



# DAY CLINIC

## Examine Your Practices

Now it's your turn. Ask yourself the following questions to consider your instructional practices and materials as they relate to readiness skills.

1. What sequence am I using to teach the alphabet? Are confusing letters and sounds taught far enough apart so students can master one before the other is introduced?
2. Am I focusing my alphabet instruction on the letter's name, shape, and sound in ways that are interactive and multisensory?
3. Do I have mnemonics to help students remember letter sounds or distinguish those that are confusing?
4. Do I teach handwriting? Do I have my students say the sound each time they write the letter to reinforce the letter-sound relationship, connect it to the physical act of writing the letter, and accelerate learning?
5. Which phonemic awareness activities am I spending the bulk of my time on? Do I include enough oral blending and oral segmentation tasks weekly? Am I careful not to overfocus on rhyme?
6. Am I sequencing my phonemic awareness tasks from easiest to most complex?
7. Am I using manipulatives and other supports in my activities to scaffold the practice as long as students need these supports, but taking them away over time?

List three ways you can modify your alphabet recognition and phonemic awareness instruction over the next month. Record the results of these changes in the chart that follows, then progress to other changes as needed.

Change	Effect on Student Learning
Change 1	Outcome
	Future Modification
Change 2	Outcome
	Future Modification
Change 3	Outcome
	Future Modification

## 4 BEST EFFECT

### My Favorite Manipulatives

- Sound Boxes for oral segmentation exercises
- Oversized letter cards for word-building activities (e.g., Living Words, in which students hold the cards in the front of the classroom and line up to spell a word)
- Magnetic letters for a host of phonics activities (also available as an app)
- Interactive whiteboard activities with spinners, spinning cubes, and movable letters and pictures for high engagement

Select your favorite (or strongest) alphabet recognition and phonemic awareness lessons. I suggest selecting a week's worth of lessons for one letter (alphabet recognition) and an oral blending and/or oral segmentation lesson (phonemic awareness). You might also wish to write a sample lesson for each yourself—taking an existing lesson and modifying it. Meet with your grade-level teachers and share these lessons. Evaluate their effectiveness and brainstorm ways to fine-tune them to accelerate students' mastery.