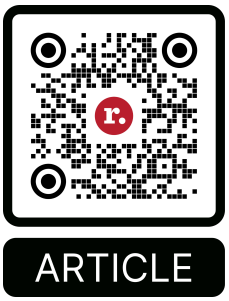
Episode 7: It's Up to Us

Direct Instruction has been rejected by the education system again and again. Why does something that works face so much resistance? And what does that tell us about ourselves? In the season finale, Emily offers some final thoughts. And we hear how Zig Engelmann viewed his life's work and what he left for others to do. Plus, some of the best podcast production credits you've ever heard.

S2 EPISODE 7

Episode Length	Listen to the episode	Read the transcript
38:33	Apple Podcasts • Spotify • soldastory.org	Printable Transcript
Additional Materials	Articles: • Five Meanings of Direct Instruction • Your state probably hasn't approved any Direct Instruction programs. Why not? • Stopping the pendulum: Making education a research-based profession • Principles of Instruction • Teaching Is a Big Enough Job Without Creating the Curriculum	

Before Listening	• What are you hoping to hear in the season finale?
While Listening	As you listen, notice the different explanations for resistance to Direct Instruction and what the episode says about the teaching profession.
After Listening	*From all perspectives:* Cathy Watkins says Zig Engelmann never claimed there is just one right way to do things: "He goes, 'I don't believe that at all. I think there are many right ways to do things. The problem is there are about a million wrong ways.'" • What did you think when you heard this? Do you agree? In this season, we've heard about: 1. Zig Engelmann's Direct Instruction programs 2. The generic version of direct instruction, also called "little d.i." or explicit instruction 3. Lecturing

	• How would you explain the differences? • Have you seen these terms cause confusion? What happened? Note: You may be interested in the article, Five Meanings of Direct Instruction. The author defines five overlapping uses of the term "direct instruction," including Zig's programs (which he refers to as DISTAR, their original name). • Has anything you've heard this season challenged your view of effective teaching?  ARTICLE We learned that few state education departments recommend Zig's Direct Instruction programs to schools. • Were you surprised? What questions do you want answered about how those lists are created? Note: You may be interested in reading this article: Your state probably hasn't approved any Direct Instruction programs. Why not?  ARTICLE Doug Carnine and Carl Hendrick say that teaching doesn't have an agreed-upon body of professional knowledge. • Do you think it's true? What makes you think that? • What would be different if teaching had a shared body of knowledge grounded in research? Note: If you would like to learn more about this topic, you might read Doug's article, Stopping the pendulum: Making education a research-based profession  ARTICLE
Wrap Up	The title of this episode is "It's Up to Us." • Why do you think that's the title? • After listening to this entire season, what do you think needs to happen next?
Extend	*Activity 1:* The article Principles of Instruction describes ten research-based principles. Read the whole article or divide the principles among members of your discussion group and share what you learn. • How would you summarize each principle? Consider jotting notes for each. • What connections do you see among the principles? How do they work together to support student learning? • What challenges might teachers face putting these principles into practice?  ARTICLE

Activity 2:

In this episode, Marty Siegel describes scripts as both Direct Instruction's greatest strength and also its biggest weakness.

Margaret, the teacher who helped write these discussion guides, once believed that scripted lessons were beneath teachers. Read her article, Teaching Is a Big Enough Job Without Creating the Curriculum, to learn how her perspective changed over time.

ARTICLE

- Why was teaching from a script a big adjustment for Margaret?
- How did her understanding of what it means to be a good teacher change over time?

At the end of the article, Margaret offers a wish list for supporting teachers at different stages of their careers.

- Which of the suggestions do you think would make the biggest difference? Why?
- What is missing from the list?

Activity 3:

Emily said:

> "I think there may be a lot of teachers out there who would be open to Direct Instruction. But they don't know what it is. They don't know about the research on it. And they haven't had a chance to learn how to do it."

Make a plan to find out how interested teachers are in learning more about Direct Instruction. You might have informal conversations, create a survey or find another way to gather the information. Before you begin, predict what you think you'll hear.

After collecting the information, discuss:

- Did teachers say what you were expecting them to say? What surprised you?
- What did you learn about why teachers are interested — or not — in Direct Instruction?

Consider sharing what you learned with Emily by sending a video or an audio recording — or emailing her at soldastory@apmreports.org.