Month 3: Organizing and Running Direct Instruction Station

Having a direct instruction or teacher time Center of your classroom is essential for getting those big gains that you want to get with your learner's you want to make that big academic progress you want to really teach in a specific way social skills and replacement behaviors and get to all of that good stuff in a meaningful way in a direct instruction station. It's going to be you and a few kids or one child and you're going to have the opportunity to do assessments to work on your IP goals to collect data to do pecs instruction to do any skill instruction related to your behavior plan. That's what you do there. So that should be a center in your classroom. And if that Center in your classroom started out as just kind of basic tasks and getting through the movements and just kind of seeing what the kids can do. That is great because remember when we start a center-based classroom, the first step is to learn the rotations not learning new content there. By this point we're ready to get to kind of the meat and potatoes of our instructional program.

What are we really working on? And how are we working on on it? So in this video we're going to talk about how to set up an organized a direct instruction station because the organization piece is essential for me here. We can't be running around collecting all the things we need and we want a simple way to jump between skill sets and by skill sets. I mean groups of students that are working on drastically different types of skills. You can't plan one math lesson for the day and be like cool. I'm done. Nope. You have to plan one math lesson or activity for each group or each different type of learner that comes to you and that's overwhelming really quickly, but we're going to talk about some strategies to streamline this process. So it's easy to maintain all year. That's keep the maintenance if you started something super complicated when you're real. I'm going to write these like 10-page lesson plans for every day. And it's going to be so detailed and amazing and it probably was detailed in amazing. But how long could you continue doing that and how long could you continue doing that where you weren't losing your mind? So we're going to talk about how to make sure this process is easy to replicate but still really effective at teaching your learner's the skills. They need to succeed. So in our video on Center based instruction, we talked about grouping our kids with similar goals or who are working on similar Concepts together.

 So you have those groups already made so looking at your groups and looking at your direct instruction or teacher time area you want to then identify if those Learners in a group have the prerequisite skills to learn together because now you want to decide with that group, are you doing instruction as a group or you doing instruction individually, and I know you're like I can't do it struction individually. I have three kids there. We'll talk about that in a minute. It but the question you need to kind of analyze to get yourself to this point is do they have the prerequisites to learn as a group. So what I want to see for my kids that can learn is a group is that they can wait that's a big one. They can take turns and they can attend to their peers in a meaningful way because when peers answer questions, when peers read sentences when peers provide prompts, we want that to be an instructional opportunity. So if your kids don't

have those prerequisite skills yet. That doesn't mean they never will that can actually be something you can Target in your direct instruction area, but then you want to look at doing your instruction individually for now if your kids do have those prerequisites great. We're going to do our instruction as a group if I do a lesson on addition if I do a lesson on identifying colors, if I do a lesson on taking turns in a board game,
we're going to do that together if your students don't have those prerequisite skills.
No problem. Something you couldn't work on in that direct instruction station,
but how you're going to structure your group is going to be a little bit different. So in this scenario, let's say you have three students who don't yet have those skills to work as a group during your Center time, you're going to work with each student one at a time and have the other students do independent activities. So for your three kids if your centers are about 20 minutes work with one student one-on-one for five minutes get your direct instruction in get your fluency in really work on a skill and an efficient and effective way and the other two kids are doing something by themselves.
Then after your five minutes you give this guy something independent you switch to the next one and I know you're thinking oh my gosh, they're only going to get five minutes of instruction, but they're getting five minutes of quality focused individualized instruction, and then they're getting an extension act opportunity on something relevant.
So let's say you are working on Identifying nouns in sentences
and you're working on that during your five minutes, then you could give a worksheet. But hey like hey Circle all the nouns you're still at the table. So you're still keeping one of your eyes on them, right working with your next learner checking in with them. Yes. We need the Octopus arms to do all the things but you're a teacher you're good at that already.

So let's talk about how this is organized and the implementation of this we have our small groups. We've decided if we're teaching as a group or teaching independently regardless of that choice. The first step is prepping some independent
or extension activities that kids can do on their own even if you're teaching is a whole group. You still want to have things that kids can always be doing because first off you will be called away from your table to deal with an emergency. You will be pulled away from your table to do staff training. You will be pulled of your way from your table for IEP meetings and conferences, etc. Etc forever, right? So in that scenario You want to have stuff to give to your kids? If you're in whole group instruction one student struggling with a concept you want to be able to pull them one-on-one you want to be able to implement assessments. So prep things like task cards or interactive activities have puzzles have word searches. One of my favorite setups is having binders for different levels of students. I have a set of these for Math and a set of these from language arts. You can get these in the resources sections with your credits. I loved having differentiated options for different skills at my fingertips. So I didn't assign these to a student. I just had a level 1 2 and 3 and then based on that learner
and about how much time I needed for them to work by themselves.
I could grab one of these give it to them. So even for kids that had some independent and great academic skills. We could make this a little more challenging like working on greater than or less than or addition sums or coin combinations and it was all ready to go.

An interactive and Hands-On way while I was working with another student.

So if you think this setup might work really well use your credits to grab some of these because these were kind of a lifesaver for me especially in direct instruction time.

So the key like I mentioned is the organization because we're already talking about a lot of stuff. We want binders. We want to ask cards. You want your data system.

You want your data sheets right there lesson plans, which we'll talk about in a minute.

You need all the things accessible in that Center based classroom video.

I talked about using Furniture to structure your environment. I love a setup like how I have right now with the shelf right behind where the teachers sitting

where things like binders things like tasks things like supplies and data can be here right where you can grab it. So when your kids are sitting you reach behind you you grab what you need you're ready to go. If you have to go to a different part of the classroom to get something your kids are gone right when they're ready to learn.

We're ready to teach them. So the organization is not only is in close proximity.

It's labeled doesn't have to be pretty use masking tape use Post-its.

I don't care just label the different things because as groups rotate to you you're going to need different types of skills. The way this reason is finder works really well is it was labeled math level 2, so I had it I could grab it. I know exactly where math level to stuff was. I didn't have these floating Loosely in a bin and trying to find them quickly.

It was in one set. It was labeled with the type of skill and I knew which learner's would use it after you get it all organized and set up in a nice way with your groups.

Then you want to start to think about the lesson planning process.

I know that's why you wanted to teaching right? You love lesson plans. Although lesson planning can be tricky can be complicated. I like to streamline this process and make it super simple with a monthly lesson plan template you can This for free with this video.

This has an editable version and a pdf version so you can type it in and it's super simple and straightforward. You can just add in the dates for the month right the group that you're working with and some of their focus goals. And then for each day just write one activity you could if you're using maybe a curriculum you can put in

what components of the curriculum you're doing. If you're working a let's say on categorizing and you have different categorizing games or activities you write it all in here. I like doing it for the month because it's going to give me that path that guide.

That's something that I used to really struggle with a group would come to

me and I knew I had good ideas of what to work on with them, but I was overwhelmed with just being in the middle of a chaotic day and it's 10 o'clock and the days already been busy and nutty and what do I do? So I grabbed the same old thing. I grabbed the same old thing when you approach it as a month you can start to think about okay.

These are all the activities that I can do with this group you plug those in on the Calendar and then each time the group comes you're ready to go. So you would make one of these for each group of your kids and have it all planned out. So we've talked about the organization and setup process. We did all the behind-the-scenes stuff to make your direct instruction station work really well. Now, how do we run? It five steps. I told you. I love a step-by-step process. So five steps for implementing

and running your direct instruction station first plan your reinforcers

or reinforcement system for your learner's.

So if you're confused on what reinforcement exactly is and you think you might just do sticker charts with everyone hold on for a second and really identify
what is reinforcing for your students behavior and go back to our month one reinforcement video to kind of refresh your memory on what reinforcement is because indirect instruction. We're doing new hard things when we do new hard things.
We've got to pull out those big ticket reinforcers. These are hard skills. These are new skills and we want to make sure the reinforcement is there for Learners so that's step one figure out types of reinforcers and the system for delivering it step 2 identify
way for your student to know what reinforcement is coming. That could be a token board. That could be a first son. That could be a choice board. That could be you just asking them. Hey, what do you want to work for during this time?
So make sure there's a way for them to know what they're working
for because they've got to see the why they have to have an incentive to do
this new hard thing step 3 work either individually or whole group.

This is where you're going to implement your instruction your discrete trial you're utilizing an activity doing a game taking data while you'll you're teaching which we'll talk about soon. So this is where you're getting to the instruction part doing the activities step 4 keep an eye on the time especially if you're rotating between students, especially if you have reinforcers that need some time to be
consumed and what I mean by that is something like a toy and iPad. Pewter, it's not just something quick. You need some time to play on the iPad or play in the break area.
So keep an eye close eye on the time have a digital clock on your desk
or your kidney bean table if needed. So, you know when you have to transition
because you got to make sure there's time for reinforcers and then have a really heavy schedule of Praise. I've watched a lot of direct instruction centers
and different teachers run them in different ways and the overall kind of theme I see with centers that go really well is there is a really heavy schedule of praise.
The teachers are into it. They are praising a ton and the kids are happy to be there.
And then these again I'm always have to tell myself. Wow. These are kids that are doing something new and hard and they're happy to be there and they're engaged one of the teachers that I worked with for a while when I was their Mentor had some students with really challenging behaviors and the part of her day. That was the best part of her day.
Direct instruction and man, the kids were engaged and they were learning
and she was collecting data and it was always so amazing how well that part of her day went and it was a testament to the structure. There was always a reinforcement system in place kids knew what to expect and there was always a heavy heavy amount of Praise. She was excited that we were doing all these great things. She was really enthusiastic about the progress they were making and that reflected in the excitement that the kids had for being there.

So whether you already have a direct instruction station or this is brand-new,
this is a good opportunity to evaluate any tweaks you can make to make sure that your direct instruction station is really effective and efficient because we don't have a ton of time unfortunately. So we want to make the most of the time we have
and simple things like a monthly lesson plan or having independent.

Tasks ready to go in labeled can really be the deal breaker on something that feels like a struggle and something that's really successful because you can jump from teaching colors to teaching pronouns to teaching wh questions. You can jump between all these instructional modes because you have everything ready to go. So head over to the download section of this video grab that lesson plan template feel free to use the editable one tweak. It add things in and to me it was such an easier way to approach lesson planning just once a month and felt a lot more doable and like I had a path and that's where I think a lot of us struggle is not knowing what's coming next but by taking that time to plan it out we suddenly dead and then if you're looking for more independent activities that can be easily utilized in a direct instruction station head over the resource section and check out the math and language artwork books. There are three levels in each if you have a multi-level classroom, this might be a great fit. you