Sold a Story: Discussion Guide

Season 2: Episode 2

Episode 2: The Remedy Is Always Teaching

At an experimental preschool in Illinois, Zig Engelmann and his colleagues begin turning his ideas into a classroom teaching method. Along the way, they make a series of discoveries about effective instruction. Their mantra: "If the student hasn't learned, the teacher hasn't taught."

S2 EPISODE 2

Episode Length	Listen to the episode	Read the transcript
27:36	Apple Podcasts • Spotify • soldastory.org	Printable Transcript
Additional Materials	What is Direct Instruction? Video • Article	

Before Listening	In this episode, we'll hear about Direct Instruction. We'll also hear about a different approach, commonly referred to as discovery learning. • What comes to mind when you hear those terms? • What do you think they look like? Sound like? Feel like?
While Listening	What does Zig believe about teaching and learning? Listen for what he says and what he does.
After Listening	This episode covers several principles of learning: ➢ "The curse of the expert" makes teaching hard ➢ Children can learn "misrules" ➢ Carefully sequencing instruction matters ➢ Contrasts — showing what something is not — can deepen understanding • Which of these principles caught your interest? Why? *From a teaching perspective:* Kurt Engelmann compared a teacher's script to an actor's script. Emily explained: "You're

	reading the lines, but you make them your own." Doug Carnine, who worked with Zig, likened it to an orchestra conductor's sheet music: > "They get to the point where they can almost lead the orchestra. I mean, they'll always be flipping through their music, but in a way they have internalized that to an incredible degree." ● Have you ever taught from a scripted lesson? What was it like? ● Should teachers be both the composer and conductor of their lessons? Why or why not? In this episode, we learn how Direct Instruction lesson plans were developed, tested and revised: > "The schedule was that we would teach and then after we would sit down for about half an hour and figure out what we did that was wrong and what was sloppy and what we had to change and what we were going to do tomorrow." ● How are your lesson plans developed? What is the process for testing and revision? *From a parenting perspective:* Zig said: > "The main goal of effective instruction should be to use time with desperate efficiency. I mean, treat time as the most precious product you have." ● What would it look like for your child's teacher to treat instructional time as "the most precious product" they have? ○ What would you want to see, or not see, in the classroom? We learn about the schedule at the preschool: > "The children came to preschool for just two hours a day. One hour was games, art, snack and music. The other hour the children were divided into small groups. And they got formal lessons. Twenty minutes of math instruction. Twenty minutes of reading instruction. And twenty minutes of language instruction." ● What does the schedule tell you about what Zig valued? ● Would you want this schedule at your own child's preschool? Why or why not? *From a community or student perspective:* Linda Carnine says the kids were excited because "it's gonna be hard," and then they "feel so good about themselves" when they did it. ● Think of a time when something at school was hard for you. Were you successful? How did you feel?
Wrap Up	● What have you learned so far about Direct Instruction?

	• What has surprised you? What do you still want to know?

Extend	*Activity 1*
	
	Five things to know about Direct Instruction are explained in this video: What Is Direct Instruction?
	
	1. Choral response
	2. Individual turns
	3. Immediate corrections
	4. Repetition and practice
	5. Scripting
	
	VIDEO
	
	Pick one of the five to watch for as you view the video.
	
	• What did you notice about how students participated in the lessons?
	  ○ What did you notice about choral responses, individual turns, or corrections? How did they help students learn?
	• What did you notice about the teaching in Direct Instruction?
	  ○ How did repetition and scripts affect the pace of the lesson?
	• What else did you notice about Direct Instruction?
	• Were you surprised by anything you saw or heard?
	
	Activity 2
	
	In this article, What Is Direct Instruction?, two additional principles are explained:
	
	- If a concept is communicated faultlessly, there is no room for mislearning.
	- Every child can learn, if they're taught well.
	
	ARTICLE
	
	• How do these two ideas fit together? How does one idea support the other?