

Rebecca Sitton's APPLESEED



PLANT THE SEEDS TO GROW SPELLING AND WORD-SKILL LITERACY.

Suggestions for Sourcebook Use with Special Education Students

The Sourcebook methodology is one that is used with positive results for all students in regular education settings, but Special Education teachers consistently verify its success with their students for whom spelling is a challenge. Following are answers to frequently asked questions that provide practical suggestions for using the program both successfully and time-effectively with students in Special Education settings.

But first, why does the instructional design of the Sourcebook work for these learners? Briefly, because spelling is *taught*. Using this program, students do not rely on memorization of letter sequences. A more guided approach that teaches students to become discriminating observers of words is necessary so that they learn what to look for in words and know what their observations mean in relation to spelling. This knowledge serves them well as readers, too. In fact, it strengthens all their communication skills.

Further, the teaching and testing format of the Sourcebooks allows the Special Education teacher to accommodate the many different ways and different rates at which students learn. Activities for teaching specific skills and concepts are selected from a menu of choices—one size does not fit all. And the systematic recycling of all skills, concepts, and words provides reinforcement for learning over time to ensure mastery.

Which Sourcebook level should I use?

Select a level that best approximates the reading level of the majority of the students in any one instructional group. For example, if the reading levels of a group of fourth through sixth grade Special Education students ranges from second grade to about fourth grade, a Level 3 Sourcebook may be the best choice. Each Sourcebook has a difficulty range of about a year above and a year below the grade level of the Sourcebook. Therefore, it is easy to accommodate a range of abilities for both teaching and testing, so I request that Special Education teachers use the built-in Sourcebook strategies to accommodate their learners, rather than using multiple Sourcebooks.

Can some of the work be done in students' regular classrooms?

Yes. For inclusion programs, all assistance is accomplished within the regular classroom setting. For pull-out programs, some of the work can be done in the regular classroom, as well.

For example, let's look at testing. It might be that with the modifications for challenged learners that are offered in the Sourcebook Teaching Notes, all students can take the Cloze Story Word Test in their regular classroom. Then the Spelling Words that result can be explored and discussed individually or in a small special-needs group using strategies guided by the Special Education teacher.

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Suggestions for Sourcebook Use with Special Education Students (continued)

☞ Which activities are the most successful for Special Education learners?

Who knows? Even for regular education students, there is not just one path to spelling success. Research validates several procedures that need consideration for conscientious spelling study. The reason some students struggle with spelling and are referred by their regular classroom teacher is that they learn differently from other students. So, Special Education teachers must have a “bag of tricks” to use on demand to meet the unusual learning needs of their students. The Sourcebook methodology provides for an extensive “bag” of resources for this purpose.

Some students become stronger spellers with the Sourcebook’s phonics-based lessons, while others are inclined to learn words through the program’s emphasis on structure or etymology. Some learners do well with manipulatives, and if so, the letter-card word-making options are good choices, while for other students these manipulatives are a distraction. Yet, nearly all Special Education students benefit from the Sourcebook’s extensive recycling of words and skills.

The learning conundrum that each Special Education student presents is the exciting puzzle a Special Education teacher unlocks through the immense research-based activity choices the Sourcebooks provide. As a former Special Education teacher, I don’t deny that this puzzle is often a frustrating one with its many pieces, but once the right pieces are in place, the reward of a child’s delight in learning is worth the toil.



Yes! Special Education teachers need multiple resources for teaching spelling!
Trot out the Sourcebook’s sing-along rhymes!