

TO: Teachers Interested in Field Testing the *Reading With Color* Method

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Thanks so much for your interest in trying out a unique method for improving fluency of students who are making slow or no progress in reading. Here is brief information about the history, uniqueness, and types of activities for *Reading With Color (RWC)*. Also see the options and steps for field testing.

HISTORY: This method, originally called *Spelling in Color*, was invented by my mother, Elinor Boeke, in the 1980s. She successfully tutored hundreds of struggling students over a 20-year period and refined her techniques along the way. She worked with students of all ages who had difficulty learning to read. Her students included students with dyslexia, autism, and other learning disabilities. She offered a guarantee to parents that students would improve by at least one grade level with 26 lessons.

UNIQUENESS: Mom's method uses just five colors as hints on vowel letters to indicate the sounds such as long, short, or silent. Although other authors have used colors to indicate sounds, Mom's method is much simpler because only FIVE colors are needed. Colors were carefully selected to accommodate students with red/green colorblindness. And one of the colors (purple) indicates unusual or less common spellings. When students see purple, they will know that it's OK to ask for help or guess the sound. Because of hints on vowels, the content of reading lessons can be more varied and interesting to students. So, this method combines the advantages of whole-language and strict phonics approaches.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES: During tutoring, Mom often helped students write words or short passages and trace vowels with colors, match word cards to pictures, or read passages that included color hints. She did not use worksheets very often. Color hints helped students catch on quickly to new words. I have edited Mom's teaching guide and created sets of thematic word cards and phonics bingo games (digital and print) to use during one-on-one lessons or with small groups. I've also created sets of word cards that can be used to systematically introduce the vowels and consonants.

OPTIONS FOR FIELD TESTING: In order for Mom's unique approach to reach more struggling students, teachers need to know how well the method works. For that reason, I'm sharing the Teacher's Guide and certain other resources to test. Here are a few options, but let me know if you have other ideas.

1. Check the current reading level of one or more students. Use color hints for four to eight weeks, then check the reading level again to see the amount of improvement.
2. Choose two student groups that are reading at about the same level. Use hints with one group and no hints with another group. Compare the improvement.
3. Print two sets of word cards or phonics bingo cards, one set with hints and one set with no hints. (These will be provided.) Compare the time it takes to master the words.

STEPS DURING FIELD TESTING:

1. Submit the online *Field Test Application Form*. This form and others are available by visiting www.readingwithcolor.com. I will email the *Teacher's Guide* and the *2200 Common Words* files.
2. Read the *Teacher's Guide* (about 20 pages), including descriptions of related resources. Briefly look over the *2200 Words With Color Hints*. Fill out an online survey of 10 questions about these resources. The survey also includes a place to request additional resources to test (for free).
3. Start to use RWC activities with your students. Additional resources will be provided one at a time in exchange for completing short online surveys and/or supplying updates about field testing.