# SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION IN READING FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS

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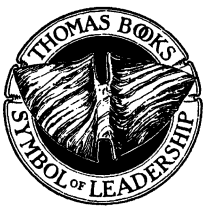


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**Elva Durán, Ph.D.,** holds a Ph.D. from the University of Oregon in special education and reading disabilities. Currently she is a professor in the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and School Psychology at California State University, Sacramento, where she teaches beginning reading to students studying to be general and special education teachers. She also teaches bilingual special education courses in her Department. She is a co-author of the *Leamos español* reading program, and her research interests include Spanish and English reading literacy, students with reading disabilities, and bilingual special education. She has been an elementary, reading, and middle school teacher in Texas and overseas, and supervises interns and student teachers in general and special education.

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This book is dedicated to ***Doug Carnine,*** my friend and mentor in reading and direct instruction methodologies. He was the first to inspire me to write this book. I have learned so much from all his reading and systematic instruction research for at-risk students as we worked on ***Leamos español*** reading program. He never left my side as we worked on so many aspects of the Spanish reading series through the years. He was a guiding light through all that hard work on the curriculum. He has always shared with me his time, expertise, wisdom, and his research contributions in reading for this book and ***Leamos español*** and continues to advise me as I consult and research ***Leamos*** reading.

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# FOREWORD

The high failure rate of Hispanic students in United States public schools has remained between 30 and 35 percent over the past 25 years according to the National Center for Policy Analysis. This high Hispanic dropout rate is 2.5 times higher than for blacks and 3.5 times higher than white, non-Hispanics. Whether the blames goes to failed bilingual education programs or overcrowded schools, lack of teacher training, lowered academic expectations, or school bureaucracies discouraging parental involvement does not really matter. What matters is the achievement of Hispanic students must improve dramatically over the next five years. This book describes one of the cornerstones for bringing about this change.

Like a carefully nurtured hybrid plant, bringing together the best qualities of two varieties, Dr. Elva Durán brings together the blend of qualities needed for solutions for improving academic performance in Hispanic students across the country. Dr. Durán went from knowing what it was like to be discriminated against as a Spanish-speaking first grader starting school in a Texas border town to becoming a notable bilingual expert in teacher education. Dr. Durán has received National and State Educator of the Year awards for her excellence in teaching and is an expert in early reading/language arts instruction. The answers she and her colleagues put forth in this text center around systematic instruction delivered early to ensure academic success in the primary grades.

The advantages of a bilingual background are actualized when Hispanic pupils are successful in learning how to read and write. For many Hispanic students this will mean early literacy development in both Spanish and English using direct instruction. The critical elements of direct instruction in early literacy are the foundation of the text's pedagogy.

In addition to early development of skills in phonological awareness and the alphabetic principle, the command of academic English is essential to success in early literacy. Several chapters in the text focus

on the critical aspects of this language development and instruction. Reading instruction in Spanish and English and the transfer of essential literacy skills from Spanish to English provide the other exegesis (critical explanation) for developing literacy among Hispanic pupils.

This text will help in the preparation of primary grade teachers throughout the United States, so that they may be successful with Hispanic students entering public school with little or no English background. It can also be a useful tool for school districts' staff development in addressing school improvement goals for increasing the achievement of Hispanic pupils.

The contribution of the book is more than its content. The added value comes from the passion of Dr. Durán to bring about the highest levels of student success that are possible. This dedication will hopefully be contagious to those who read the book! Changing the lives of Hispanic students takes more than knowledge; it also requires commitment. This book can serve as a guide for both goals.

DOUG CARNINE

# PREFACE

This book addresses the area of reading and literacy instruction for Spanish-speaking students. It is comprehensive in that it includes information on language, academic language instruction, reading, decoding, listening, speaking, transfer of components from Spanish to English, and comprehension development. Also, it has sample lessons in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades which give the teacher some examples on how to utilize a balanced systematic and comprehensive approach to teaching reading.

This author is also pleased with the chapters of each of her coauthors and contributors as they have each added valuable information to make this book helpful to teachers who instruct Spanish-speaking students. There is also other information included in the Appendix of this book that has been completed by this author; some of the examples found in the Appendix also appear in the *Leamos español* reading series. The author is pleased to get permission from SRA/McGraw-Hill to include some of the work that is found in *Leamos* in the Appendix.

Finally, throughout the various chapters on reading and literacy instruction and sample instructional plans, this author has included several examples that will be helpful in developing various reading skills with Spanish-speaking students. The book is a labor of love and a dream to better assist Spanish-speaking children who often come to school not knowing the language or vocabulary and not having had the experiences to help them become better readers.

Many years ago, this author was also a student in a first grade class who did not understand a word of English and struggled to learn to read and write in English. She wished always that she could have had a program that would have had all the information contained within these chapters. Many years later, much new research in teaching Spanish reading is being completed, and new reading programs are being developed which are filled with research and rigor that can only make instruction for Spanish-speaking students much improved.

I am proud of the challenges ahead of me as a college professor and teacher who spends a lot of time in elementary classrooms working with students and teachers. I will continue researching, gathering information on comprehensive and systematic reading and literacy instruction, and will continue to gather data on how to best teach Spanish-speaking students to read in Spanish and English. It is the hope of this author that this book will offer some suggestions, review of the literature, research information, and lesson plan examples that will assist parents, teachers, and the children to learn to read and also learn literacy skills in Spanish.

ELVA DURÁN, Ph.D.

# INTRODUCTION

Almost ten million children in the United States between the ages of five and 17 live in homes and communities in which a language other than English is spoken (Waggoner, 1994). These language minorities represent more than 100 distinct language groups, with Spanish speakers comprising 75 percent of the population (Ortiz & Graves, 2001). A group of the language minority population consists of English Language Learners (ELLs), also referred to as limited English proficient students, whose English skills are so limited that they cannot profit from general education instruction provided entirely in English without support.

Language minority students in general, and English learners in particular meet with limited academic success. They experience high rates of retention in the grades, high dropout rates, and disproportionate representation in special education (Ortiz & Graves, 2001). According to Robertson and her colleagues (Robertson, Kushner, Starks, & Drescher, 1994), in some states English learners are underrepresented, while in other states as many as 27 percent of the students with limited English proficiency are in special education programs. The 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress indicated that 20 percent of fourth grade English learners were also classified as having disabilities (Mazzeo, Carlson, Voekl, & Lutkus, 2000). English learners pose complex challenges relative to referral, assessment, and instruction, and, in many cases, the services they are provided do not respond effectively to their needs (IDEA Amendments, 1997).

For the past 35 years the federal government has been involved in education to attempt to close the gap which exists between the higher and lower end of students. Even with all these efforts nationally and in our local governments, 40 percent of all fourth graders cannot read. With the recent signing of the new provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2001), it is the hope of Congress that every child in America can learn and be able to excel in his or her performance and live out his or her dreams. One of the main focal points of the

new bill will be academic instruction and having the students learn English through English language development and native language instruction utilizing scientifically proven educational methods and curriculum which have been tested with many children over long periods of time. Also, the bill will have strong accountability plans in place to determine if the children are learning and will provide for parents to have a greater say in how their children are educated.

Such bill provisions have great promise for the many Spanish-speaking children who are learning English, reading, and speaking in their native language, and later learning academic language in the content subjects. Also, this new bill has great promise for the many immigrant children who come from Spanish-speaking countries and are unable to learn English because their native language is weak or they do not have the adequate background, vocabulary, and academic vocabulary to learn English or Spanish. Systematic programs and information indicated by the various authors of this text will serve as a good beginning and knowledge base to better plan programs and curriculum for the Spanish-speaking students.

Some of the research on teaching Spanish-speaking students how to read and learn literacy has recently started to surface from various investigative teams, and the results are promising. We know, for example, that in the past when educating many bilingual children, not enough English language development was given to the students as they were learning to read, write, listen, and speak in Spanish. Many schools are adding more time during reading and literacy instruction in the native language to also have their children learn English. Many schools have indicated that English language development should be at least one hour or more daily and have further noted that the English instruction needs to be increased a half hour every grade level until the students have transferred to English reading instruction.

We have also learned that implementing a strong phonological structure to beginning reading will not only help the children become better readers in their native language but will also help the children be better readers in English because of the positive transfer of the phonological skills in both languages.

Additionally, we have learned that giving the students instruction in syllables only in Spanish is helpful, but we have also learned that students need practice in learning the phonemes or individual sounds in Spanish in order to be strong readers in Spanish (Francis, 2001). We also know that students will get practice in learning the sounds once they have transferred or begin reading in English. Having the students

learn the individual sounds in Spanish as they are learning to read in their native language will help prepare them for the transfer to English reading.

Just as this book offers a recent review of scientific evidence on what is effective in teaching Spanish reading instruction, the various authors also offer in their chapters much review of the literature and suggestions for teaching Spanish-speaking students reading and literacy instruction. In Chapter 1, Elva Durán and Doug Carnine introduce the readers to direct instruction and the various components that are found in the systematic approach which can be used with any reading and literacy program and/ or instruction. In Chapter 2, written by Elba Maldonado-Colón, she gives an excellent review of the literature in language development and includes many additional ideas for developing oral language instruction, listening, and speaking with Spanish-speaking students. In Chapter 3, Linda Carnine gives a review of the literature on language development and instruction and presents information on what a comprehensive language development program should look like when being implemented with Spanish-speaking students who are learning Spanish and English instruction. In Chapter 4, John Shefelbine talks about academic language and its importance in developing reading and literacy instruction with Spanish-speaking students. In Chapter 5, Elva Durán discusses components of reading and literacy instruction in Spanish, and in Chapter 6 she outlines for the readers some lesson plan suggestions for teaching reading and literacy to Spanish-speaking students. Barbara Gunn gives a summary of her research in Chapter 7, utilizing systematic and supplementary instruction in reading and literacy for Spanish-speaking students. In Chapter 8, Elva Durán defines transfer and gives us a review of the literature concerning transfer. In Chapter 9, Elva Durán and John Shefelbine discuss the components that transfer and do not transfer from Spanish to English reading instruction. Finally, in Chapter 10, Elva Durán gives her reflections and summation of what she feels we need to have in a comprehensive and systematic reading and literacy program for Spanish-speaking students.

ELVA DURÁN, Ph.D.

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# CONTENTS

# SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION IN READING FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS

# Chapter 1

# DIRECT INSTRUCTION

ELVA DURÁN AND DOUGLAS CARNINE

## DEFINITION

Direct instruction is a method by which students are taught face to face in small or large groups utilizing systematic and explicit instruction. This specific means of teaching students may include the teacher signaling, modeling, and following a lesson which is scripted and is designed to have the student respond chorally as the teacher signals the small group or an entire group of students. The pace of a lesson being presented by the teacher is brisk so that the students will respond to what is being presented and will not be distracted. The more engaged and attentive the students are to what is being presented in the highly organized lesson, the more success the students will have in learning the lesson objectives.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF DIRECT INSTRUCTION AND RESEARCH

Englemann (1966) started writing some of his conceptual ideas of a methodology that would eventually become known as the direct instruction model in 1966, when he and Carl Bereiter started a preschool designed to help the most disadvantaged children learn the academic subjects. The driving force for Englemann was always to produce materials that would help any student learn. Later, Englemann and his colleague Wes Becker would begin their work in a federally-funded research project known as Project Follow Through. Project Follow Through was a project which was funded from 1967 to 1976 (and still continued as a federally-funded program until 1995 (D. Carnine, personal communication, July 12, 2000). The project evaluated education models

that utilized the direct instruction approach with those schools utilizing a constructivist/discovery learning approach. In the constructivist approach, the child's interests and choice drives the instruction. According to D. Carnine (2000), the major skills-oriented teacher-directed model tested in Project Follow Through was "direct instruction," sponsored by the University of Oregon. D. Carnine, who was one of the lead research scientists in Project Follow Through, notes that key assumptions of the direct instruction model are: "(a) that all children can be taught (and that this is a teacher's responsibility); (b) that low performing students must be taught more, not less, in order to catch up; and (c) that the task of teaching more requires careful use of educational technology and time" (p. 6). Of all the approaches analyzed in the Project Follow Through research in the direct instruction (model), the students who participated in this type of instruction were at or near national norms in math and language and close to national norms in reading (D. Carnine, 2000). D. Carnine further notes that other approaches which are constructivist in concept performed worse than the control group or direct instruction model. This was seen not only in reading and reading comprehension but in other subjects as well. D. Carnine notes the following concerning the Follow Through research:

> The performance of Follow Through children in direct instruction sites on the affective measures is an unexpected result. The direct instruction model does not explicitly emphasize affective outcomes of instruction, but the sponsor has asserted that they will be consequences of effective teaching. Critics of the model have predicted that the emphasis on tightly controlled instruction might discourage children from freely expressing themselves, and thus inhibit the development of self-esteem and other affective skills. In fact, this is not the case. (p. 7)

## SOME COMPONENTS NEEDED IN TEACHING LESSONS UTILIZING DIRECT INSTRUCTION

The many years of research of the direct instruction model have given much information on what is effective for teachers to know about teaching lessons utilizing direct instruction. In order to have an effective lesson to teach specific curriculum that utilizes direct instruction methodologies, some of the following components are necessary to have in the various lessons presented to the students (Carnine, Silbert, & Kameenui, 1997). First of all, teachers need to organize their instruction, and also need to evaluate their curricular materials to see if the programs are meeting their student needs, and teachers need to also know presentation techniques that are at the heart of direct instruction curriculum. Additionally, once the teachers begin using direct instruction curriculum, as Durán and D. Carnine (1999) have learned in field testing the Leamos Spanish reading curriculum which utilizes direct instruction, the

teachers needed coaching for at least three or four times until they felt comfortable enough to complete the reading lessons on their own. First, some of the effective components that are needed in teaching students lessons that are planned utilizing direct instruction will be given and then each component will be further explained in this chapter.

## Organization of Instruction

In the l970s and 1980s, much information was given to us about effectiveness of instruction and how best students learned (Brophy & Good, 1986; Murphy, Weil, & McGreal, 1986). One of the important components that was given to us from all of this research was the idea that in order for children to learn most effectively, they needed to be engaged actively in what they were learning. Rosenshine and Berliner (1978) talked about direct instruction and further revealed for us that having students engaged in their learning could also help to increase their reading achievement. From much of Rosenshine and Berliner's earlier review of direct instruction and their synthesis of many classroom observational studies, they indicated that students consistently demonstrate higher reading achievement scores when their teachers do the following:

(a) Devote substantial time to active instruction;
(b) break complex skills and concepts into small, easy-to-understand steps, and systematically teach in a step-by-step fashion;
(c) ensure that all students operate at a high rate of success;
(d) provide immediate feedback to students about the accuracy of their work; and
(e) conduct much of the instruction in small groups to allow for frequent student-teacher interactions. (p. 252)

### *Reading Engaged Time*

As a result of all of this review came a concept that is extremely important in direct instruction, and that is the idea of reading engaged time. According to D. Carnine et al. (1997), reading engaged time refers to the time students actually spend on reading exercises and activities. D. Carnine et al. further note that researchers point out that time spent in reading yielded higher correlations with achievement than any other teacher or student behavior studied. It should be noted and emphasized here that engaged time refers not to scheduled time but only to the time students actually spend completing reading activities. D. Carnine et al. report that Rosenshine and Berliner (l978) reviewed studies that found only 80 percent of the 85 minutes allocated to reading in second grade were academic-engaged minutes, while in fifth grade about 75 percent of the 113 minutes were engaged minutes. D. Carnine et al.