

Challenging Students

We must continue to work with our “at-risk” students, but it is very important to remember to provide activities that are challenging to our “on-grade level,” and “above-grade level” students. It is not enough to give the students the work others are doing in class and challenging does not mean extra work or worksheets. It is important to find activities that are interesting but help challenge these students academically. Some activities could enhance the reasoning abilities of the students. Some activities could develop the agility of the mind. Some activities could also help the students with their different skills, talents, and abilities. Our job will be to find ways to challenge them and make them better students.

- Think differentiation instruction. This maximizes the learning of all children by taking account of individual differences in learning styles, interest, motivation and aptitude, and reflecting these variations in the classroom.
- Make decisions based on research and best practice.
- Encourage creative and critical thinking.
- Provide opportunities for sharing and exchanging ideas in a supportive environment.
- Look at the next grade level and begin to introduce them to some of these skills/standards. Discuss with your colleagues and share ideas with them. Also, work in learning clubs with teachers in the next grade level.
- Group them for engaging discussion on a topic – choose leaders to keep the discussion alive and more challenging.
- Use hands on activities to challenge your students and make them more productive. This also allows you to

- challenge them on how much they could achieve in your class.
- Think about research projects or projects instead of worksheets.
 - Think technology and how that can enhance their learning (research papers, powerpoints, etc.).
Zoho.com is a great site for students and a simple way for them to create powerpoints for presentations.
Xtranormal.com allows them to make movies.
Audacity.com allows them to do podcasting.
Edublogs.org allows them to discuss topics with other students. All web sites are safe for students and require the teacher's registration. The teacher also controls the content.
 - Challenge them with reading strategies. Activate prior knowledge before, during, and after reading; determining the most important ideas and themes in a text; asking questions; creating visual and sensory memories during and after reading; drawing inferences in the form of conclusions, predictions, and new ideas; and synthesizing what they have read. These comprehension strategies will also add to the overall quality of the unit.
 - Research higher order thinking and problem solving especially in Math. Try to implement "Balanced Math" to correlate with your math series (I can help you with this and model strategies for you).
 - I will also put links to various educational web sites on my web page for additional resources so check it often.

