

Braille Box

Transcript

SPEAKER 1: Video provides demonstration of the instructional steps outlined in the article. Video begins with reviewing instruction using braille paper with both ink print and braille alphabet followed by the APH Swing Cell.

All right, so these are just the instructional steps for the Braille Box. And of course, you can adapt this in any way that's appropriate for your students. Typically, I would start with reviewing the braille alphabet or the alphabet and the letter sounds. So A, a, apple. B, bu, bus. C, cu, cat. Much slower than that with our student. We would go through the whole alphabet as part of a daily practice.

And then from that, we would move to a swing cell. And with this, we would practice dot numbers. You know, dot one, two, three, four, five, six. And then maybe form the letter of the day or week in the closed position. So say we're doing the letter B that day. And then you practice in the open position: dot placement, as well as the letter of the day or a week. From this step, we would transfer this, once it's in the open position, to reflect writing. We would transfer this knowledge to the Braille Box. Braille Box displayed.

So the pink dots, which I got from the APH Picture Maker Kit, are placed on the vertical Velcro strips that represent the keys on a braille writer. And the student would pick these up one at a time while saying the dot number. So one, two, three, while placing them on the top horizontal strip. Four, five. Now you could have these placed in any spot. You could have all six. Of course, you would never need six dots to form a letter, but you could still have all the dots covered, all the keys covered, if you wanted.

So say we are-- so now that we've done that, we're going to open the Braille Box. And students are going to independently open the Braille Box and pull out the item that-- the item is going to have the initial letter and letter sound of the letter of that day or week. So since we chose B, we're going to have a ball. And we're going to talk about what is a ball, how do we play with them, do we play with them ourselves, can we play with them with other people, what sports, what kind of sports balls.

And the thing that's cool about-- the opportunity is to expand on concept development. Say, you could have a sound ball, you could have a stress ball, you could have a beach ball, deflated, and then blow it up. And so they see what deflated and inflated. So there's just lots of opportunities. And you could switch it. It doesn't have to be a ball for B, but you could switch-- there's lots of room to expand on concepts right here.

And so once you've really got the student engaged and we're talking about B and ball and concepts, now we're going to form the B on top of the Braille Box. So we're going to take-- and they're going to take the dot number, one, two. I instruct them to put their fingers over it to emulate what they're going to do on the braillewriter. And then we immediately transfer from here, this point--

Perkins braillewriter displayed.

--to writing it on the braillewriter. And there's lots of room for creativity. If you think about a car for letter C, think about moving it fast, slow, forward, backward. They could systematically count the tires-- top, bottom, left-right progression. One, two, three, four. You could talk about what side does a driver sit, what side does a passenger sit. There's just so many-- top, bottom of the car, front, back. There's just so many concepts that you can expand on that relate back to the literacy and emerging reader skills. And so that is basically the Braille Box. I'll briefly go over the pros and cons of the size of the Braille Box.

Braille Box displayed.

This is what I would call the really big one and I like it because I can put just about anything in here. Like if I wanted to do a whole pineapple for the letter P, I could. And I think that could also be really impactful for your functional braille users that need something super tangible in that way. However, if you use this with, say a student who is pre-K, four, or kindergarten. They're at the smaller tables and chairs. And so whenever they have to use this, they end up having to flip it over.

Demonstration of young student with Braille Box turned on its side.

Because it's too tall for them. So it could be an option that you may want a shorter Braille Box, not to be as deep, I should say. But there's just pros and cons to whichever way you make it. But it's been a great device for student engagement and just building on concepts in literacy.

Various objects displayed as potential items for Braille Box.

So these are-- everything in here is either from the Dollar Tree, things from-- potentially from swag bags or, I don't know, maybe a yard sale item, because look at this old car, I did not get that from the Dollar Tree. So basically, almost anything can go in the Braille Box. Like this fan, an accordion style fan. And that's something to expand on when you talk about a ceiling fan, or there's other types of fans. Or maybe they hear fans in their Chromebooks or their laptops and they talk about that fan, how it cools their device.

Gift bag, You could use this for G or for B, just put something maybe fun in it. Talk about hands, H. You could also use this to expand on body concepts and maybe even play thumb war. There's lots of ways to engage them. Dollar Tree mustaches, that would be fun. Necklace. Again, ball. Harmonica, Dollar Tree. You might not want to be within a group setting, this may be more for individual. This is egg.

So the bugs I love because sometimes it's hard. You run out of ideas for a letter. If you've been working on a letter for-- say you're working on a letter for a week. I like this because you can use it for insect, I. B, bug. If you had an ant, A, ant. You can just keep that going. And then microphone, little Dollar Tree microphone. Have them talk into it and talk about those concepts. So there's just so many-- there's just so many things that you can expand on and I think it's a lot of fun to see how much more engaged they are

with the letter and how much more eager they are to write about and practice writing based on the materials we use to engage them.