

**Client:** NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DIRECT INSTRUCTION  
**Project:** NIFDI VIDEO  
**Subject:** HELPING KIDS SOAR: Children Reaching their Full Potential with Direct Instruction  
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[CLASSROOM]

Teacher: Sophie

Student Sophie: [READS] You count the number of lines from the sun- -

Teacher: The higher level kids can just take off and go.

Teacher Christensen: What word? Get ready.

I have kids in my Kindergarten class reading 60 to 70 words per minute.

Teacher: If they're doing well, they can move up. They can surpass the rest [of] the group. They're never held back.

Girl Student: When everybody was sleeping, he would go get the lifeboat and swim to Angel Island.

Teacher Leverett: The high achieving students they're placed where they need to be placed and is lettin' them know that they're expected to achieve more.

Teacher: If you have a program that is this strong with students who are higher, you just move through it faster.



[CLASSROOM; EXTERIOR]

Narrator: This is a story about a program that helps all kids achieve their true potential. From reading to social studies, the Direct Instruction curriculum, not only helps lower performing kids catch up it enables higher performing kids to soar. One school that has a lot of experience with Direct Instruction is Fickett Elementary in Atlanta, Georgia.

Girl Student (Kinder): [READ] Dud and his sister paid for the bike.

Girl Student (3<sup>rd</sup> Grade): [READ] That's Pluto the old man said. It is much farther from the sun than Saturn.

Boy Student (5<sup>th</sup> Grade): He was an intruder on Angel Island and he didn't have small pox already so they didn't want it to spread.

Narrator: Fickett Elementary has received implementation support from the National Institute for Direct Instruction, also known as NIFDI.

Vicky Vachon (NIFDI Project Dir): 'Mood'. Okay, I couldn't read it. 'Bad mood'. Excellent. Nice.

Fickett's a school we've been working with now for four years and over the course of the four years we have seen our graduates be higher and higher in the program. And what's wonderful about this particular program is that everything is there for the students but if we have students that don't need as much practice we can accelerate them through. We always check kids as they're going along to see if they can move up to other programs.



[KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM]

Excellent.

Narrator: The first two levels of Direct Instruction's Reading Mastery Program use small group instruction to help students unlock the wonders of reading.

Teacher: Evani.

Student Evani: [READS] A boy from - -

Girl Student: [READS] His sister said, *That looks like fun.*

Girl Student2: [READS] Don said, *Why don't we paint the sidewalk?*

Teacher Christensen: Isaiah, what word? Get ready.

Student Isaiah: Scare.

K Christensen (Kinder Teacher): Yes, scare.

This is my second year teaching Direct Instruction so it was very new and unusual but I've come to really like DI just because I've seen how much it does for the children. The end of the year for Kindergarten children should be reading on 30 words per minute and I have kids in my Kindergarten class 60 to 70 words per minute.

Student Brooklyn: [READS] And look to eating they are good, good, good.

Teacher Christensen: Brooklyn, why do they need firewood?



Student Brooklyn: To make their food.

Teacher Christensen: To make their food so they can cook their food to eat it.  
Next sentence, Isaiah.

Student Isaiah: [READ] The gull said, *I hate to walk, walk, walk. But I love to talk, talk, talk.*

[THIRD CLASS CLASSROOM]

Students: [UNISON]

Teacher Johnson: Four times so you should have said: It freezes four times.  
Continue tracking and continue reading. Brittany.

Student Brittany: [READS] Each ring shows one trip to the top of the cloud.

Boy Student: [READS] The small lifeboat was sliding up huge waves and then down the other side of the waves. Edna felt sick and dizzy.

Teacher Johnson: Thank you. What was making Edna - -

Melanie Johnson (3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher): My name is Melanie Johnson. I've been teaching Direct Instruction for five years.

Tyler.

Almost all students that have been in the program since Kindergarten are fluent readers by 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade.

Girl Student: [READS] The lifeboat slid down the wave and Edna could not see anything but water. Then the boat moved up, up to



the top of another wave. Now, Edna could see the thing that Carla had pointed to but it wasn't land. It was a wave much bigger than the other waves.

Teacher Johnson: I love its flexibility. I've been very pleased with the fact that my students can move up or down levels just depending on where they are and how they're achieving. If they're doing well, they can move up. They can surpass the rest of the group. They're never held back. They're always right where they should be.

What did she think was land? She thought she saw land. But what was it really? Ulanda.

Student Ulanda: Another wave.

Teacher Johnson: Just another wave.

[EXTERIOR]

Narrator: A thousand miles away in Alliance, Nebraska another school working with a different population has seen similar results with Direct Instruction. Welcome to Emerson Elementary School.

[KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM]

Teacher Cummings: Read nice and loud so your friends can follow along. Next sentence, Brianna.

Student Brianna: [READ] He had buttons on his hat and buttons on his sock.

Teacher Cummings: Nice reading. Joel.



Student Joel: [READS] He had ten big buttons on his pants.

Teacher Cummings: Nice. Gregory.

Student Gregory: [READS] The man said, *I have* - -

Narrator: Thanks to Direct Instruction these Kindergarteners are reading well above the level of many 1<sup>st</sup> graders.

Boy Student: [READS] Had red buttons and gold buttons.

Teacher Cummings: Nice work. Brandy.

Student Brandy: [READS] He had lots of big - -

Teacher Cummings: I've taught for 15 years. I've had the opportunity this year to work with three different levels and the kids are placed at their reading level. So those that need to go a little bit faster are placed in the correct group and they can work at their own pace.

Teacher Cummings: Okay. Brianna, next sentence.

Student Brianna: [READS] So the farmer took off the big red button.

Susan Cummings (Kinder Teacher): One thing that I really appreciate about the program is I know that they're not guessing. They're actually sounding out each and every word. They're not relying on context clues. They're not relying on picture clues. They are actually doing the reading independently. And they'll carry that knowledge and those tools with them and be able to learn a lot more, be able to read their assignments and read their textbooks.



[FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM]

Girl Student: [READS] The Brown Family Comes to Catch Goad.

Teacher Lawrence: Everybody, what's the title of the story?

Narrator: In this 1<sup>st</sup> Grade class, students that had Direct Instruction last year in Kindergarten are racing ahead.

Girl Student: [READS] Here is a picture of binoculars. Follow these instructions.

Becky Lawrence (1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher): I've been teaching school for 34 years, never had kids read like this before in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, even my low ones are reading like crazy.

Boy Student: [READS] She's swimming. There's no way she could get away.

Girl Student Fifteen of them were on vacation at Four Mile Lake, and they decided to spend all their time looking for Goad. More next time.

Teacher Lawrence: First you read two information passages, the first one tells about binoculars. Everybody - -

Narrator: The Reading Mastery Program is designed with the content that kids will need to succeed in all academic subjects.

Teacher Lawrence: Alright. Good job.

It includes science and social studies and all sorts of things right in with reading so the high kids love it. They really do.



[SECOND GRADE CLASSROOM]

Linda McMeekin (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher): Boys and girls, find Part B in your textbook. We're not going to start with the vocabulary. We're going to start with Part B. You're going to read the next story about Henry and Tim. First your - -

It was my privilege this year to teach a higher level reading group and because they were all at the same level they could just soar. And they did. I've had 1<sup>st</sup> graders this year who are reading at a 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Grade level and they're doing very, very well with it.

Girl Student: [READS] So if you want to find out which place has more heat, you count the number of lines from the sun that hit the/that place.

Teacher McMeekin: There are a lot of stories that are scientifically based, a lot of stories that are historical.

Boy Student: [READS] The equator receives more heat than any other part of the earth.

Teacher McMeekin: Of all the programs that I've seen and used this is by far the most effective and these kids are reading better than I've ever seen.

Boy Student: [READS] Would have made sense for the bees to travel 200 miles.

[EXTERIOR; INTERIOR]





School Staff: Five, four, three, two, one.

Boy Student: Good morning, Fickett Trojans. Welcome to another great day of learning.

[HALLWAY]

Director Vachon: He's in Reading Mastery—remind me, Miss Harwick, Ready Mastery 5—and these are 5<sup>th</sup> graders but I understand they're - -

Narrator: Back at Fickett in Atlanta, teachers know that in order for kids to soar, they need continuous professional development in the Direct Instruction methodology.

Boy Student: [READS]

Teacher: Alright, Mary.

Narrator: NIFDI provides Fickett's teachers with extensive training, onsite support in all aspects of the Direct Instruction program and ensures that weekly assessment of student placement and performance in the program takes place.

Anthony Dorsey (Principal): Direct Instruction is channeled and programmed to fit the skills of a, of a particular child. The kids are assessed and evaluated on such a regular basis and then the child is reading above grade level. DI makes a way for that child to go ahead and be placed up if necessary. They're never— They're very rarely placed down.

[MEETING ROOM]



Director Vachon: Let's start with Miss McAfee. And what we're looking at here is Kindergarten. We've got three groups here: 9, 5 and 4 kids so we're looking at really good lesson gains, especially for the bumble bees. Now did they go back, Miss Harwick? Remind me. So they had seven lessons - -

Narrator: Regular assessment of student performance allows some kids to make spectacular progress while at elementary school.

[FOUR GRADE CLASSROOM]

Teacher: Who can tell me some of the things that were very significant that Harriet did to help the Union? Alisha.

Student Alisha: Harry helped the Union during the Civil War by being a nurse and she helped the slaves escape on the underground railroad.

Teacher: Very good. Torin, can you add any more to that?

Student Torin: Harriet helped this/the Union during the Civil War by raiding parties, fight/actually fighting in the Army and - -

Director Vachon: When we look at our highest students here we have now one group in understanding U.S. History which is a 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies program. We're using it as reading in the content area and a second group will be entering understanding U.S. History right after the break. And we're talking about students who go out. Their teacher requires them to bring in articles from the newspapers on Monday about world current events and local current events and they sit and they discuss these with what they're learned



about U.S./about understanding U.S. history and how to look at historical problems because what happens historically often will pertain to what's happening now. And these students have become very insight/insightful about what's going on and have opinions about what's going in their world today.

Teacher Leverett: Now, we've been discussing how early Native American cultures meet their basic needs. Okay? Which group did we begin to examine yesterday? Which group did we begin to examine yesterday? Dashe.

Student Dashe: The group we began to examine yesterday was the Inuits.

Janell Leverett (5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher): Okay. So the group that we began to examine yesterday were the Inuits.

The students that I have they're in the highest group at the school and right now we're doing U.S. History. They absolutely love it. We/It's a great a lot of current events. They have to bring in two current events articles every Monday. And so right now we're just beginning U.S. history and so we're dealing with the problems and solutions that humans might face in terms of their basic needs and then the solutions they use to meet those needs.

We know that if they lived in the area that was flat, treeless and frozen beneath the surface we know that this was not an environment that was good for what? Was this an environment that would be good for farming?

Student: [UNISON] No.



Teacher Leverett: No. And so how would the Inuit meet their basic need for food? Kyra?

Student Kyra: The Inuit met their basic need for food by fishing and also hunting game - -

Teacher Leverett: They're expected to achieve more and this is what they'll see when they reach 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. They're always gonna continue moving forward. There's always something for them to do so the high achieving students they're placed where they need to be placed and they're encouraged to continue going further and further.

[EXTERIOR]

Principal Ocken: Good morning, everybody.

Students: [UNISON]

Narrator: From urban Atlanta to rural Nebraska the comprehensive Direct Instruction model, along with implementation support from NIFDI, offers schools a means of helping all kids achieve their true potential.

Principal Ocken: What a year we had in reading and you guys did so good. Let's give ourselves a big hand.

Students: [APPLAUSE]

Dave Ocken (Principal): I've been principal here in Emerson Elementary School for 14 years. In the past we'd use different types of reading approaches. You know we've used whole language. We've used some balance literacy pieces, doing a variety [of]



different things, and we just were not seeing the type of results we wanted to see from our reading program. And I would have middle school teachers that would say, *Why are you sending us kids that cannot read?*

Come on up, Spider Monkeys. Come on up. They worked hard this year. Give me five, you guys. Way to go. Good job. Here you go, honey. Look it, they're already looking at their books.

We wanted a program where students could achieve mastery and that's what the Reading Mastery Program has given us. This program meets the needs of children at all levels and the exciting thing about it is that once these kids do learn how to read then as they go through the higher levels of Reading Mastery they get into the novel studies and they're able to do so many of those really fun enriching type things that makes reading what it is. It's just a great adventure.

[EXTERIOR]

Principal Ocken: Alright, everybody, listen up. Boys and girls, reading takes us to places we've never been and when you look at these balloons look how high that they're going. Your message and your name is gonna go a long ways. So we're ready to start counting backwards from five. Five, four, three, two, one, let go!

Students: [CHEERS/CLAPPING]

Narrator: For more information on what Direct Instruction can do for your students, contact the National Institute for Direct



Instruction toll free at 1-877-485-1973 or email NIFDI at [info@nifdi.org](mailto:info@nifdi.org). You can also find NIFDI on the World Wide Web at [www.nifdi.org](http://www.nifdi.org).

[CREDITS]

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