The Developmental Spelling Analysis (DSA) is a spelling screening assessment used by teachers to gauge the spelling stage of their students. The DSA begins with a spelling inventory screening which starts with simpler spelling words and gradually increases in difficulty as the test goes on. Teachers can count the number of words correctly spelled to get a predicted spelling stage for each student. Using this information, they can then administer a feature spelling test just below the student’s predicted level. From there, they can administer more tests depending on how well the student does. The DSA is an extremely useful tool for teachers to learn more about each student’s spelling strengths and weaknesses. It not only provides them with information about which stage each student is currently spelling in, but it also provides more detailed information about which spelling features they have perfected and which they still need work on. Teachers can use this information to determine starting points for lessons and to break students into groups for differentiation (Ganske, 2014).

The pre-literate student that I worked with was a preschooler named Clara. At the beginning of the assessment, Clara informed me that she did not know how to read, but did know how to spell her name and a few other words. With almost every word that I asked her, she would say a letter in the word and then ask me if she was correct before writing it down. I urged her to just write what she thinks and that it did not matter if it was correct. She scored a zero out of five on the first set of words, but she wanted to try a few more so I asked her eight overall. Of the eight words that I asked her, she correctly identified the first or last letter for five of the words. The first step in beginning instruction would be to work on expanding Clara’s ability to identify the initial consonant sounds.
I worked with my five-year-old niece, Madeline, for the Letter Name stage. Madeline is in Kindergarten and spelled one of the first five words of the screening inventory correctly. While she missed the other four words, she did show an understanding of initial consonants in all of the words except for one. She also showed some understanding of final consonants. On the Letter Name feature assessment, Madeline scored a twelve, which puts her in the Letter Name stage of development. When attempting to spell each word, she audibly sounded the word out before writing each letter. She wrote the letter “P” backwards throughout the assessment, but while writing it, said the letter “P” and showed an understanding of its sound. On the feature test, she also showed an understanding of initial & final consonants and used but confused short vowels. I would begin her instruction by concentrating on short vowels and then moving on to comparing initial & final consonants to initial and final consonant blends and digraphs.

The student I worked with in the Within Word stage was Aspen. Aspen is a first grader and she correctly spelled six out of fifteen words. She got three out of the first set of five correct, three out of the second set of five correct, and zero out of the third set of five correct. This placed her in a predicted stage of Letter Name/Within Word. Because I was only scheduled thirty minutes to meet with three different students, I did not have time to give Aspen both the Letter Name and Within Word assessments. Ms. McFarland had indicated that Aspen was in the Within Word stage so I only had time to give her that assessment. Aspen only received a stage score of 9 on the feature assessment. Because I was not able to give her the Letter Name assessment, based on this information alone, I cannot conclusively put her in the Within Word pattern stage of spelling. However, she is Ms. McFarland’s daughter and Ms. McFarland told me that she is in the Within Word pattern stage so I will use that information when I work with Aspen on the next assignment. Aspen demonstrated that she has a very good understanding of long vowels (VCe) and that she is using but confusing r-controlled vowels. Instruction should begin with comparing long vowels with r-controlled vowels. Instruction should then
concentrate on other common long vowels, complex consonants, and abstract vowels. She did not show an understanding of any of these word features.

The Syllable Juncture student I worked with is my niece Emilia, a third grader. Emilia scored a fifteen on the spelling screening inventory and correctly spelled the first thirteen words. This put her in a predicted stage of Syllable Juncture. On the Syllable Juncture feature test, Emilia scored a twenty-one and showed an understanding of doubling & e-drop with “ed” and “ing” and long vowel patterns with stressed syllables. She also used but confused the other three features of this stage. Since she scored all 4’s and 5’s on the word features, I decided to administer the Deverational Constancy assessment to see how she would do. On this feature assessment, she scored an eight. She showed an understanding of consonant changes and used but confused silent/sounded consonants, Latin-derived suffixes, and assimilated prefixes. Based on this information, I believe that Emilia is in the Syllable Juncture stage, but will be in the Derivational Constancy stage soon. I would begin her instruction by concentrating on comparing doubling & e-drop with “ed” and “ing” with other syllable juncture doubling. I would then compare long vowel patterns with 4-controlled vowels.

The Derivational Constancy speller that I worked with was a fourth grader named Jack. Jack received a score of 14 on the screening inventory so I started by giving him the Syllable Juncture assessment. As soon as he saw which assessment I was giving him, he informed me that he is one stage ahead of that and is in the highest-level spelling group in his class. On the Syllable Juncture feature test, Jack attained a score of twenty-two. On the Derivational Constancy feature test, he scored a ten. With the information from both tests, I think that Jack fits in the early Derivational Constancy stage. He is using but confusing silent/sounded consonants, consonant changes, and Latin-derived suffixes. He had lesser understanding of vowel changes and assimilated prefixes. I would begin instruction by concentrating on perfecting silent/sounded consonants, consonant changes, and Latin-derived suffixes before moving on to vowel changes and assimilated prefixes. I would then move on to comparing
silent/sounded consonants with consonant changes.

The Developmental Spelling Analysis is a useful tool for teachers because it can not only provide them with the word stage level of each student, but it also provides specific information about which areas of spelling a student understands well or is having difficulty with. This information can be used to divide students into spelling groups based on level and also allows the teacher to know which word features to concentrate on with different students. The DSA shows teachers which words students are using correctly, as well as using but confusing (Ganske, 2014).
Reference

Screening Answer Sheet

Name: Madeline
Date: ____________

1. Hen
2. Wis
3. hrq
4. Juq
5. BreF
6. ____________
7. ____________
8. ____________
9. ____________
10. ____________
11. ____________
12. ____________
13. ____________
14. ____________
15. ____________
16. ____________
17. ____________
18. ____________
19. ____________
20. ____________
Screening Answer Sheet

L W S D

1. hen
2. which
3. trap
4. Jummp
5. Brave
6. Smile
7. grain
8. craw
9. clerk
10. cluck
11. place
12. obsors
13. Suttle
14. ecuital
15. treesin
16. 
17. 
18. 
19. 
20. 

Name: Aspen
Date: 

O LW/WW
Name: Aspen

1. pach
2. couch
3. step
4. cute
5. bridge
6. glare
7. scrap
8. mite
9. girl
10. from
11. smoke
12. flake
13. stud
14. rest
15. sort
16. write
17. grape
18. yen
19. drive
20. cost
21. hint
22. pant
23. ripe
24. fer
25. pant

2's - 9
1's - 1

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<th>G</th>
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<th>J</th>
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<td>5</td>
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Screening Answer Sheet

L
W
S
D

Name: Emilia
Date: __________

1. hen
2. wish
3. trap
4. jump
5. brave
6. smile
7. grain
8. crawl
9. clerk
10. clutch
11. palace
12. observe
13. shuffle
14. exiting
15. treason
16. column
17. variety
18. extinction
19. competition
20. elitist

15
Name: Emil

Date: __________

1. terrene
2. making
3. sober
4. Complaint
5. pilot
6. termite
7. polar
8. piling
9. clapped
10. escape
11. disturb
12. trample
13. circus
14. survive
15. swimming
16. burden
17. bagged
18. fountain
19. explode
20. mayor
21. solute
22. minnow
23. trotted
24. tennis
25. compete

2's - 21
12 - 1

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<th>M</th>
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<td>4</td>
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DC Stage Answer Sheet: FORM A

Name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

1. Electrician  
2. Impression  
3. Immaculate  
4. Permissive  
5. Hem  
6. Commend  
7. Grievance  
8. Moistened  
9. Corruption  
10. Explanation  
11. Dependence  
12. Accomodate  
13. Resign  
14. Suffice  
15. Incredible  
16. Hostily  
17. Eruption  
18. Vehicle  
19. Condemn  
20. Provision  
21. Admiration  
22. Irresistible  
23. Caprice  
24. Majority  
25. Confidence  

2's - 8  
1's - 8

Screening Answer Sheet

Name: Jack
Date: 

1. hen
2. wish
3. trap
4. jump
5. brave
6. smile
7. grain
8. crawl
9. clerk
10. clutch
11. palace
12. observer
13. shuffle
14. existing
15. treason
16. colma
17. variety
18. extension
19. competition
20. altimate

14 - SJ
SJ Stage Answer Sheet: FORM A

Name: Jq Cr
Date: 

1. furnace N 16. burden N
2. making B 17. baggage L
3. sober L 18. fountain O
4. complaint M 19. explode M
5. pilot L 20. mayor O
6. termite N 21. sultry O
7. polar O 22. mirror L
8. pelting K 23. trotted K
9. slapped K 24. tennis L
10. escape M 25. compact M
11. disturb N
12. trample O
13. circus N
14. survive M
15. swimming K

2's - 22
1's - 0

K L M N O
5 4 4 5 4

DC Stage Answer Sheet: FORM A

Name: Jack                    Date: ______________________

0 1. destruction          2 16. hostility   S
0 2. impression           2 17. eruption     O
0 3. immature             2 18. vehicle     P
0 4. permissive           1 19. condemn     P
1 5. worm                 2 20. provision   Q
0 6. command              0 21. explanation  R
0 7. grievance            0 22. (ir)isible   T
0 8. mansion              0 23. composition  R
0 9. assumption           1 24. majority    R
0 10. explanation         0 25. confidant   R
0 11. dependent            S
0 12. accommodate          T
0 13. resign               P
0 14. sitice               T
0 15. incredible           S

2's - 10
1's - 3

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FIGURE 3.4: Part of a blank class record.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Word Features Known</th>
<th>Word Features Used But Confused</th>
<th>Begin Instruction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clara</td>
<td>● Does not demonstrate knowledge of any features</td>
<td>● Has a slight understanding of initial and final consonants</td>
<td>● Initial consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline</td>
<td>● Initial and final consonants</td>
<td>● Short vowels</td>
<td>● Concentrate on short vowels. Compare initial &amp; final consonants to initial &amp; final consonant blends &amp; digraphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspen</td>
<td>● Long vowels (VCe)</td>
<td>● R-controlled vowels</td>
<td>● Compare long vowels to r-controlled vowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilia</td>
<td>● Doubling &amp; e-drop with “ed” &amp; “ing” ● Long vowel patterns (stressed syllable) ● Consonant changes</td>
<td>● Other syllable juncture doubling ● R-controlled vowels (stressed syllable) ● Unstressed syllable vowel patterns ● Silent/sounded consonants ● Latin-derived suffixes ● Assimilated prefixes</td>
<td>● Compare doubling &amp; e-drop with “ed” &amp; “ing” with other syllable juncture doubling ● Compare long vowel patterns with R-controlled vowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>● Doubling &amp; e-drop with “ed” &amp; “ing” ● R-controlled vowels (stressed syllable)</td>
<td>● Other syllable juncture doubling ● Long vowel patterns (stressed syllable) ● Unstressed syllable vowel patterns ● Silent/sounded consonants ● Consonant changes ● Latin-derived suffixes</td>
<td>● Silent/sounded consonants and consonant changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word Journeys

- Feature Lists
- Stage Scores
- Letter Name Stage
- Spelling Inventory and Feature Test
- Derivational Constancy Stage
- Syllable Juncture Stage
- Developmental Spelling Analysis
- DSA Class Record
- Five Stages
- Within Word Stage

Words Their Way

- Primary Spelling Inventory
- Power Scores
- Classroom Composite Chart
- Upper-Level Spelling Inventory
- Three Stages
- Features assessed from first inventory, not separate feature assessment
- Assessment predicted by grade level, not by spelling inventory

- Word Features
- Differentiation
- Use unfamiliar, fresh words
- Increasing Difficulty
- Spelling Inventories
- Qualitative Scoring