



National Institute for Direct Instruction

Video Guide for: Reading Mastery Training Series Disk One: The Path to Literacy 12:07 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:

This video is the story of five kindergarten teachers who were able to teach their students to read fluently by the end of their kindergarten year. The students were predominantly disadvantaged, at-risk children from poor, urban areas of Houston and Baltimore. Each teacher taught their students how to read in a typical nine-month school year by using a carefully designed step-by-step approach: Reading Mastery. The Reading Mastery program first teaches students sounds in isolation, and then teaches them to blend those sounds into words. Soon they are reading fluently and comprehending what they read.

Note:

Although all five teachers are using Reading Mastery successfully in the video, you will see slight differences in presentation from teacher to teacher. In a school provided with support from the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI), some of these differences would be corrected by NIFDI support personnel.

Focus Items:

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

1. **In the video, it is stated: “The children are poor and at risk for academic failure.”**
 - a. Why do you think poor, urban students are often considered to be “at risk?”
 - b. What happened between September and May to minimize the risk of academic failure?
 - Students started in September with nothing, barely able to speak in sentences.
 - By November, students are reading words and sentences and are writing stories with phonetic spelling using the sounds they’ve been taught.



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- By May, students are reading fluently with expression and understanding.
 - c. Were you impressed by the reading performance of these kindergarten students by the end of the year? Discuss.
2. **At one point it is stated, “Since children learn at very different rates, this program divides the children into small reading groups based on their levels.”**
 - a. Discuss why this teaching practice might be beneficial for kindergarten students.
 - b. Discuss why this practice might be beneficial for kindergarten teachers.
 3. **The video identifies a kindergarten group that has completed 125 out of 160 lessons of the first level of Reading Mastery as a “low-performing group.”**
 - a. What do you think about this statement? Discuss.
 4. **The five teachers in this video are very positive about being able to teach their kindergarten students to read. What factors contribute to their confidence?**
 5. **Although each instructor presents a little differently, some things are noticeably similar from teacher to teacher.**
 - a. What aspects did you see that are the same in all five classrooms?
 - All are using the Reading Mastery program for instruction.
 - Signals are used for a unison response.
 - Children are placed in small groups for instruction.
 - The precise language in the program’s scripts is followed carefully.
 - Students are highly engaged in their lessons.
 - Lessons are taught with enthusiasm and an expectation that all will succeed.
 - b. How critical do you think each of those aspects are to the success of the program? Discuss.
 6. **The Reading Mastery program uses signals for unison responses. Of what benefit are unison responses?**
 7. **At the conclusion of the video, Anauka Ahidiana, from Baltimore, makes a strong statement about Reading Mastery. She says, “You can teach any child to read. You can teach every child to read. If you can open this door, the kid can walk through it. They have an option, but if you don’t do it, it probably won’t get done and the kid has no options.” These are strong words of accountability. They suggest that each one of us is accountable for providing students with the tools needed to give each child options in the future.**
 - a. How do you feel about her statement?
 - b. Should teachers be held responsible for such a high level of accountability for student success?

Note to presenter: The next page 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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1. **In the video, it is stated: “The children are poor and at risk for academic failure.”**
 - a. Why do you think poor, urban students are often considered to be “at risk?”

 - b. What happened between September and May to minimize the risk of academic failure?

 - c. Were you impressed by the reading performance of these kindergarten students by the end of the year? Discuss.

2. **At one point it is stated, “Since children learn at very different rates, this program divides the children into small reading groups based on their levels.”**
 - a. Discuss why this teaching practice might be beneficial for kindergarten students.

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 - a. What aspects did you see that are the same in all five classrooms?

 - b. How critical do you think each of those aspects are to the success of the program? Discuss.

- 6. The Reading Mastery program uses signals for unison responses. Of what benefit are unison responses?**

