

Rebecca Sitton's APPLESEED



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

Think-Alouds—a Good Way to Model Strategies We Want Students to Use

Each unit in a Sourcebook requires students to *think*. Often this thinking begins with a short lesson, and then releases responsibility to the students to collect and analyze words to extend the topic at hand. How do you get students to begin their word collections, to know what to do? Teach them how.

Try modeling the activity for them. I like think-alouds. For example, if students are asked to collect long-*o* words, and then sort them by their spelling pattern, do this: Tell the students you are going to think aloud as you do this task—

“Let’s see. I think I know what a long-*o* word is. It’s a word that has the sound of ‘*o*’. First, I think I’ll just get a few long-*o* words written down, and then I’ll sort them later. How will I know where to look? Wait! I just said a long-*o* word—*know*—*how will I know where to look—know!* So I’ll write k-n-o-w. Of course, there is its homophone, the opposite of *yes*, too. So I’ll write n-o. So far I have two words. So far—hey, *so* is another long-*o* word! I’d better write s-o.

Now I might look in some of my books for more words. I’ll use my library book—here it is. I’ll read slowly and listen for long-*o* as I say the words. That will give me more words. I need lots more!”

Often we ask students to do something that we have not “taught” them to do. We assume they can do it. Then we get unsatisfactory results because the students were not clear about exactly how to do it. Make it clear. Model the process with a think-aloud demonstration. Then tell them it’s their turn. Your unsatisfactory results will turn around quickly! Now students know how.

Telling students what to do
is not a substitute for
teaching them
HOW!

