
Direct Instruction: What DI Teachers Say

Prepared by the Education Consumers Foundation

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WHAT DI TEACHERS SAY

Following are actual quotes from teachers using Direct Instruction:

“Direct Instruction does it all. It teaches kids to listen, it teaches kids to think, it teaches kids to respond, it teaches self-control. It does it all. It’s hard, but most things that are good are hard.”

— *Barbara Carroll*
Northport, AL

“In all my career with thousands of kids, I’ve never met a kid who could not learn. And I would not be able to say that without the design of the DI programs.”

— *Phyllis Haddox*
Eugene, OR

“One hundred percent of our children in our classroom reading at grade level is every teacher’s dream. And I wasn’t getting it until I had this structure. I was always playing catch-up. I haven’t seen the child yet that hasn’t become successful with DI, whether they’ve come to school with the background knowledge or not.”

— *Sunya Lewis*
Spring, TX

“DI taught me how to structure tasks so that learning will occur. I’m an engineer in the classroom. That is my job—to be the best engineer possible.”

— *Maria Collins*
Lisle, IL

“DI is the great equalizer.”

— *Wayne Callender*
Boise, ID

“Most teachers spend the whole day throwing out information without really knowing where it landed. With DI you know where it landed.”

— *Mary Frances Bruce*
Mathews, AL

“DI was my savior as a teacher. It was a life vest for me. It kept me afloat.”

— *Cary Andrews*
Leland, NC

“The reinforcement that the teacher gets with DI is overwhelming. Being able to teach the hardest to teach kids, the amazing technical skills I’ve gained over the years—that’s so empowering.”

— *Linda Carnine*
Eugene, OR

“In education you find a lot of people that are incredibly good-hearted and well-intentioned, but they never learn how to teach. I’m a skillful teacher and I attribute it exclusively to DI.”

— *Linda Garcia*
Albuquerque, NM

“There is a misperception that DI is hard to teach. Initially it is, but then it’s fun because you don’t have to worry about kids with holes in their knowledge anymore.”

— *Donald Steely*
Eugene, OR

“Teachers worry kids will be bored with DI. It’s the opposite—kids love getting the skills. Teachers worry that kids won’t work independently, but it’s the opposite. DI gives them the skills to be independent. Teachers worry that DI is tracking, that kids in the low track will get a watered down curriculum and move slower. But it’s the opposite. DI teaches more efficiently, more intensively, so that you don’t have to track. Tracking assumes ability is inborn and you can’t do anything about it. DI assumes all kids can learn.”

— *Charlotte Andrist*
Columbus, OH

“This is a program that actually can deliver what it promises. It’s a life-changing experience for teachers and students. I could never give it up. I’d change jobs and take less money.”

— *Linda Youngmayr*
Columbus, OH

“No curriculum allows you to analyze your teaching like Direct Instruction because you’re collecting meaningful data all the time that help you plan your lesson for the next day.”

— *Sharon Brumbley*
Monroe, OR

“DI provides the structure to allow me to be creative in the classroom. The kids are learning so much faster than you possibly could have taught them without the sequences. I used to spend all this time preparing lesson plans. Now I spend all my time doing the fun stuff.”

— *Erin Chaparro*
Eugene, OR

“It’s the most exciting, fun successful instruction possible.

— *Don Crawford*
Portland, OR

“DI is designed for diagnostic teaching. Every single thing you put out, you know right away whether they have it or they don’t have it.”

— *Eileen Cohen*
Atlanta, GA

“You will see changes in your kids within two weeks. Their attention is better. Kids who usually don’t speak will speak and answer questions. You see these broken, beat-up kids who don’t know anything and are used to being shamed. Their eyes are down, their shoulders are slumped. I’ve had these kids. It’s joyous and fulfilling to watch them change. After one 45-minute lesson, they’re on the edge of their seats. That’s gold to me.”

— *Adrienne Allen*
Columbus, OH

“DI has touched so many people’s lives. Troubled kids are leaving institutions and being repatriated with their families, kids are leaving locked facilities for group homes.”

— *Vicky Vachon*
Picton, Ontario

“The scripted lessons give me more time to see what they enjoy and to think about how I’m going to keep them engaged and coming back the next day eager to learn. It’s not delivered as a script. It’s a conversation with them. I don’t feel regimented, I feel like I’m released.”

— *Dorothy Glewwe*
Baltimore, MD

“DI makes kids feel safe and empowered. You’re rarely asking them to do anything they’re not prepared to do. And they feel safety with unison response.”

— *Karen Galloway*
Eugene, OR

“What faster and more efficient way is there to build their self esteem than to arrange the environment so that they can do something they’ve never been able to do before and thought they never would be able to do?”

— *Ray Hall*
Tucson, AZ

“It works and you’ll know it works by the outcomes along the way. Most teachers really believe what they’re doing works and that they have their own evidence to point to. But self perception of effectiveness is not the same as an independent evaluation of effectiveness. DI programs can give you independent ways to evaluate your effectiveness.”

— *Robin Morris*
Decatur, GA

“DI is work. But it’s not harder work than the other things teachers use, and it works better.”

— *Nancy Woolfson*
Eugene, OR

“The main thing DI taught me was there is a difference between being a presenter and a teacher.”

— *Milly Schrader*
Elk Grove, CA

“I learned how to program stimuli to induce learning. That’s what Direct Instruction does—it focuses on what is critical to learning: what’s crucial to know and how do you focus the learner on that?”

— *Ed Sims*
Birmingham, AL

“Teacher evaluations are pretty easy using DI. You don’t go in and see a dog and pony show. There’s no need for that. Our teachers don’t get worked up when the principal comes in to do an evaluation. It’s like any other day.”

— *Kathi Sexton*
Bel Air, MD

“It’s not intuitive, you need training. But once it’s in place it’s transformational. When it clicks for you, it’s totally amazing.”

— *Jane Carter*
Eugene, OR

“No train, no gain—this is not a do it yourself program. The secret is good training up front. If you’re not going to train the teachers, don’t put in the program. But with a willing administrator, there are no barriers to growth.”

— *Carolyn Schneider*
Travelers Rest, SC