DIRECT INSTRUCTION CASE STUDY: A YEAR ON

McGraw Hill

A case study written in partnership with Kevin Surrey and Suzy Wybrow, Directors of Direct Instruction for United Learning, was completed in July 2020 ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With a year having passed since the writing of the last paper looking at the impact of Direct Instruction (DI), as well as the ramifications on account of the global pandemic, this new paper explores:

- How the Direct Instruction teaching methodology fared when it was moved remotely
- The challenges—and how they were overcome—with moving the DI model online
- The excellent results the two sets of learners included in the DI streams saw despite the tumultuous times
- The future of Direct Instruction for Suzy and Kevin and their vision for widening the impact it can have.

> **"Students were already being left behind. It wasn't the pandemic that caused this." Suzy Wybrow**

Initial Impact of the Virus

As reported on both a national and an international scale, teaching teams were taken by surprise when the pandemic first hit. Suzy and Kevin shared that we were not in a position to deliver DI remotely as it required specific training.

"We were able to provide worksheets to pupils," Kevin commented, but admitted that there was no provision of digital or remote learning in place immediately.

When schools did return in the Autumn of 2020, the pair were keen to get their learners back on track and up-to-speed. They were also keen to ensure, should another lockdown be put in place, that they were ready to support their learners with a plan for remote-based learning. They spent a lot of time planning for the eventuality of further restrictions and how they could look to mitigate the loss of learning for the students in their groups.

The pair also attended a training session focused on how DI can be delivered effectively online, which Suzy described as "really eye-opening." The 9-hour course, put on by NIFDI, showed Kevin and Suzy how the methods they would usually utilise in a classroom setting could be converted to a remote environment. For Kevin, it was a "unique insight in how DI can be delivered remotely when needed to allow all students to continue with their DI experiences.

Whilst much has been made of the gap in learning the pandemic caused, and its impact on learning loss, Suzy and Kevin were keen to get across that the gaps in the education space were there long before the virus hit. "Students were already being left behind," Suzy said. "It wasn't the pandemic that caused this," she stated.

Regardless of views on learning loss, what lies largely undisputed is the fact that the second national lockdown in the UK saw enhanced levels of digital provision available from schools.

Direct Instruction Moved Remotely

When Suzy and Kevin were faced with the reality of another national lockdown, thanks to the training they had had and the preparation they'd put in place, they were ready to move their DI classes online. Despite their efforts, they did share that "DI is all about coming together as a class and checking every student is on board." For them, the restrictions in place across the UK were "far from ideal" for the progress of their learners.

Like so many other educators, they also faced additional challenges linked to the use of technology; they were reliant on their learners turning up to the sessions and having the right equipment.

Technical issues aside, the pair shared that they were able to get things up and running remotely and admitted that they even saw some benefits to the shift to digital lessons.

Explaining how the sessions online worked, Kevin said, "You would deliver the lesson the same as you would in class. For example, with some simple addition questions, in the classroom, I'd ask the whole class for the answer and they'd all come back at once with what they thought was right. When you do it online, you have to ask the same questions but individually, so I used to select one pupil to answer the next question, and another pupil for the next." He shared that it was more time-consuming that way, though rather than seeing that as a drawback, the pair found it to have a positive impact.

Suzy expanded, "When you're in a classroom setting, even though I'll ask the questions to an individual, just from where you're stood or perhaps your body language, some of it can be given away." Virtually, this wasn't the case, she commented, and "because nobody knew who the next question would be geared towards, everyone was kept motivated."

This motivation helped both the groups as a whole and also had a positive impact on individuals within their cohorts. As a group, the data showed that the learners saw their numeracy and literacy levels move up as they progressed through lockdown. "Our results and data show that we were able to keep the kids on track and

making excellent progress," Suzy said. The pair also shared that, in addition to the data showing progress, they had also seen examples of individual behavioural shifts.

Suzy gave the example of one of her learners who, in the classroom setting, was particularly underconfident. "When she would answer her questions, she'd barely be audible," she said. And yet, when the classroom shifted to a remote-based one, the student gained additional confidence; she felt more comfortable. "This newfound confidence stayed with her when we returned back to normal," Suzy said.

The Results

With a year under their belts, and with an unprecedented mixture of teaching methods to track against, Suzy and Kevin explained that their year-on-year results were, despite the challenges, still hugely positive.

> **"They've done just as well remotely as they would have in class." Kevin Surrey**

> **"It's testament to the power of Direct Instruction that, despite the huge limitations and challenges this year brought, we've still been able to see such uplift in both literacy and numeracy skills." Suzy Wybrow**

Overall Breakdown with Age Related Progress for the Year 2020-2021 for Classes, Pupil Premium, Non-Pupil Premium, SEN and Non-SEN - Literacy

	Groups	Average Age Sept	Progress	Average Age July
Year 7	Year 7 Girls Class	8.38	+3.80	12.18
	Year 7 Girls PP	8.51	+3.49	12.00
	Year 7 Girls Non-PP	8.07	+4.48	12.55
	Year 7 Girls SEN	8.56	+2.52	11.08
	Year 7 Girls Non-SEN	8.21	+4.91	13.12
	Year 7 Boys Class	7.27	+5.57	12.84
	Year 7 Boys PP	8.37	+4.57	12.91
	Year 7 Boys Non-PP	6.80	+6.00	12.80
	Year 7 Boys SEN	4.47	+5.33	12.80
	Year 7 Boys Non-SEN	7.72	+5.34	13.06
Year 8	Year 8 Girls Class	7.23	+5.81	13.04
	Year 8 Girls PP	7.28	+5.37	12.65
	Year 8 Girls Non-PP	7.20	+6.10	13.30
	Year 8 Girls SEN	6.63	+5.77	12.40
	Year 8 Girls Non-SEN	7.83	+5.87	13.70
	Year 8 Boys Class	6.59	+6.83	13.42
	Year 8 Boys PP	6.49	+7.08	13.57
	Year 8 Boys Non-PP	9.58	+3.75	13.17
	Year 8 Boys SEN	8.57	+4.83	13.40
	Year 8 Boys Non-SEN	5.49	+7.98	13.47
Year 9	Year 9 Girls Class	9.83	+4.23	14.06
	Year 9 Girls PP	12.03	+2.77	14.80
	Year 9 Girls Non-PP	9.57	+4.40	13.97
	Year 9 Girls SEN	10.52	+3.48	14.00
	Year 9 Girls Non-SEN	8.90	+5.20	14.10
	Year 9 Boys Class	8.01	+5.06	13.07
	Year 9 Boys PP	8.00	+3.80	11.80
	Year 9 Boys Non-PP	8.01	+5.49	13.50
	Year 9 Boys SEN	9.00	+3.80	12.80
	Year 9 Boys Non-SEN	5.05	+8.95	14.00
Total Impact	Total Impact Class	7.89	+5.21	13.10
	Total Impact PP	8.45	+4.50	12.95
	Total Impact Non-PP	8.21	+5.01	13.22
	Total Impact SEN	7.96	+4.49	12.45
	Total Impact Non-SEN	7.12	+6.46	13.58

Overall Breakdown with Age Related Progress for the Year 2020-2021 for Classes, Pupil Premium, Non-Pupil Premium, SEN and Non-SEN - Numeracy

	Groups	Average Age Sept	Progress	Average Age July
Year 7	Year 7 Girls Class	7.15	+3.51	10.66
	Year 7 Girls PP	6.56	+3.24	9.80
	Year 7 Girls Non-PP	7.72	+3.51	11.23
	Year 7 Girls SEN	7.45	+2.39	9.84
	Year 7 Girls Non-SEN	7.07	+4.40	11.47
	Year 7 Boys Class	7.90	+3.96	11.05
	Year 7 Boys PP	8.19	+3.13	11.32
	Year 7 Boys Non-PP	7.47	+3.19	10.66
	Year 7 Boys SEN	7.61	+3.10	10.71
	Year 7 Boys Non-SEN	8.72	+3.34	12.06
Year 8	Year 8 Girls Class	7.46	+3.49	10.95
	Year 8 Girls PP	7.55	+2.24	9.79
	Year 8 Girls Non-PP	7.75	+3.86	11.61
	Year 8 Girls SEN	7.03	+3.02	10.05
	Year 8 Girls Non-SEN	8.45	+3.58	12.03
	Year 8 Boys Class	9.94	+1.18	11.75
	Year 8 Boys PP	8.47	+2.45	10.92
	Year 8 Boys Non-PP	12.72	+0.99	13.71
	Year 8 Boys SEN	9.34	+2.28	11.62
	Year 8 Boys Non-SEN	10.68	+1.38	12.06
Year 9	Year 9 Girls Class	8.18	+3.86	12.04
	Year 9 Girls PP	8.03	+5.50	13.53
	Year 9 Girls Non-PP	8.22	+3.39	11.61
	Year 9 Girls SEN	8.03	+3.47	11.54
	Year 9 Girls Non-SEN	8.39	+4.65	13.04
	Year 9 Boys Class	9.34	+2.74	12.08
	Year 9 Boys PP	8.57	+3.51	12.08
	Year 9 Boys Non-PP	11.05	1.04+	12.09
	Year 9 Boys SEN	8.57	+3.51	12.08
	Year 9 Boys Non-SEN	11.05	1.04+	12.09
Total Impact	Total Impact Class	8.33	+3.09	11.42
	Total Impact PP	7.90	+3.34	11.24
	Total Impact Non-PP	9.16	+2.66	11.82
	Total Impact SEN	8.01	+2.99	11.00
	Total Impact Non-SEN	9.06	+3.07	12.13

"Zig Engelmann believed that all educators, in any setting, can uniformly teach any child to read, and learn, even against the odds and that those very same children will improve in terms of their own self-image. This philosophy, that underpins Direct Instruction, has not only been proven over time but continues to reach out to ALL students. The data shows that whether you are a child with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or Pupil Premium (PP), the DI programmes do not discriminate and that the results are uniform over all categories in both Reading and Maths." Kevin Surrey

Results: The Individual Impact

Speaking about the results on an individual level, Suzy and Kevin shared that they received a number of cards and letters at the end of the academic year from those in their groups, thanking them for their efforts and sharing that their lives have been changed on account of the teaching.

Suzy shared that, at the start of a new year, the learners will often "question why they're in the DI groups; they'll ask why they have to learn and they will frequently share their dislike for the subject, especially with maths."

"By the end of the year, the change is fascinating and we have so many letters as testament to that," she said. The pair gave examples of one of the cards they received. "If it wasn't for you two, I wouldn't be the person I am today," it said.

Adding further context to this, Suzy shared, "Once students can access the work and access the curriculum, they stay in lessons. Generally, the reason they won't is because they can't access it, so as soon as they can, they have skills to try."

Generally speaking, she said, "It changes a child, having their confidence being built, and that extends out into their other lessons and other subjects. I get feedback from other tutors saying how the DI students are very willing to put their hands up in other classes."

The Future of Direct Instruction and Extending its Impact

With results not being impacted by two national lockdowns and schools keen to explore how they can best support learners still playing catch-up, Suzy and Kevin, as well-known advocates for the DI model, explained that they've never been busier.

"We have seen a surge in interest through the marketing we have done and the awareness we've been shining a light on," Kevin said, with Suzy agreeing. "Our awareness has grown—people get what we do and who we are, and we're really booked up for training with schools now being able to come to us."

In addition to an increased number of schools interested in both finding out more and being trained to deliver DI, Suzy and Kevin are also looking to pilot the model in a handful of Primary schools. They are keen to introduce intervention in KS2 to alleviate issues in Year 7. "That's our next goal," Suzy shared.

For further information on DI, please visit mheducation.co.uk/schools or www.direct-instruction.co.uk

Any queries relating to implementation and training of Direct Instruction, please contact the Direct Instruction Hub. McGraw Hill are proud to be working in partnership with them to help you on your DI journey.

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