



## DIRECT INSTRUCTION FOR STRUGGLING READERS

There is a large body of research demonstrating the benefits of direct, explicit instruction for students struggling with reading. Two large international studies provide further support for this teaching methodology.

Houtveen and Grift (2007), in a survey of 1,400 Year 3 students at 63 primary schools, found that reading levels were significantly higher in classes where students had received explicit or direct instruction and where appropriate and timely remediation strategies were put in place for students performing poorly. The timely and appropriate remediation of struggling students involved a five stage student evaluation cycle. The first stage involved regular observation and general testing of all students to identify students at risk. The second and third stages involved selecting students at risk and investigating appropriate solutions based on further specific, diagnostic testing. The fourth stage involved planning and implementing appropriate remediation strategies and the fifth stage involved re-evaluation. This continuous cycle was limited to a specific time and period and therefore occurred multiple times over the school year.

A four year longitudinal study of 4,572 students by Stockard (2010) found that those students who had received direct instruction in Year 1 (which involved mastery learning, high levels of feedback and structured, incremental steps of instruction) made significantly greater gains in reading vocabulary and comprehension by Year 5 compared to those who received alternative types of reading instruction. Interestingly, those students in the direct instruction group began Year 1 with reading scores that were, on average, lower than those students in the other groups.

***Cracking the ABC Code*** provides a direct instruction style of teaching based on the premise that a good knowledge of the alphabet code (phonics) are the building blocks of literacy. To find a program that is suitable for your child go to **Cracking the Reading Code** at [www.crackingtheabccode.com](http://www.crackingtheabccode.com)

### References

Houtveen, T., & van de Grift, W. (2007). Reading instruction for struggling learners. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, 12(4), 405-424.

Stockard, J. (2010). Promoting reading achievement and countering the “Fourth-Grade Slump”: The impact of direct instruction on reading achievement in Fifth Grade. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, 15(3), 218-240