

## DI SPELLING STRATEGY

After DI training, I realized that I needed to change how I taught spelling to my first graders. In the past, I had one list for all the children in my classroom, and at times some children already knew how to spell the words and did not need to study. Below is how I put DI into my spelling instruction:

- I give a pretest of the regular spelling list for the following week to all students on Friday afternoon. Parents do not have access to words at this time.
- Students who correctly spell all the words on the Friday pretest go on to a “challenge” list for the following week. I have a stamp with the words “challenge list” for these students.
- Students who do misspell any word/words on the Friday pretest stay with the regular spelling list.

## MATH PRE-ASSESSMENT TIPS

I pretested, now what? Have you asked yourself this question? Here are some tips that have helped me:

- Keep your pretest short.
- Pretest only one topic at a time.
- Use Exam View to create your own pretest. Two to three questions per section should be enough.
- Use multiple choice questions so that you can quickly check each pretest.
- Sort questions by lesson so it is easy to quickly assess who does/does not understand it.
- For each lesson, create a chart or make a list of those students who “get it”.

I stamp “pretest” on these papers.

- After the initial Friday pretest, I have both lists posted on edline for parents’ easy access.
- On Friday mornings I administer two final spelling tests. While one group is testing the other is actively involved at learning centers.

Initially, parents did not understand why they could not have the words for the pretest, but after I explained the DI strategy to them, they became willing partners. In addition, I set a positive environment and enthusiastic tone so that students do not feel superior or inferior to others. I have found great success with this method.

Lisa McCall – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade  
Holy Redeemer School

Now what to do with those that “get it”:

I have all students sit through my teaching of the general lesson.

Give those that “get it” a more challenging assignment on the same topic

Use enrichment pages, internet resources, or the next grade level’s workbook for assignment ideas

Try to keep the challenge assignment around the same length as the regular assignment

I hope these tips help you better use pre-assessment for your math instruction.

Erin Griffieth – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
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### UPCOMING DATES

#### **TEACHER LEADER MEETING**

Thursday, Oct. 20, 2011  
@ Sts. Peter & Paul – 3:30-5:00

#### **ALL PROJECT SCHOOLS SHARE MEETING**

Thursday, Nov. 3, 2011  
@ Catholic Center – 3:30-5:00

#### **SDE DI: “THEORY INTO PRACTICE” PROGRAM**

Dec. 5-9, 2011 in Nashville, TN

#### **TEACHER LEADER MEETING**

Thursday, Feb. 16, 2012  
@ Corpus Christi – 3:30-5:00

#### **ALL PROJECT SCHOOLS SHARE MEETING**

Thursday, Mar. 15, 2012  
@ Catholic Center – 3:30-5:00

#### **TEACHER LEADER MEETING**

Thursday, April 19, 2012  
@ Memorial HS – 3:30-5:00

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## PROJECT OUTREACH SHARE MEETING

MEO will be hosting a DI share meeting November 3, from 3:30-5 at the Catholic Center. We hope to see all Project Outreach teachers present.

your name and grade level on your handouts and give them to the teacher leaders in your building so that they may bring them to the Teacher Leader's Meeting on Thursday, Oct. 20.

We need your help! We will be creating packets of ideas for each teacher that attends the share meeting and we need your ideas. We need your ideas for classroom management, teaching strategies, assessments, projects, etc. Please include

Again, you will be receiving a packet of ideas at the share meeting geared toward your grade level/ subject area. To make this successful, we need your ideas! We look forward to seeing all of you at the Project Outreach Share Meeting!

## DI ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

Effective use of assessment is the foundation of a successfully differentiated classroom. Information gained from carefully chosen assessment strategies allows teachers to adjust instruction based on students' needs.

### Give Me 10 Questions for This Answer

Give students a word related to the content being studied and tell them that the word is an answer. They need to come up with ten questions that have that answer. You can easily increase or decrease the complexity of this quick assessment based on the content you are addressing.

Example:

- Write ten words that start with "R."
- Come up with ten questions to which the answer is the word "abolitionist."
- Give ten different equations, each containing at least one exponent expression, that equal 24.

### Word Sorts

Have students organize and classify lists of key words so that they can see the relationships between the words. Students can work individually or in groups. The process can also be modeled with the whole class.

Sorts can be open or closed:

- In open sorts, the categories into which the words are to be sorted are not given. The students sort the words, come up with labels for the categories, and discuss their reasoning behind the categories they have used.
- In closed sorts, students are told how to organize the groups (e.g. according to types of animals, by shape, by color, by culture, etc.)

*Found online at [www.SDE.com](http://www.SDE.com)*

## SPOTLIGHT ON WEBSITE

Vanderbilt University's Programs for Talented Youth has a website [www.ptv.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.ptv.vanderbilt.edu) that is designed to promote programs for gifted youth. They also sponsor professional development to help prepare educators to identify and meet the needs of gifted students in their classrooms. Remember, the idea of Differentiated Instruction originated as a way to meet the needs and to provide appropriate challenge to gifted learners. The website has links to resources, articles, and podcasts on many topics including DI and assessment with an emphasis on gifted students. They will be hosting a session titled *Differentiating Instruction for Gifted Learners in the General Classroom* on March 15-16, 2012. For more information on this session, call (615) 322-8261.

If you have any information about what is happening in your school or pictures of some of the work your students have done, please send to the Project Coordinators so that we can include it in the newsletter. It is always educational to see what other teachers are doing!