

Suggestions for Using the Assessment and Teaching Worksheets

Student Prerequisites

The worksheets are designed for students who have mastered the phonic and related decoding skills normally taught in the first two years of reading instruction.

Review, Initial Instruction and Test Taking

Using the Worksheets for Review.

- a. Present the pretest items in a small- or large-group discussion setting.
- b. Discuss the questions and the rationale for selecting correct answers and excluding wrong answers.
- c. After approximately one-third of the questions have been presented in a discussion setting, present the middle one-third in a “test” setting and informally assess the level of understanding of all students. Use this information to adjust instruction. You may have to provide more instruction to the group or to individuals. Administer the remainder of the pretest to check on student performance.
- d. When you are reasonably confident all students can achieve at least 80%, administer the posttest as a test.
- e. Never give the pre- and posttest on the same day, particularly if there is a considerable instructional investment associated with the pretest. Administer the posttest at least a week after concluding instruction on the pretest.
- f. Conduct a one-month follow-up by putting the questions on an overhead in a group setting. This review may take only a few minutes. These will be minutes well invested.

Using the Worksheets for Initial Instruction.

If you are reasonably certain that much of the content is new to the student, teach the content, but do not use the specific test examples. The test examples should serve as a measure of conceptual understanding and not as an exercise in rote memorization of specific test examples. After instruction, use the previously listed suggestions for “Using the Worksheets for Review,” starting with “a.” above.

Using the Worksheets for Test-taking Skills Instruction

- a. When using the previous suggestions for review and initial instruction, make the test-taking skills explicit and place a time limit on the posttest.
- b. Use the “bubble” sheet to ensure student comfort and confidence with computer-scanned response sheets. A bubble sheet is also provided for entering the students name.
- c. Use the experience to identify general test-taking skills applicable to other test settings. See “General Guidelines for Test Taking.” These guidelines apply to all age groups; you will need to adapt them to the elementary-age group.

Staff Awareness Suggestion

The September 1997 issue of the *American School Board Journal* contained an excellent article on test-related issues faced by educators (see “Cover Story: Teaching to the Test.”)