



Curriculum

Berwyn East Academy will use the very best programming available for students in the primary grades. This set of programs was the winning entry in the largest federal research project in education ever funded. It always comes out on top in scientific studies comparing different teaching methods. The programs are published commercially by SRA McGraw-Hill. There are six levels in the reading series, Reading Mastery. In the first three levels, students learn to read, and in the last three, they read to learn about science, social studies and great literature. The math programs, Connecting Math Concepts, have been recently rewritten to follow the Common Core Curriculum. All of these programs are designed using the general set of techniques called Direct Instruction (DI). DI is the creation of Zig Engelmann who has authored over a hundred academic programs and who has been recognized by the education community as the foremost creator of truly effective education curricula.

Direct Instruction lessons are characterized by carefully scripted lessons in which homogeneously grouped students actively respond to teacher prompts many times in each lesson. In this way, the teacher can observe closely each student's ability to respond and can provide immediate remediation through repetition. Only 10% of any lesson involves the introduction of new concepts. The remainder of the lesson provides practice on previously introduced concepts, some of which are reaching mastery while some are being reviewed on their way to mastery. In DI programs every concept is mastered by every student. Mastery of more basic skills provides a solid foundation for progress to more complex concepts and enhances student ability to progress. Students not only feel smarter under this process, they actually do learn faster and have better recall of what they have learned.

Besides the series of programs for reading and math, there are DI programs for writing, language, spelling and advanced math (Intro to Algebra) and history.

DIRECT INSTRUCTION INCLUDES:

DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING means teaching in a way that is best for each individual student. Instruction is based on careful assessment of the level of each student and measurement continues throughout the program.

Diversity and uniqueness among students is considered and instruction varies accordingly to meet the needs and strengths of each individual student.

STUDENT-LED LEARNING is based on student performance through each lesson. Should any student or group of students fail to meet learning goals, teachers are directed to go back to the last topic mastered and reteach the material.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING utilizes a group setting to help all members in the group by answering on signal so the teacher can assess when students depend on group responses or answer late. Teachers identify those students and repeat the question until they can keep up.

MULTISENSORY LEARNING or **TEACHING TO THE "WHOLE CHILD"** means that the student must use several senses at various times. They must listen, respond out loud, touch parts of a book, write answers or even tap responses.

BALANCED LITERACY means mastering all aspects of literacy to include excellent phonetic skills and superior comprehension.

GUIDED READING is when students are carefully guided in their reading instruction throughout the beginning programs. As their skills grow, students are asked pointed questions and are asked to provide written responses.