

## Teaching Beginning Reading Skills, Grade K

### Classroom Management

*Open Court Reading* and *SRA Imagine It!* recommend a combination of whole class and small group instruction (Workshop). With whole-class instruction, it is particularly important for the teacher to employ management strategies that focus students' attention.

Children thrive on routine; therefore, establishing a set of predictable procedures for instruction is the primary way to engage them. For example, the predictable routines for introducing sound-letter correspondences, blending, reading a *Pre-Decodable Book* and a *Decodable Book*, allow students to focus their attention on what is most important—learning sound-letter correspondences, using that knowledge to recognize words, and learning to read with fluency and comprehension. It is therefore important for teachers to establish and stick to routines.

Mrs. Quinney employs several different methods to ensure that, although she is using whole-class instruction, all the students are engaged and learning. When working with the whole class, she:

- Makes the instruction personal as often as possible by using the students' personal information, such as their names.
- Switches from eliciting whole-class responses to asking random students for individual responses. This keeps the students focused.
- Uses the entire classroom environment to teach. For example, she has the students look around the room for the word *the*.
- Gives students continual positive reinforcement.
- Explains why she or the other students are doing what they are doing. In this way, she makes sure that everyone understands.
- Has students get on their feet and/or respond physically whenever possible.
- Waits and gives students time to think and respond rather than jumping in with the answers.
- Has the students explain some of their responses. This helps those who may be struggling to understand.

In addition to the techniques Mrs. Quinney uses in whole-group instruction, she has arranged her room to facilitate whole-group instruction and utilizes the tools available with the *Open Court Reading* and *SRA Imagine It!* program.

Mrs. Quinney has provided ample open space in the front of the room for students to gather around her for instruction. This arrangement assures that all students can clearly see what she is doing; allows her to position herself in such a way that she can clearly see all of the students and monitor their responses; and lends a slightly more relaxed feel to the instructional time. This helps students relax so they are not anxious about responding. It also makes it easier for students to help each other without causing disruptions.

Mrs. Quinney has posted the *Alphabet Sound Cards* in such a way that all the students can see them clearly. The position of the cards will remain the same through the year. It is essential that the students have fast and easy access to the cards as they read and write each day. The *Alphabet Sound Cards* become a major source of support to the students as they progress in their reading and writing instruction.