

CDO Writing Strategy: One-Page Teacher Summary

Strategy Name:

CDO – Compare, Diagnose, Operate

Part of the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) approach

Purpose:

CDO is a research-based strategy that helps students revise their writing **one sentence at a time**. It teaches students to think critically about their writing, identify what's unclear or ineffective, and make purposeful changes to improve clarity, engagement, and flow.

Who It's For:

- Middle school students (grades 4–8), adaptable for younger or older learners
- Especially effective for students with learning disabilities, emerging writers, or those who struggle with revision

When to Use It:

- During the **revising stage** of the writing process
- Can be used for narrative, persuasive, and informational writing

How It Works:

Compare

- *“Is this what I meant to say?”*
Students read one sentence at a time and compare it to their intended meaning or idea.

Diagnose

- *“What’s wrong with this sentence?”*
Students use **evaluation cards** or a checklist to name specific sentence-level problems (e.g., unclear, uninteresting, not useful, off-topic, awkward).

Operate

- *“How can I fix it?”*
Students choose a revision tactic to improve the sentence. Strategies include:
 - Add detail
 - Delete unnecessary content
 - Reword for clarity
 - Rearrange parts
 - Combine or break up sentences
 - Add transitions
 - Adjust tone

Why It's Effective:

- Encourages **metacognition** and self-regulation
- Promotes **meaningful revision**, not just surface-level editing
- Tactile tools (e.g., evaluation cards) support engagement and comprehension
- Supports inclusive and differentiated writing instruction

Materials to Support Implementation:

- CDO anchor chart
- Printable evaluation cards
- CDO revision checklist
- Sentence-level graphic organizer
- Peer review template
- Writing prompts for practice