

Rebecca Sitton's APPLESEED



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

Ask Rebecca

Dear Ilene,

Rebecca,

Your program was brought to our school by our new principal. I want the power to make my own curriculum decisions. I feel absolutely powerless. What's to say your way is right? We're supposed to begin next fall.

Ilene Olsen

3rd Grade Teacher of 27 years

Your feelings of discouragement are probably justified because new programs are often thrust upon us, and powerlessness prevails. You are undoubtedly frustrated, just like so many teachers who find themselves in situations in which they have so little control over the decisions that influence their teaching lives.

Yet, do not feel discouraged. Your new principal has actually empowered you—now you have a new authority to make important curriculum decisions on your own as you use your new Sourcebook. The Sourcebooks put *you* in charge to create *your own spelling and word-skill program*. At first,

you'll just have to take my word for it that your Sourcebook will empower you! You'll see it for yourself once your implementation is under way.

With your Sourcebook, you and I work together. I need your help. Yes, I'm the author of your Sourcebook; however, you have essential information that I don't have in order to make appropriate instructional choices. I've never been to your classroom, nor met your students or you. I don't know what reading or language program you're using—every program has slightly different strengths and weaknesses. I don't know the results of your students' last achievement test scores that provide you with areas of need. Each State Standards document has varying priorities. The specifics of your school district curriculum guidelines are unknown to me. If you have a School Improvement Plan to target an area of the communication skills, I'm not aware of it. All of these elements are absolutely necessary in order to make suitable instructional decisions for your students, and you have this information—I don't.

So, in tandem, you and I can create an appropriate spelling and word-skill curriculum. With your Sourcebook, I give you the structure, the scaffolding, to make the task easier. I keep essential skills and concepts for third graders in the foreground. I provide you a menu of best-practices activity choices that vary in difficulty and format to teach these essentials. Then you make the instructional selections and assessment choices based on your insights of what your kids need most. We're partners.

You asked, "What's to say your way is right?" Well, it's not solely "my way." I lean heavily on the research and veteran teachers' ideas to make the program teacher-friendly, practical, and time-

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Ask Rebecca (continued)

efficient. I realize that one size does not fit all. I offer options for differentiating, customizing, personalizing—is there a word such as flexibilizing? No. But my point is this—you will have a whole lot of say about your spelling and word-skill curriculum once you begin Unit 1. And so do other teachers who have needs different from yours. Because of this program’s flexibility, it’s successfully used in competitive schools with students who need challenges, as well as in Special Education classes with students who struggle with language learning. It can be used with new teachers and veteran teachers, such as you. It’s successful with multi-age classes, with ELL programs, and...well, you name it! It is now the most often used stand-alone spelling and word-skill program across the country. And this has occurred primarily through word of mouth. I’m guessing that your principal heard about this program from another educator’s success with it, and he or she wants you and your colleagues to have the benefits it provides for learning. So please give it a chance.

One thing before you begin next fall. Is your principal arranging training for you and your colleagues to use your new Sourcebooks? Will a Sourcebook Consultant visit your school for training or might your principal have ordered the CD-ROM [Tutor Me](#) as a getting-started aid? I hope so. If not, discuss options for training with your principal. If your principal needs training information, call 888-937-7355. We can help. We can make it easy for both teachers and parents to feel comfortable as your new Sourcebook methodology is implemented at your school.

Once you’ve had training and you implement the program, you’re not on your own. I will help you. My home phone, office phone, and email address are in your Sourcebook. Contact me as questions arise, or you and your colleagues can schedule a complimentary conference call with me to ask questions. I play an active—not passive—role to support literacy. I believe it makes a difference. So, let’s make a difference together, Ilene.

Rebecca

Do you have a question? Call me at home or toll free at the office, send me an email, or set up a complimentary conference call for a group of colleagues who have questions. • email: rsitton@sittonspelling.com
• home phone: 480-473-7277 • office phone: toll free at 888-WE-SPELL (937-7355) or 480-596-5100