



Facilitator’s Guide

This guide was produced in partnership with the **National Education Association**



EPISODE 4

Learning ‘b’ and ‘d’ and Reading Short Vowel Words with Aiko (Grade 2)

Video length: 13 minutes

Watch the video here: ReadingRockets.org/interventions/letter-reversals-b-d-with-aiko-second-grade

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Watch the whole “Looking at Reading Interventions” series here:
ReadingRockets.org/interventions



Section 1: Purpose of this guide

This facilitator's guide for professional development (the Guide) is intended to provide suggestions for reading coaches, principals, team leaders, or other facilitators to use for professional development (PD) sessions.

The Guide is organized to facilitate discussion about the video, not for the facilitator to lecture. PD facilitators may find insight about the videos by reading the Guide before leading PD about the video.

Use in conjunction with the Viewer's Guide

A separate Viewer's Guide intended for anyone to use during a first viewing of the video. Find it here:

- [Episode 4 Viewer's Guide](#) (printable PDF)
- [Episode 4 Viewer's Guide](#) (fillable PDF)

The Viewer's Guide includes the following:

1. Aiko's profile
2. Video overview
3. What to notice while watching the video
4. Questions to consider while watching the video the first time

PD participants should use the Viewer's Guide as they watch the entire video as the initial step in PD, either on their own or in a group.

Using this guide for professional development

General guidelines for using the guide

PD should start with all participants watching the entire video and using the Viewer's Guide to guide their watching.

The Guide organizes the video into short clips for the group to view before discussing the clips. The short clips are organized around the following themes:

- A. Aiko Learns about the 'b-hand'**
- B. Aiko Learns About Practicing with her 'b-hand'**
- C. Aiko Reads CVC Words**

Each theme includes one to three short video clips for viewing, and one to five discussion questions for immediate discussion after each clip is viewed.

A PD facilitator may elect to offer several shorter sessions as part of ongoing shorter PD sessions, such as for a Professional Learning Community (PLC), or to have one half-day session to discuss the entire video.



Use the guide for a series of shorter PD sessions

1. Ask participants to read the Viewer's Guide before viewing the entire video. As they view the video, participants should answer the questions in Section 4 of the Viewer's Guide.
 - Facilitators might want to use the first session to view the video and discuss the questions in the Viewer's Guide.
 - Alternatively, facilitators might ask participants to view the video and answer the questions in the Viewer's Guide before the first session, then discuss the questions during the first session.
2. Before each PD session, select video clips and the discussion questions that will fit into the time frame for the session.
 - Facilitators may want to make a copy of the discussion questions for each participant so they can write notes during the session.
3. During the PD session, show the video clips and discuss each clip, using the questions in the Guide.
4. Consider using one or more questions from Section 3: Summarizing Questions before the session ends.

Use the guide for a half-day session

Preparation: Make copies of the Viewer's Guide and the questions in Section 2 for each participant.

Consider an agenda as follows:

1. View the entire video.
 - Read the Viewer's Guide.
 - Answer questions in the Viewer's Guide while viewing the video.
 - Discuss the answers to the questions and other questions participants may have.
2. View short clips and ask discussion questions for each section listed in Section 2.
3. Discuss the questions from Section 3: Summarizing Questions before the session ends.

Using the answer keys

Answer keys provide facilitators with suggestions for answers to each question in the Viewer's Guide and this Guide. Of course, you can adapt the answers to address the needs of participants in your session.



Section 2: Questions for guiding the second viewing of the video

Note about time stamps: The location for the part of the video related to the question is in parentheses. The start and stop times are shown as minutes:seconds. For example, the first question starts at 29 seconds and ends at 1 minute, 55 seconds. The total time for each clip is also shown in minutes and seconds.

Short session A: Aiko learns about the 'b-hand'

2.1 Aiko Learns Which Hand Is Her 'b-hand' (0:29 – 1:55) 1:26 total time

1. Why is b–d confusion a problem that must be fixed?
2. Why does Ms. Farrell put the rubber band on Aiko's wrist?

2.2 Aiko Learns About the 'b-hand' (1:56 – 3:53) 1:57 total time

3. Why is b–d confusion not a symptom of dyslexia?
4. What words does Ms. Farrell have Aiko say when she compares her b-hand to the letter 'b'?
5. Why does Ms. Farrell have Aiko explain how she knows a letter is a 'b' or a 'd'?

2.3 Aiko Practices Not Looking Away from the Letters (3:54 – 5:14) 1:20 total time

6. Why do you think Aiko looks away from the letters?
7. Why does Ms. Farrell have Aiko practice just looking down without naming letters?

Short session B: Aiko learns about practicing with her 'b-hand'

2.4 Aiko Learns How to Practice Using Her 'b-hand' (5:15 – 6:31) 1:16 total time

8. Why does Ms. Farrell have Aiko hold her b-hand up to her chest for letters other than 'b' or 'd'?
9. What does Aiko need to do when she puts her b-hand next to a letter 'b' or a letter 'd'?

2.5 Aiko Practices Using Her 'b-hand' to Name Letters (6:31 – 8:04) 1:33 total time

10. Why should Aiko practice using her 'b-hand' as she names letters every day?
11. What are the two habits Aiko will be changing with the 'b-hand' practice?



Short session C: Aiko reads CVC words

2.6 Aiko Reads Two Sets of CVC Words (8:05 – 9:41) 1:36 total time

12. What poor habits did you observe when Aiko read the words?
13. What did Ms. Farrell say when Aiko finished reading the second set of words?

2.7 Aiko Reads Another Set of CVC Words Thinking the Sounds (9:42 – 12:18) 2:36 total time

14. What does Ms. Farrell ask Aiko to do when she reads the next set of words?
 15. Why did Ms. Farrell ask Aiko to reread the same set of words a second time?
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Section 3: Summarizing questions

1. Do you have any students who might benefit from the strategies Aiko learns?
2. What did you learn?
3. How do you plan to use what you learned in your instruction?
4. How can you use what you learned with a small group?



Section 4: Answer keys

Answer key for Viewer's Guide

1. What is the 'b-hand'?

The student's left hand in a fist with the forefinger sticking up so the curled fingers look like the 'ball' and the forefinger looks like the 'stick' of a lower-case 'b'.

2. How does a student use the 'b-hand'?

The b-hand is a visual anchor for the letter 'b' that the student compares to written b's and d's to know which the letter is. If the letter looks like the b-hand it is a 'b', and if it **does not** look like the b-hand it is a 'd'.

3. Why does Ms. Farrell only teach the 'b-hand' and not both a 'b-hand' and a 'd-hand'?

A student who confuses the shapes of the letter may also confuse which hand is the b-hand and which hand is the d-hand.

Fixing b-d confusion is more effective and faster with just the one anchor to use for checking the letters.

4. What does Ms. Farrell do to help Aiko keep her eyes on the letters?

First, Ms. Farrell isolates the practice of looking down, so Aiko only has to think about keeping her eyes down. Next, Ms. Farrell immediately reminds Aiko to look down whenever Aiko forgets. Ms. Farrell also gives Aiko a cue (stomping her fist on the desk) for when she can look up. This helps Aiko keep her eyes down until she has finished naming all the letters.

5. Why is the b–d practice done in isolation and not practiced only when Aiko misreads a word during reading instruction?

The practice needs to happen in isolation so that it becomes automatic for the student to internally check every 'b' and 'd'. When Aiko guesses for 'b' and 'd', she has only a 50% chance of reading a word correctly. Practicing the two letters in isolation is the fastest way for Aiko to start recognizing those letters automatically, just as she recognizes all the other letters. It is too hard for Aiko to remember to check b's and d's when she is simultaneously using her mental 'desk space' to decode the words she is reading. Isolated practice will allow her to develop automaticity in recognizing b's and d's accurately.

2. How does Ms. Farrell keep Aiko from sounding out words aloud when Aiko is reading?

Ms. Farrell has Aiko keep her mouth closed and think through the sounds in her head before Aiko reads the word aloud, rather than saying each sound aloud.



Answer key for Section 2: questions for guiding the second viewing of the video

Short session A: Aiko learns about the 'b-hand'

2.1 Aiko Learns Which Hand Is Her 'b-hand' (0:29 – 1:55) 1:26 total time

1. Why is b–d confusion a problem that must be fixed?

Proficient readers recognize every letter automatically, instantaneously, and without effort. B's and d's are among the most used consonants in the English language. Even the easiest texts will have a number of these two letters. A student who confuses these letters will have both impeded fluency and weakened comprehension.

2. Why does Ms. Farrell put the rubber band on Aiko's wrist?

Ms. Farrell places the rubber band on Aiko's left wrist as a way to remind Aiko which hand is her b-hand during the practice. After a few practice sessions, Aiko will automatically know her b-hand and will not need the rubber band.

2.2 Aiko Learns About the 'b-hand' (1:56 – 3:53) 1:57 total time

3. Why is b–d confusion not a symptom of dyslexia?

While some students with dyslexia do confuse 'b' and 'd', research tells us that dyslexia is primarily a phonological (speech sound) processing difficulty. B-d confusion is a letter shape confusion which is an orthographic (visual) processing difficulty.

4. What words does Ms. Farrell have Aiko say when she compares her b-hand to the letter 'b'?

Ms. Farrell has Aiko say, "The stick is on the same side of the circle as my finger."

5. Why does Ms. Farrell have Aiko explain how she knows a letter is a 'b' or a 'd'?

If Aiko can explain how she compares the shape of her 'b-hand' to the shape of the letter, Ms. Farrell can be sure Aiko understands how to use her 'b-hand'.

2.3 Aiko Practices Not Looking Away from the Letters (3:54 – 5:14) 1:20 total time

6. Why do you think Aiko looks away from the letters?

Aiko is looking away from the letters because she is unsure if the letter is a 'b' or a 'd' and she is trying to see if she can think of the answer in head. But in fact, she is just guessing. The only way to recognize a letter is to look at it.



7. Why does Ms. Farrell have Aiko practice just looking down without naming letters?

Ms. Farrell has Aiko practice the task of keeping her eyes on the page without the extra load on her mental 'desk space' of also trying to accurately name the letters. Aiko is already using all her mental desk space to name the letters. Asking Aiko to think about using her b-hand to check and remember not to look up is too many tasks to practice at once. Changing two habits at one time is too taxing until Aiko has some practice with each separately.

Short session B: Aiko learns about practicing with her 'b-hand'

2.4 Aiko Learns How to Practice Using Her 'b-hand' (5:15 – 6:31) 1:16 total time

8. Why does Ms. Farrell have Aiko hold her b-hand up to her chest for letters other than 'b' or 'd'?

Aiko does not need to compare any other letters with her b-hand because b-d confusion is only with those two letters. By holding her hand up to her chest for any letter that is not a 'b' or 'd' Aiko has her b-hand ready to use for the next 'b' or 'd' she encounters. This way she does not have to think about getting her hand into the correct shape or which hand is her b-hand during the practice. It also makes Aiko pay attention to which letters are the ones she needs to check.

9. What does Aiko need to do when she puts her b-hand next to a letter 'b' or a letter 'd'?

Aiko's task is to look at the letter and look at her hand to compare them. Initially, some students do not really compare the b-hand with the letter. They simply put the b-hand down on the page and then just guess the letter name. Asking the student to say aloud that the circle is on the same side or not on the same side encourages them to check. This can be dropped once the student gets used to checking.

2.5 Aiko Practices Using Her 'b-hand' to Name Letters (6:31 – 8:04) 1:33 total time

10. Why should Aiko practice using her 'b-hand' as she names letters every day?

Short, frequent, intermittent practice is the best way to change a habit and to train the brain. The goal of the b-hand practice is to make checking for 'b' or 'd' an automatic process (done without conscious effort). Isolating the b-d practice from other tasks and doing it as frequently as possible is the fastest way to develop automaticity.

11. What are the two habits Aiko will be changing with the 'b-hand' practice?

Aiko will change her habit of looking up and her habit of guessing 'b's and 'd's.



Short session C: Aiko reads CVC words

2.6 Aiko Reads Two Sets of CVC Words (8:05 – 9:41) 1:36 total time

12. What poor habits did you observe when Aiko read the words?

Aiko looked away from the words and she orally sounded out unfamiliar words.

13. What did Ms. Farrell say when Aiko finished reading the second set of words?

Ms. Farrell says, "You got five right!" This is positive error correction — telling the student what they got right before working on fixing errors. Positive error correction keeps students motivated and engaged. (There were six words on the list.)

2.7 Aiko Reads Another Set of CVC Words Thinking the Sounds (9:42 – 12:18) 2:36 total time

14. What does Ms. Farrell ask Aiko to do when she reads the next set of words?

Ms. Farrell asks Aiko to keep her eyes on the page until she hears Ms. Farrell tap her fist on the desk.

15. Why did Ms. Farrell ask Aiko to reread the same set of words a second time?

Ms. Farrell asks Aiko to reread the same set of words because students need to develop the habit of reading accurately. Aiko should reread the set of words until she gets all the words right. This procedure also encourages students to read accurately the first time rather than having to repeat reading them again.



Answer key for Section 3: summarizing questions

1. Do you have any students who might benefit from the strategy Aiko learns?

Use this question to have participants discuss their students who might be struggling with b–d confusion and students who look up from the page to guess letters and words.

Thoughts for teachers to consider:

- What student behaviors do teachers observe that might be clues to difficulty with b–d confusion?
- Do teachers have any data from assessments that might indicate a student's difficulty with b–d confusion?
- How will teachers go about practicing the b-hand with students who need it?
- How will teachers help students change the looking up habit?

2. What did you learn?

Use this question to have participants reflect on and consolidate their learning by expressing it aloud.

3. How do you plan to use what you learned in your instruction?

Use this question to have participants develop and express specific action plans for teaching their students: Who? What? When? How will you measure student progress?

4. How can you use what you learned with a small group?

Teaching the b-hand strategy is easy in small groups with 2–3 students who need to fix the b–d confusion.

The deck of cards for each student has the letters that student is practicing, providing targeted practice for each student's particular difficulty.

The first step is for the teacher to assess each student to determine which letters the student knows and which they need help with. Recording this by circling the known letters on a separate grid of the alphabet for each student is helpful.

When armed with the assessment information, the teacher can create separate flashcard decks for each student that include the letter being learned or the two confusing letters.

It is important that each student practice from his/her individualized flashcard deck to practice with, as opposed to all students practicing chorally.

Step 1. I DO — The teacher teaches and models how to use the b-hand for the whole group.

Step 2. WE DO — The teacher and all the students together practice using the b-hand for one or two rows of letters. The teacher works with any student who needs help.



Step 3. YOU DO — Each student has a turn to read a row of letters using the b-hand. After the student names the letters in a row, the teacher tells the student how many they got right and then has the student go back and fix any errors. Then another student has a turn to read a new row of letters as the other students follow along tracking. Once a student demonstrates mastery and automaticity naming the letters using the b-hand, move the practice for that student to naming the letters without using the b-hand.

Notes for YOU DO:

1. The students who are not naming letters can silently watch the letter-namer. When the namer finishes, the teacher can call on the watchers to show a 'thumbs-up' if they think the namer was 100% accurate or a 'helping hand' (a raised hand with palm facing out) if the namer needs help. They do not say anything aloud. The teacher then tells the namer how many were correct and then guides namer in fixing any errors.
2. Another way to keep the other students engaged is to let them practice printing letters, arranging letters in alphabetical order with manipulatives, working on a tablet activity, or participating in some other quiet individual activity.