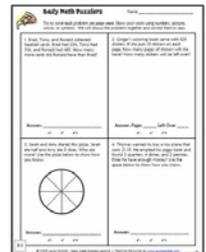


Differentiating with Daily Math Puzzlers



Linda Schuman, a multi-age teacher, developed the following method for differentiating word problem instruction with the **Daily Math Puzzler** series. She teaches a grade 3/4 class, but has students who range from emergent readers to those working on a middle school math level! Read below to find out how she's able to meet the wide variety of needs in her classroom:

1. During the first week of school, I gave all children the **Problem Solving Assessment** pretest that I received as a **Candler's Classroom Connection** subscriber. Based on the results, I placed the children in 4 groups (Level A through Level D).
2. I presented the problem solving strategies as a whole group lesson and then gave smaller lessons to each individual group on problem solving skills. This gave me a feel for the appropriateness of the level that I placed each child in. This part is time consuming, but it was only for about a week and set the foundation for them to work independently.
3. For four days, I met with each group and guided them through each of the four problems, one a day. By the time we finished all four problems on a sheet the children were then on their own. I did have to read the problems to some of my emergent readers, but I encouraged them to do their problem of the day independently. The children keep the papers in folders and it is their responsibility to do a problem a day.
4. At the end of the day, I check each child's DMP. If it is correct, I circle the "check plus", put it back in their work folder, and they know to do the next problem on the sheet the next day. If it is incorrect but they tried to solve it, I circle the "check". If they did not even attempt it I circle the "check minus". The "check" and "check minus" papers are not returned to their folders.
5. The following day, first thing in the morning, I pull groups from those papers I put aside and go over the problem that they missed. The children correct their errors and are sent off to do the next one independently. This whole process takes anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes a day depending on the complexity of the problem.



What I especially love about this program is that several of the children have come to me and said that their level has become too easy and they want to retake the test for the next level. I have had several move up since the beginning of the year. In December, I gave the pretest again to the class and the growth was astounding. I am looking forward to seeing the results of the post test at the end of the year!

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