates, ipads.

### Response Cards

- Students hold up a card indicating the answer to a teacher's question.

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

**Frequent responses are elicited.**(Written Responses)

### Response Slates

- Ask students a question or give them a directive.
- Have students record their answers on their slate (e.g., whiteboard, mini chalk board).
- Move around the room and monitor responses.
- When the majority of students have responded, have them hold up their slates.
- Carefully examine responses and provide feedback.

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

**Frequent responses are elicited.**(Written Responses)

### Response cards

- Have students write possible responses on cards or paper or provide them with prepared cards.

Examples:

Simple responses: Yes, No; Agree, Disagree; True, False; a, b, c, d

Graphemes: sh, wh, ch, th

Punctuation Marks: . ? ! ,

Math Operations: + - X

Types of Rocks: Igneous, metamorphic, sedimentary

Vocabulary Terms: perimeter, area

- Ask a question.
- Have students select best response and hold it under their chin.
- Then ask students to hold up response card.
- Carefully monitor responses and provide feedback.

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

**Frequent responses are elicited.** (Action Responses)

- **Touch or point at stimulus**
- **Act out**
  - Students act out a concept, story, historical event, cycle, etc.
- **Gestures**
  - Students use gestures to indicate answer or to facilitate recall of process.
- **Facial Expressions**
  - Students indicate answer by changing facial expression. ("Show me glum." Show me not glum.")
- **Hand Signals**

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

**Frequent responses are elicited.** (Action Responses)

- **Use hand signals.**
  - Useful to share categorical responses.
    - Thumbs up. Thumbs down. (yes, no; agree, disagree)
    - Thumbs up. Thumbs down. Thumbs sideways. (I don't know.)
    - Branches: 1. Legislative, 2. Executive, 3. Judicial.
    - Volcanoes: 1. Shield, 2. Composite, 3. Cinder Cone.
    - Vocabulary review: 1. Concentrate, 2. Impress, 3. Educated, 4. Enemy, 4. Absurd
  - Carefully introduce and model hand signals to ensure that errors are content errors NOT signal errors.
- If numbered responses are used, write numbers and words on the board or overhead transparency.
- Ask a question. Have students formulate their answer on their desks or under their chins.
- After think time has been given, have the students raise their hands and display hand signal.

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

**Student performance is carefully monitored.**

- Walk around.
- Look around.
- Talk around.

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

Immediate affirmative and corrective feedback is given.

**Corrective Feedback is:**

- Provided
- Immediate
- Specific and informative
- Focused on the correct versus incorrect response
- **Delivered with appropriate tone**
- Ended with students giving correct response

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

Immediate affirmative and corrective feedback is given.

**Praise is:**

- contingent (IF – THEN)
- specific
- provided for noteworthy performance
- **focused on achievement and effort rather than personality attributes**
- comparing students to themselves rather than to other
- positive, credible, genuine

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## Explicit Instruction is engaging. Delivery of Instruction

### **The lesson is delivered at a brisk pace.**

- Prepare for the lesson.
- Use instructional routines.
- After a response is given, move on.
- Avoid digressions

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## Let us remember:

How well we teach = How well they learn

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## Thank you for participating.

May you always teach with  
passion and manage with  
compassion.

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