Enabling Writers Workshop Program
Field Test Toolkit

2016

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Field Testing Overview

Field Testing is the process by which books are trialed in classrooms before they are considered publishing-ready. Field testing provides valuable information about a variety of key indicators of book quality, and the potential value of book use in early grade reading instruction, including

- Target levels for specific reading stages (decodable and leveled targets)
- Ability of teachers to use the book successfully for a variety of instructional purposes
- Appropriate language
- Appropriate cultural context
- Inclusivity and positive portrayal of gender, minority, and/or under-represented communities
- Accessibility for students
- High engagement for students

Books that successfully address all of these indicators are more likely to be used successfully for early grade reading instruction. In order to ensure that these indicators are addressed, gathering direct information from both teachers and students during field testing is necessary.

In order to prepare for field testing your team must
1. Prepare a sample of books
2. Select and contact schools and classrooms
3. Prepare field testing materials
4. Distribute field testing materials

In order to conduct field testing, your team must be prepared to
1. Take calls from teachers and schools with questions
2. Conduct site visits to 25% of your selected schools while field testing is taking place
3. Have a plan in place to collect field test data after testing is completed

Sampling Books

Books written within the Enabling Writers Workshop Program must be field tested before completion of the project. However, field testing all books is cost- and time-prohibitive. Therefore, a sample of books should be field tested. You should select a stratified random sample of books. This means that you should field test 25% of your total book set, selecting a proportional sample from each reading stage. See the example sampling process here to assist you in selecting your book sample.

Total Number of Books:	200
25% of Total Books:	50
List Stages Below:	Proportional Number of Books:
Level 1 (Decodable Stage 1)	10
Level 2 (Decodable Stage 2)	10
Level 3	10
Level 4	10
Level 5	10

In addition, you should select both narrative and informational books within each stage book set. 25% of your books should be targeted toward informational text. Therefore, 25% of your books in each stage should also be informational. In the sample above, this indicates that 2-3 books at each stage will be informational. Finally, it is important to ensure that the sampled book set does not come from a small group of writers, but instead represents the full range of your writing team. Therefore, after you have created a chart similar to the sample above, you will begin selecting books to address both informational/narrative text balance, and a balance of writer representation.

Selecting/Contacting Schools

Each sampled book should be field tested in at least two classrooms (in two different schools). However, you may field test multiple books in a single classroom, and you may field test in more than one classroom per school. For example, you may choose to field test decodable books in a Grade 1 classroom in the same school where you field test leveled books in a Grade 2 classroom. Again, using the sample above, the project may choose to field test 5 books per classroom, and 2 classrooms per school. With 50 books to field test (each book tested twice), the project would select only 10 schools for field testing. By increasing the number of books and classrooms for each school, it will limit the number of schools needed for field testing and be both financially and operationally efficient. See the chart below, continuing the sample above, showing how field testing can be mapped out.

School	Grade 1	Grade 2
School A	Level 1: Books 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Level 3: Books 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
School B	Level 1: Books 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Level 3: Books 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
School C	Level 1: Books 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Level 4: Books 31, 32, 33, 34, 35
School D	Level 1: Books 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Level 4: Books 31, 32, 33, 34, 35
School E	Level 2: Books 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	Level 4: Books 36, 37, 38, 39, 40
School F	Level 2: Books 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	Level 4: Books 36, 37, 38, 39, 40
School G	Level 2: Books 16, 17, 18, 19, 20	Level 5: Books 41, 42, 43, 44, 45
School H	Level 2: Books 16, 17, 18, 19, 20	Level 5: Books 41, 42, 43, 44, 45
School I	Level 3: Books 21, 22, 23, 24, 25	Level 5: Books 46, 47, 48, 49, 50
School J	Level 3: Books 21, 22, 23, 24, 25	Level 5: Books 46, 47, 48, 49, 50

In the sample above, it is important to note that Level 3 is the final level associated with Grade 1, and by field testing the books again at Grade 2, your project can gain further data on the "cut points" between Grades 1 and 2 levels, and whether you have targeted your books appropriately for the two grade levels. While it is understood that children come to school with different readiness, and proceed through reading stages at different speeds, it is useful to know how to generally guide teachers at specific grade levels, and whether the same books can be recommended for late Grade 1 and early Grade 2, often the case.

Select your schools based on ease of location and engagement of students in reading instruction. It is not useful to field test books in classrooms where books are rarely used or structured reading instruction is not taking place. In order to gather useful information, you

need to have the books tested in a classroom where teachers have some knowledge of how to use them with students, and students are minimally prepared to access and use the books.

Make contact with schools to discuss the purpose of field testing, and also notify schools that they may keep the books after field testing is completed. This will provide them with motivation to participate in the process.

Preparing/Distributing Field Test Materials

Each teacher should receive a field test packet, with all materials needed for field testing. Distribute these packets to schools through the most efficient means. Prepare the following:

1. Teacher information sheet – 1 copy (see Appendix A)
2. Teacher Data Form – 1 copy (see Appendix B)
3. 10 copies of each book to be field tested in that classroom

During Field Testing

While books are being field tested, you should have a dedicated staff member, whose phone number is distributed to schools, to take any calls with questions about field testing. In addition, you should plan to conduct site visits for 25% of your field testing schools. In the case of the example provided here, the project would visit 4 schools during field testing to observe classroom use of books, interview the teacher conducting the field testing, and briefly talk with students who are using the books. See Appendices C, D, and E for the Field Test Observation Form, Teacher Interview Protocol, and Student Focus Group Protocol. By visiting schools during field testing, you can gain additional information about how, and how well books are used in the classroom, teacher response to using the books during instruction, and students' response to the books they have read. This will assist you in any book revisions that you find necessary after field testing, and support your final project report.

After Field Testing

After field testing, compile your teacher and student data for each book and again for each level. Examine the response of both teachers and students to determine the extent to which the books were successful with teachers and students and the extent to which you believe you should conduct book revision. Apply this new information not only to the books that were field tested, but also to your larger book set, using the lessons learned from field testing to revisit each book, and ensure that they are of the highest quality possible.

Appendices

Appendix A: Teacher Information Sheet
Appendix B: Teacher Data Form
Appendix C: Field Test Observation Form
Appendix D: Teacher Interview Protocol
Appendix E: Student Focus Group Protocol

Appendix A: Teacher Information Sheet

You have been asked to participate in field testing books that have recently been written for Grades 1 and 2. Field testing means using the books with your students in a variety of ways, and providing information back to the project about the quality of the books, and their usefulness in your classroom reading instruction. We are interested in finding out:
- Whether the levels of text are appropriate for your students
- Your opinion about the books, and the most effective ways teachers can use them
- Pupil opinions about the books, and whether pupils find them interesting and engaging
- Next steps for revision before publishing and larger use

Process: Use one book at a time. Complete the process below for each book, using 2-3 days for each book.

1. Begin use of the book by introducing it to your students, and using it as a read-aloud book. This will peak student interest, and provide an access point for those students who may struggle with reading.
2. Then use the book with your students during your regular reading instruction, providing the same type of instruction as usual in your classroom.
3. Make the book available for independent student reading, and provide time each day during field testing for independent reading time. This ensures that students will have multiple opportunities to use the books.
4. Repeat this process for each book in your field test packet.

Follow-Up

After you have completed field testing, complete the Teacher Data Form included in your packet. This is the primary source of information to be gathered from field testing, so please take the time to comment as well as marking the levels for each indicator.

Your classroom may also be selected for a site visit during field testing. If you are selected for a site visit, you will be notified in advance, and a date and time will be scheduled. During that site visit, the visitor will need to

1. Observe you using one of the field test books during instruction.
2. Interview you about the books you have tested.
3. Interview a small group of your students about their opinions of the books.

After all field testing is complete, we will collect the data forms. The books will remain in your classroom for ongoing use with your students. We thank you for your willingness to participate in this field test, and for helping us make sure our books are of the best quality, and the greatest use to teachers and students.

Appendix B: Teacher Data Form

Please complete this survey, and provide comments for each of your responses. Include any additional comments you have at the end of the survey. Thank you.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly Agree
1. The books I used are appropriate levels of text for my classroom instruction.				
Comment:				
2. The books are useful for me to use in modeling reading behaviors.				
Comment:				
3. The books I used are useful for whole group guided reading skills development.				
Comment:				
4. The books I used are useful for small group comprehension instruction.				
Comment:				
5. The books I used are useful for independent pupil reading.				
Comment:				
6. The books I used are useful for fluency practice.				
Comment:				

7. The illustrations in the books support pupil comprehension and engagement.				
Comment:				
8. Pupils like reading the books.				
Comment:				
9. The books will be useful to me as supplemental text for reading instruction.				
Comment:				
10. The books can be used by pupils who are on level, below level, and above level in reading.				
Comment:				

Other Comments:

Appendix C: Field Test Observation Form

Indicator	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The teacher was making effective instructional use of the book.					
Comments/Notes:					
2. Students responded positively to the book.					
Comments/Notes:					
3. Students were able to read the book successfully.					
Comments/Notes:					
4. The book is appropriate for this grade.					
Comments/Notes:					
5. The book is appropriate for students in this region.					
Comments/Notes:					
6. The book promotes activities that allow students to respond to reading.					
Comments/Notes:					
7. The book promotes reading skills development.					
Comments/Notes:					

Other Comments:

Appendix D: Teacher Interview Protocol

Use the following questions to conduct a teacher interview, making notes in an electronic file about the teacher's response. Conduct individual interviews with each teacher.

1. What is your overall impression about the books you have tested?

2. What are the ways you found them most useful?

3. In what ways were they least useful to you?

4. How did your pupils respond to the books?

5. In what ways are they appropriate for students at this reading level?

6. In what ways are they culturally appropriate for students in this area?

7. Do you think other teachers would benefit from having access to these books? Why?

8. What advice can you give me about how to improve the books?

9. Do you have any other things you want to share with me about this experience?

Appendix E: Student Focus Group Protocol

Ask the teacher to provide time for you to talk with a small group of pupils from his/her class (6-8 pupils). Use the following questions to interview pupils, making notes or audio taping.

1. (Hold up some sample books) – What do you think of these books?

2. Did you get to read them during class?

3. Did you get to read them on your own?

4. What do you like about them?

5. What didn't you like about them?

6. Are they too easy? Too hard? Or just right for you? (follow up with any logical question based on their responses)

7. What is your favorite book in the set? Why?

8. If these books were in your classroom always, would you choose to read them? Why?

9. Is there anything else you want to tell me?