



Video Guide for: Helping Kids Soar: *Children Reaching Their Full Potential with Direct Instruction*

16:07 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:

Although often used to help students who are struggling academically, Direct Instruction programs are also used effectively to accelerate the learning of higher performing students. This video portrays two schools in different parts of the United States. One school is Emerson Elementary in Alliance, Nebraska. The other is Fickett Elementary in Atlanta, Georgia. Both schools have used Direct Instruction programs successfully with all children, including high performing students. The video shows how a careful implementation of Direct Instruction brings out the joy and wonder of reading as it prepares students for advanced content.

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 from the video. Presenters and participants will likely find other topics to discuss depending on their own personal experiences.

- 1. In the video, several statements are made by teachers regarding the practices that allow for high achieving students to “soar” through the levels.**
 - a. What are some practices mentioned?
 - Students who do well are “moved up.”
 - All students are placed in groups according to their level of skill.
 - Higher students need less practice so are able to move fast.
 - Students are never held back.
 - High achievement is encouraged and expected.
 - Students work at own pace.
 - b. How important are those practices in promoting acceleration?



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- 2. In Atlanta, one kindergarten teacher says, “I’ve really come to like DI because I’ve seen how much it does for the children.”**
 - a. What do you think is meant by that statement?
 - Fluency expectation for K students is 30 cpm, but many students read 60-70 cpm.
 - b. How does this relate to your own experience?
 - c. Discuss your feelings regarding expectations for student performance.
- 3. Third grade teacher, Melanie Johnson, mentions that almost all the students at Fickett Elementary School are fluent readers by 3rd grade.**
 - a. How does that relate to your expectations?
 - b. Discuss the practices currently in place in your building to ensure students are fluent readers by 3rd grade.
- 4. Melanie Johnson also says, “I love the flexibility.”**
 - a. How does flexibility relate to grouping?
 - b. How might flexibility be beneficial in accelerating students?
- 5. Although the student population in the elementary schools in Emerson, NE and Atlanta, GA differ, the outcome of the curriculum is the same. Discuss the factors that result in consistently high-achieving students in both rural NE and big-city Atlanta.**
- 6. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience are not always open to new methodology. That does not seem to be the case with the teachers in this video. Discuss why feelings are so strongly in favor of Direct Instruction practices.**
- 7. This video describes several types of on-going support provided by the National Institute for Direct Instruction.**
 - a. List some of the types of support provided by NIFDI.
 - b. Discuss the benefits of each type of support listed.
- 8. As NIFDI provides support for a school system, the focus is on student performance rather than teacher performance.**
 - a. Discuss why this is important.
 - b. Is student performance related to teacher performance? Discuss.
- 9. After watching this video, describe your feelings about the Direct Instruction programs and how they are promote the acceleration of high performing students.**

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



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Topics to Discuss:

1. In the video, several statements are made by teachers regarding the practices that allow for high achieving students to “soar” through the levels.
 - a. What are some practices mentioned?
 - b. How important are those practices in promoting acceleration?
2. In Atlanta, a kindergarten teacher says, “I’ve really come to like DI because I’ve seen how much it does for the children.”
 - a. What do you think she means by that statement?
 - b. How does this relate to your own experience.
 - c. Discuss your feelings regarding expectations for student performance.



National Institute for Direct Instruction

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National Institute for Direct Instruction

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