Mini-Lesson Plan: Teaching the CDO Writing Strategy
(One-Day Instruction)

Grade Level: 6–8
Subject: English Language Arts
Duration: 45–60 minutes
Focus Skill: Revising writing using the Compare–Diagnose–Operate (CDO) strategy
Standards Alignment: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.5 – Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting...

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain the steps of the CDO revising strategy.
- Use evaluation cards to diagnose sentence-level issues in their own writing.
- Apply at least one appropriate revision tactic to improve sentence clarity, structure, or engagement.

Materials Needed
- CDO Digital Anchor Chart (posted or projected)
- CDO Google Slide Presentation
- CDO Evaluation Cards (laminated or printed on cardstock)
- Graphic Organizer for Sentence Revisions and Revision Checklist (1 per student) (digital or printable versions available)
- Writing Prompt Handout
- Peer Review Interactive Template (optional for extension)
- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Student writing tools (laptops or paper/pencil)

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction (5–7 minutes)

- Project the **CDO anchor chart** and introduce the strategy:
  "Today we're going to learn a new way to revise our writing called **CDO**—Compare, Diagnose, and Operate. It's like being your own editor, fixing your writing one sentence at a time."
- Give real-world analogy: "Just like doctors diagnose symptoms and choose the right treatment, you'll diagnose your sentences and operate with a strategy to revise them."

2. Mini Lesson: Teacher Modeling (10–12 minutes)

- Display a short example paragraph or sentence (deliberately vague or weak).

- Model the **CDO process** aloud:

    - **Compare** – "What did I want to say here?"

    - **Diagnose** – "This isn't what I intended. It's not engaging."

    - Use an **evaluation card** (e.g., "This doesn't sound right.")

    - **Operate** – "I'll reword for clarity and add descriptive detail."

    - Show revised sentence and explain why it's better.

- Repeat the modeling for 1–2 more sentences using different revision strategies.

3. Guided Practice: Student Application (15–20 minutes)

- Distribute the **writing prompt handout**.

- Students choose one prompt and write an initial **3–5 sentence paragraph**.

- Then, they:

    - Use the **evaluation cards** to diagnose 2–3 sentences.

    - Use the **CDO revision checklist** and **graphic organizer** to revise each diagnosed sentence.

- Circulate the room to provide support and prompting as needed.

4. Optional Extension: Peer Review (5–10 minutes)

- Pair students and provide the **peer-review template**.

- Students read one sentence aloud, have their partner select an evaluation card, and revise together.

- Reinforce respectful, constructive feedback.

5. Closure & Reflection (5 minutes)

- Ask students to reflect in writing:

  - "What sentence did you revise and why?"

  - "Which evaluation card helped the most?"

  - "How did your writing improve?"

- Optional: Share a few strong "before and after" revisions with the class.

Assessment

- **Formative**: Teacher observation during modeling and guided practice.

- **Student Work**: Review of completed graphic organizers and revised sentences.

- **Reflection**: Student's ability to explain their revision process.

Specific Strategies for Each Stage:

1. Compare (e.g., comparing student work to an exemplar, or comparing two texts/ideas)
For Struggling Learners/SWDs:
- Provide Clear Exemplars: Don't just show a "good" example; show a "good" example and a "developing" example. Discuss the differences explicitly.

- Focus on 1-2 Criteria at a Time: Instead of comparing against a whole rubric, have students focus on comparing only the topic sentence, or only the use of evidence, or only sentence complexity.

- Visual Side-by-Side Comparison: Use a graphic organizer with two columns (e.g., "My Work" vs. "Exemplar") and specific rows for each criterion being compared.

- Guided Questions: Provide specific questions to guide the comparison:

  - "What do you notice about the introduction in my work compared to the exemplar?"
  - "Where does the exemplar use strong descriptive words? Where does my work use them?"
  - "Are there any parts in my work that are missing compared to the exemplar?"

- Color-Coding: If comparing writing pieces, use a consistent color-coding system (e.g., for main idea, evidence, explanation) on both the student's work and the exemplar to make structural comparisons immediately visible.

- Read Aloud: Have students read their work and the exemplar aloud (or listen to an audio version of the exemplar) to catch differences in flow, rhythm, or clarity.

- Pre-highlighted Exemplars: For some students, pre-highlighting key features in the exemplar can direct their attention during the comparison phase.

2. Diagnose (e.g., identifying specific areas for improvement based on the comparison)
For Struggling Learners/SWDs:

- Categorized Checklist: Provide a checklist of common "diagnoses" or areas for improvement, rather than expecting students to generate them from scratch. Examples:

  - "Needs a clearer topic sentence."
  - "Needs more evidence."
  - "Evidence needs more explanation."
  - "Sentences are too short/choppy."
  - "Needs more descriptive words."
  - Sentence Stems for Diagnosis:
  - "I notice that my [part of writing] could be stronger because..."
  - "A specific area for improvement in my writing is..."
  - "The main difference I see between my work and the exemplar is [criterion], so I need to focus on..."
  - "Point and Explain" Strategy: Encourage students to physically point to the problematic area in their text and explain why it needs work.
- Teacher Conferencing: Conduct brief, targeted one-on-one conferences to help students articulate their diagnoses. Guide them with specific questions.

- Error Analysis Focus: If diagnosing errors, provide a limited "menu" of common errors to look for (e.g., run-on sentences, missing commas, vague words) rather than an open-ended "find errors."

3. Operate (e.g., applying the diagnosis to revise or improve the work)
For Struggling Learners/SWDs:

- Targeted Mini-Lessons: Based on common diagnoses, provide quick, explicit mini-lessons on specific "operations" (e.g., "How to combine sentences," "How to add a strong verb," "How to elaborate on evidence").

- Sentence Frames for Revision:

  - "To make my topic sentence clearer, I will change it to: [new sentence]."
  - "I can add more descriptive words by changing [old word] to [new word] here: [sentence with new word]."
  - "To explain my evidence better, I will add: [new explanation]."
  - "One Change" Focus: For some students, ask them to identify and make just one significant "operation" per paragraph or section. This reduces overwhelm.

- "Revision Strips" or Cut-and-Paste: For students who struggle with rewriting, allow them to write new sentences or phrases on separate strips of paper and physically insert them into their draft.

- Word Banks/Thesaurus Use: Provide curated word banks or guide them in using a thesaurus effectively to find stronger vocabulary.

- Graphic Organizer for "Operation": A simple organizer where they list their diagnosis and then brainstorm 2-3 specific "operations" they can make.

- Model the "Operation" Process: Show how you would take a diagnosed problem in a sample text and apply a specific revision strategy.