

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

Department of Education Question No. ED0269_15

Senator Wright provided in writing.

Question

Direct instruction in remote schools

I understand the Federal Government is in the process of advertising for organisations to roll out 'direct instruction' in remote schools. Can you explain what direct instruction or explicit instruction means in a pedagogical sense? Why have schools that are mostly indigenous been targeted for this program? What evidence is there for this method – in general and with indigenous students in particular? Is this policy consistent with the Coalition's other stated intentions to end running schools from Canberra and give schools more autonomy?

Answer

Can you explain what direct instruction or explicit instruction means in a pedagogical sense?

Direct Instruction focuses on teaching core literacy skills through step by step lessons with clear scripts for teachers. Students are grouped according to ability rather than age and undertake continuous assessment to evaluate progress.

Explicit Instruction involves students receiving clearly articulated statements about the purpose for learning new skills such as sounding out letters. Lessons are structured in a systematic way with learners guided through explanations, demonstrations, feedback and practice until the skill is mastered.

Why have schools that are mostly Indigenous been targeted for this program?

Remote primary schools are the focus of the programme. In 2013, the proportion of Year 3 students in remote schools meeting the minimum standard in NAPLAN for reading was 80.7 per cent compared with 96.1 per cent for metropolitan students. Many remote primary schools also have large Indigenous student enrolments.

What evidence is there for this method – in general and with Indigenous students in particular?

The findings of the *National Inquiry into the Teaching of Reading* (2005), found that explicit systematic instruction in phonics is an essential foundation for teaching children to read.

Research on the benefits of Direct Instruction is contained in *Visible Learning – A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* (Professor John

Hattie, 2009), and the Evaluation of the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy Initiative (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2013)

<http://deta.qld.gov.au/indigenous/pdfs/cyaaa-evaluation-report.pdf>

Is this policy consistent with the Coalition's other stated intentions to end running schools from Canberra and give schools more autonomy?

This initiative is consistent with the Government's election commitment. Schools will be invited to participate in the programme.