

EMBRACING LITERACY SHIFTS AND UNDERSTANDING THAT EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION IS VITAL FOR STUDENTS

Gunn, B., Smolkowski, K., Strycker, L. A., & Dennis, C. (2021). Measuring explicit instruction using classroom observations of student-teacher interactions (COSTI). *Perspectives on Behavior Science*, 44(2), 267-283.

WHAT DID THEY DO?

Researchers employed the Classroom Observations of Student-Teacher Interactions (COSTI) tool to assess explicit instruction interactions between teachers and students. Through this tool, they observed four key instructional moves: teacher demonstrations, student independent practice, student errors, and teacher-provided corrective feedback.

The study involved a multi-step process. First, instructional assistants received training. Then, researchers documented student-teacher interactions and worked to improve instruction quality. Furthermore, the researchers validated the COSTI tool by using it to evaluate the Read Well Kindergarten reading program. This evaluation was conducted through a randomized controlled trial across 26 schools.

WHAT DID THEY FIND?

The research yielded promising results, students who received supplemental instruction demonstrated superior reading skills compared to their control group counterparts. Notably, these benefits persisted for two years following the intervention, with the supplemented group exhibiting greater growth in oral reading fluency.

Furthermore, the study found that combining the Direct Instruction curriculum with sufficient independent practice resulted in significant gains for students. Additionally, the Classroom Observations of Student-Teacher Interactions (COSTI) tool proved effective in evaluating the quality of teacher instruction and identifying opportunities for student practice.

WHAT COULD THIS MEAN FOR TEACHERS?

This research is important for teachers because it illustrates that explicit instruction strategies (modeling, think aloud, scaffolds, practice, and feedback) improve student learning outcomes. The research also shows that using tools like COSTI, helps teachers assess and refine their instructional approaches. This makes COSTI a great coaching tool. The study also demonstrates that combining direct instruction curriculum with independent practice for students increases student gains and supplemental instruction with high student-teacher interaction supports students at risk of reading difficulties.

