



# National Institute for Direct Instruction

## Video Guide for: Closing The Performance Gap: *The Gering Story* 21:30 minutes

### Video Guide Purpose:

This presentation guide is to be used as a tool for stimulating discussion about the important points raised in the video. It is only intended to be a framework for discussion. Presenters of the video should feel free to add to the focus items which have been included. Other topics related to the events in the video may come up after the video is viewed.

### Video Summary:

In 2004, Gering School District was a district in trouble. They were failing a majority of their students. Not only were they failing many of their students, there was also a serious achievement gap in reading between the Hispanic students and the white students. That was before the district implemented the comprehensive Direct Instruction model with the support of the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI). Now the achievement gap in reading has been closed with a majority of all students meeting or exceeding benchmark expectations! This is the story of how the Gering School District made a dramatic change from one with serious problems to one in which all students succeed academically.

### Focus Items:

The next section includes a list of possible focus items to be used by the presenter. Some possible points of discussion are bulleted after the focus items, but they include only a sample of points from the video. Presenters and participants will likely find many other topics to discuss depending on their own personal experiences.

1. **As the video begins, Andrea Boden (the Director of Assessment for the Gering District) makes the following statement: “We just felt like the demographic group you represent should not determine your achievement level.”**
  - a. What was happening in the Gering District to cause her to make that point?
    - There was a significant achievement gap between poor, minority students and white middle class students.
  - b. What are your thoughts about this statement?



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- 2. Before they began implementing DI, the teachers were nervous, apprehensive and skeptical. Some were concerned there would be no room for creativity. The Jr. High teachers were concerned about teaching outside of their subject area. Do you (or did you) share any of those concerns?**
- 3. The staff expressed far more positive feelings after DI was fully implemented. What contributed to such a dramatic change?**
  - Appreciated opportunities for acceleration.
  - Noticed big gains in achievement.
  - Junior High teachers saw improvements in creativity and confidence in their students.
- 4. At one point in the video, the elementary principal states, “We had zero discipline problems during reading instruction.” What factors contributed to a lack of discipline problems?**
  - No time lost in instruction time, teaching time, or learning time.
  - All students actively engaged during the reading period.
  - Program designed for success. Students respond positively to success.
- 5. It takes a team effort to make such a significant change occur in a system. Who are the critical players in making this happen?**
- 6. Why did this video begin and end with celebrations of academic success?**
  - There’s no longer a negative gap between economically disadvantaged minority students and middle class white students. Hispanic students now outperform the white students.
  - In the beginning 35-36% of Gering students were at grade level. Now, 70-80% of all students are achieving grade level expectations.
  - In one year, the number of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students achieving above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on the Terra Nova rose from 41% to 59%.
- 7. The five components of the DI program discussed in the video are:**
  - Instructional Grouping
  - Scripted Lessons
  - Progress Monitoring
  - Professional Development
  - High Quality Instruction

How did each component influence the Gering teachers? As an outside support provider, what role did the National Institute for Direct Instruction fulfill?

Note to presenter: The next page should be reproduced and handed out to participants to use for the purpose of taking notes as the video is viewed and for reference during discussion.



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  - b. What are your thoughts about this statement?
  
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- 6. Why did this video begin and end with celebrations of academic success?**
  
- 7. The five components of the DI program discussed in the video are:
  - a. Instructional Grouping
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  - c. Progress Monitoring
  - d. Professional Development
  - e. High Quality Instruction**

**How did each component influence the Gering teachers? As an outside support provider, what role did the National Institute for Direct Instruction fulfill?**