

## **Hints for Time Management Using Stevenson**

***Whether you call it organizing or juggling***, allocating your time to different kinds of instruction is a huge challenge to anyone working with struggling readers. Since you probably do not have the time to read thousands of words on the subject, we thought we would try to supply some relatively brief suggestions. And, if digesting these suggestions seems too time-consuming, you can always call us at 800-343-1211, ask for a consultant, and we can share suggestions specific to your situation.

### **Centers**

If you are not already using activity centers, create some. If you need ideas for centers, go to the [www.quesstconsulting.com](http://www.quesstconsulting.com) website (note the double s in quesst) and spend a few minutes looking around. There are free suggestions for teacher-made materials, or if you do not have time to make anything, the PAL supplemental items are for sale. If you need additional help, call us toll free and arrange for a quick consulting call.

With centers in place, you can make sure all your students can use their time effectively when you have to give individual attention or when the inevitable interruptions occur. Center activities do not replace actual instruction, but they can ensure that the learning process continues while you have to redirect your instruction or your attention.

### **Starting Off on the Right Foot**

If you are new (or relatively new) to Stevenson, be sure you are starting in the right place, so you do not have to cover more material than necessary. There are only two principal options you need to worry about: starting at the Beginning Green Level Manual or starting with The Overlapping Strategy Manual. (In a very few circumstances, you might want to start with Stevenson's Letters Teachers Manual.) To decide between the Beginning Green and the Overlapping, you can look through our information called "Starting the Stevenson Program" on the website. You will find it under "Stevenson Reading" on the home page. Or you can simply call us toll free and ask for a consultant.

### **Strands / Parts of Lessons**

The Stevenson Program weaves together several different strands of language skills. There is a core of phonics instruction around which are wrapped strategies for vocabulary, comprehension and more. Author Nancy Stevenson found that many times her students' progress in one area of reading would stall because they lacked skill in a different area. When she developed the program, she made sure all necessary foundational skills and sub-skills were covered. However, some students move easily through some tasks and have significant difficulty with others. So you can save some time by knowing which skills are most needed by which students. You may not be able to make this adjustment in your first few lessons, but after a few weeks your options will start to become evident.

Our rule of thumb is: "Don't omit any lesson completely, but you can omit or de-emphasize some parts of some lessons." For example, in the Beginning Green Teacher's Manual, Lesson

8 contains four parts (most lessons contain three). Part 1 applies the peanut butter and jelly clue to the ai friends and integrates several skills. All teachers would want to cover it completely. Part 2 opens with a phonemic awareness activity that will be very easy for some students, but difficult (and important) for others. Similarly, Part 3, which teaches students how to answer simple Yes or No questions in writing with a complete sentence, will be easy for some and difficult but valuable for others. Some teachers will omit Part 4, although we do not recommend it. Part 4 focuses on spelling instruction, which is more time-consuming than reading practice, and some teachers feel that they have so little time with their Stevenson students that they must focus on improving reading first. Once you start to understand which students need to spend more time with one strand than another, use your centers. If, hypothetically, you have five pupils in a short period and two of them need extra work with the Question Answering activity, you can have the other three students working on sorting or matching peanut butter and jelly patterns.

If you look at Lesson 8 of the Overlapping Strategy Manual, you will see an analogous situation. Part 1 is essential. Part 2 is valuable, but may not be a high priority for some teachers. Parts 3 and 4 will be easy for some students and can easily be covered in a single session with little practice. However, for other students, such as many ELL pupils, each section will require separate time and practice. It is difficult to generalize about a particular lesson or section of the manual, because students can vary so much in the underlying dynamics of their reading issues. However, if you want to discuss your particular students, and how to vary the pacing and emphasis, call and ask for a consultant. There is a good chance we can help.

### **The Group Game**

Frequent oral reading practice is good for all struggling readers, but it is not always easy to find enough time for it. Make the most of your oral reading periods by playing the Group Game often. It ensures that each student in the group is truly paying attention, it reduces impulsive guessing and the children like it. (See the "Group Game" in the Teaching Resources Section of the website.)