Dealing with correct spelling in student work is a continual issue in schools, even in the age of computers and the internet.

The attached page is a very efficient method of answering students’ question, “How do you spell ___________?”

With this spelling dictionary, each student is provided a 26 page spelling dictionary with 26 copies of the next page. The pages are placed in a 3-hole punched report folder. When students wish to know how to spell a word, they come to an adult who writes the word in the dictionary. The reason the spaces are so close together, on the attached dictionary page, is that an adult is writing the words.

The students then copy the words (hopefully correct) into their work.

The responsibility of students, when they approach an adult for spelling, is to have their dictionary open to the correct page, so that the adult can very quickly write the word. Of course, students will ask for words such as Lamborghini and the teacher will have no clue how to spell them. As the teacher looks up the spelling, by whatever method is reasonable, it is important for the teacher to “think out loud” so the student hears the process the teacher is using to find the spelling.

There is always, the temptation when students ask for spelling to give them a “phonics lesson.” My advice is to save the lesson for later and quickly, efficiently spell for them. If students believe asking for spelling will create uneasiness, they will avoid asking and write a simpler synonym.

Sometimes students, particularly the younger ones, ask how to spell a word and it is already in their dictionary. Some teachers have found that if they circle the word already on the page with the eraser, the students can copy the word in their story and then brush off the eraser crumbs.

Ideally, this dictionary is not for individual teachers, but is for the whole school. Every student, beginning in kindergarten is issued a dictionary. At the end of the school year, the dictionary is transferred to the next teacher. There is no need to issue a new blank dictionary each school year. Thus some thought needs to go into the title page for the dictionary: School name, logo, address, district name, place for student name and so on.

Hopefully, this is efficient and helpful for you and your students,

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