

# ExWyZee Remedial Reading

ExWyZeeRemedialReading.com

[ExWyZeeReading@gmail.com](mailto:ExWyZeeReading@gmail.com)

## LOOPY DRILLS AND ADHESIVE TAPE FOR THE b-or-d PROBLEM

For Rx See end of article.

When I see the misreading of the letters small-b and small-d, the first thing I do is point out to parents that their child is not seeing those mirror-image letters backward, that it simply is not yet fixed in their mind which is which. (It can be as difficult to convince some that dyslexia is not a visual perception problem as it is to convince some that getting a chill isn't what causes colds.)

And I point out that when a child reads "saw" as was, it's no more a matter of faulty visual perception than it is when the parent gets a wrong number by dialing 555-4489 as 555-4498. The saw-was error seldom occurs in the context of "I saw Sam sitting on a see-saw." They don't read it as "I was Sam sitting on a see-was."

If you've taught very long, it's likely you've felt goose bumps when seeing a student suddenly show insight for some concept or skill that has been especially troublesome. Joey, a severely dyslexic 6th grader, had been in special-ed all of his school-life. While I don't know how the b-d problem was handled in school, when he was tutored at home, he had the habit of asking "is it b-or-d?," and he would be told which letter it was.

After a couple of training sessions with the family, I had Joey print cap-B on paper, with a pencil, then asked him what he would have if he erased the top loop. He erased it, and called the remaining figure the letter-b. I had him print small-b, add a top loop, and asked him what he had after adding the loop. Then I had him print small-d, and add a top loop. He observed that adding a top loop to a small-d didn't make any letter.

I have had students say "it's a backward-B." I told Joey that he would never again be told whether the letter is b-or-d when he asked again. I told him he was to think in terms of the loops. Then I put a piece of adhesive tape on the back of his left hand, with small-d printed on the tape, and a piece of tape on the back of his right hand, with small-b printed on it. I told him that the left hand was his d-hand, and the right hand his b-hand.

So, as we did various basic skill drills with Joey, he would look at the left or right hand when he had to make a b-or-d decision. It worked perfectly for 2 sessions. But then, at the beginning of the next session he objected to being taped, so we left it off. Then came goose-bump time! When coming to a decision-point for b-or-d, Joey would look at the backs of his now bare hands, and make the correct b-or-d decision. And we saw that behavior over the next few sessions, until the b-or-d problem had pretty well faded away.

I've had other students since then for whom the loopy drills and the tape has been remarkably effective in most cases. It's a good idea to point out to parents that other letter-pairs also result in letter-discrimination errors (a-e, f-t, g-q, m-n, u-v), but that these errors are not as evident as the b-d errors.

Rx: When the b-or-d deficit is first seen, do the loopy routine. If the deficit occurs only infrequently, doing the loopy-sessions at the time of occurrence might be adequate treatment. If it's a chronic condition, I recommend 3-prong treatment:

- (1) The d & b adhesive tape on the hands.
- (2) Brief Loopy-sessions at the beginning of reading sessions.
- (3) If you have access to the ExWyZee Remedial Reading Computer Program, sort the exercise list by Category, scroll to Ltr Discrimination Category, use exercise sets:

1. Letter Discrimination b & d-F7
2. Letter Discrimination - BD
3. b-words d-words flash - F5

Provide drills on those sets every other day or so.