

Promoting Measurably Superior Instructional Methods in Schools

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Reference: Binder, C. and Watkins, C. (1990). Precision Teaching and Direct Instruction: Measurably Superior Instruction Techniques in Schools. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 3 (4), 74-96.

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Overview

- What do we have to offer?
- Are these solutions needed?
- Why no mad rush to get what we have?
- What or who is our market?
- What can we do differently?
- Our personal roles in making a difference

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What do we have to offer?

- Learner-validated teaching methodologies (2 examples)
- Measurably superior results and programs
- Thousands of successful students
- Measurement and revision built-in, not added on
- Objective performance standards and measurement tools
- Cost-effective methods for student-centered individualized learning

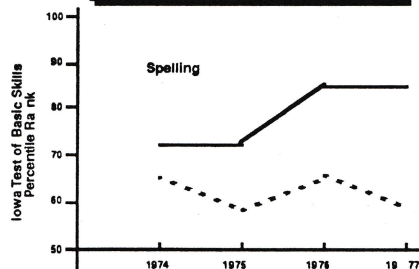
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A Brief History of Precision Teaching

- Lindsley "puts science in the hands of teachers and students"
- Eric Haughton and others discover and apply "aims"
- Pennypacker, Koenig, Lindsley and others publish books, journals, newsletters, articles
- Kunzelmann *et al* demonstrate the power of learning screening
- Beck and associates at the Great Falls Sacajawea Project demonstrate unprecedented educational effectiveness (with only 20-30 minutes of PT per day) and disseminate methods
- Teachers and students quietly surpass all expectations!
- Educators mostly ignore and reject Precision Teaching

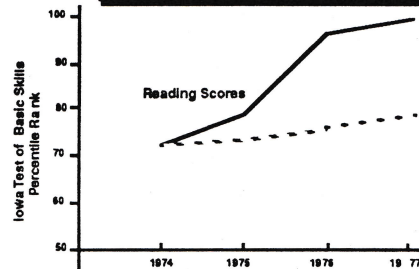
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Precision Teaching Project Results 4th Grade

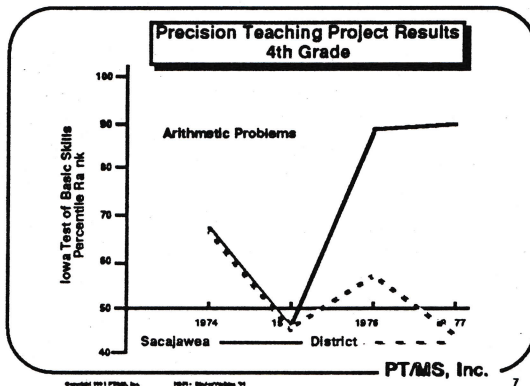


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Precision Teaching Project Results 4th Grade



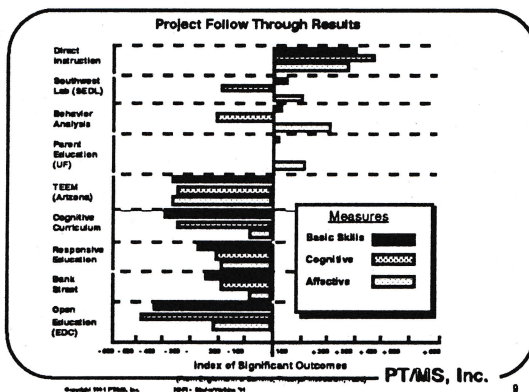
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Direct Instruction and Project Follow Through

- Most expensive federally funded educational experiment in history (almost 1 billion dollars)
- Evaluated programs to "follow through" on Head Start gains, and compared effects of 22 educational models in dozens of schools
- Included and compared "Basic Skills", "Cognitive-Conceptual" and "Affective-Cognitive" programs
- *Direct Instruction* surpassed all other models on all measures
- Most programs were worse than regular classroom education
- Results were mostly ignored or rejected by educators
- Less effective programs have consistently received more funding!

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Are these solutions needed?

- U.S. spends more \$ per capita on education than any developed nation.
- US students achieve less than those of any developed nation.
- A problem of return on investment
- Policy-makers and business leaders express concern
- There are many misconceptions about what variables account for educational failure and success
- Debates about "re-structuring" education, etc.

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Why no mad rush to get what we have?

- Publications are out of the educational mainstream
- "Behaviorism" is out of vogue -- passing fad
- "Too structured; rigid; drill and practice" etc.
- Our own jargon gets in the way of communication
- Educators have not been rewarded for effectiveness
- We are mostly concerned with our *own* students
- We have not been effective marketers

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Segments of the Educational Establishment

- Policy-makers
- Colleges of Education and Education Professors
- Teachers
- School Districts and Administrators
- Publishers
- The Public: consumers of the "product"

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Contingencies Governing Policy-makers

- They control funding for programs
- Their decisions are controlled largely by popular support
- They are most likely to agree with the majority position
- They rely on "expert advice" and Education Professors
- DI and PT represent a minority view in education
- Therefore.....

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Contingencies Governing Colleges of Education and Professors

- Professors and researchers have been especially resistant to measurably effective methods
- These methods differ in philosophy from the currently most popular educational philosophies ("cognitive," etc.)
- Professors are threatened because they do not know these methods themselves
- Academics are rewarded for published papers and books and generally use lecture method and teach "theory"
- Therefore, they are inclined to perpetuate the status quo.....

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Contingencies Governing Teachers

- Measurably effective methods do not resemble the usual classroom approach (Stallings and Kaskowitz, 1974)
- Therefore, teachers are unlikely to encounter them without specialized training (unlikely in Colleges of Education)
- Most teachers are not even aware of these more effective methods (but blame factors other than instructional method for educational failure)
- Teachers are not rewarded for measured effectiveness
- They are punished for "bucking the system."
- Therefore, teachers tend to perpetuate the status quo....

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Contingencies Governing School Districts and Administrators

- School District Administrators want effective operations
- Budgets, personnel, and politics are their main priorities
- Only outside funding moves them in new directions
- They do not generally reward schools and teachers for results
- They receive more support for athletics and facilities than for measured results
- Therefore, they tend to perpetuate the status quo, or let it slide down hill slowly (budget cuts, etc.)

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Contingencies Governing Publishers

- Publishers' products control methods and materials to a large extent
- They do not generally field test for results (less than 1%)
- They do not generally use systematic instructional development in producing their materials
- They do not usually initiate new trends, are controlled by sales volume and popularity
- They get their information from Education Professors
- Therefore.....

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Contingencies Governing the Public and Parents

- They provide the ultimate source of financial support, are the "consumers" of education
- They tend to believe what they are told by "authorities"
- They are generally unaware that there are dramatically more effective methods
- They notice that things seem to be getting worse, rather than better.
- And.....they are getting very angry.

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What or who is our market?

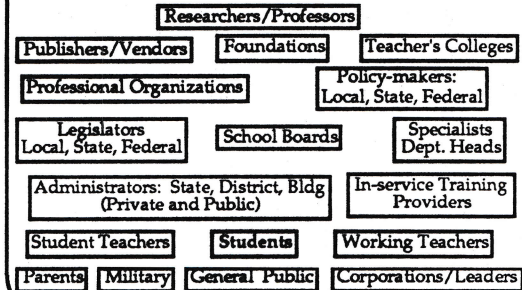
- Concerned parents who are able to pay
- Business leaders who need better employees
- General concerned public
- Policy makers looking for return on investment
- Probably not most public educators at this time (?)

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Market Segments



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What can we do differently?

- Become marketeers, not just technologists
- Communicate in Plain English
- Speak to a broader audience: "Solutions exist!"
- Be systematic -- apply our own methods
- Create integrated, prioritized strategy and tactics
- Focus on best opportunities, targets, markets
- Specialize according to skills and resources

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Our Personal Roles in Making a Difference

- This is a deepening cultural emergency
- Our children and grandchildren will suffer the effects
- We are a very small number
- Our methods and philosophy are not in vogue
- We tend to be absorbed in our own level of concerns
- What are we willing to do, now that we have measurably more effective educational technology?

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1 Minute Thinking Exercises

- What are the major problems or obstacles?
- What successes or solutions can serve as models?
- What can we do as a community of people, nationally or internationally?

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Next Steps

1. Decide on long-term mission and objectives
2. Work back to enabling objectives
3. Generate and select strategic options
4. Look for cost-effective tactics
5. Focus on greatest leverage
6. Define and commit to tasks

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