



# **They Still Can't Spell? Understanding and Supporting Challenged Spellers in Middle and High School**

*Rebecca Bowers Sipe*

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Challenged spellers in middle and high school are hit with a triple whammy—they can't spell, traditional strategies don't help them, and poor spelling often inhibits their writing. English teachers face a challenge, too—especially those whose job is *not* to teach spelling. This book changes that. It offers teachers ways to identify students' problems *within the context of writing* and the appropriate strategies to correct them in regular English classrooms.

The book is the result of the four-year collaboration of former secondary teacher Rebecca Bowers Sipe, two middle and two high school teachers, and their students. Based on literacy histories, placement inventories, visual memory tests, and analyses of student writing, their book:

- offers a detailed look at the literacy journeys of challenged spellers through student work, vignettes, and interviews
- describes four categories of challenged spellers and their relationship with overall literacy investment
- identifies the pitfalls of "too little, too shallow, too fast" practices, including familiar but ineffective lists and tests
- expands basic spelling knowledge within the constraints of the regular English curriculum
- steps inside the classrooms of these teacher-researchers as they put their strategies into practice
- includes tools, resources, and other materials for immediate use in teaching.

In addition, the book provides ideas and cautions for addressing spelling at the classroom, school, and district levels, plus step-by-step plans for supporting departmental- and school-based discussions about spelling instruction.

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