

Running Head: Using running records to attain reading outcomes

Analyzing and Conferring with Students on Running Records to Improve Reading Outcomes

By

Brigid Sandager

A Master's Paper  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
The Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science in Education – Reading

University of Wisconsin-River Falls

2014

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this action research was to show changes in student reading outcomes with the use of individual assessments. Running records provide the teacher with knowledge about individual students' reading strengths and needs. The analysis of running records provides data to use when conferring with students to help determine number of miscues and types of miscues made during oral reading. The first part of the study was the use of running records for miscue analysis. By analyzing the types of miscues a teacher can assess a student's reading comprehension. The second component, conferring was used to collect data from students and then provide feedback. The use of analysis and conferring brought about a change in student reading outcomes. Students were able to take ownership in their literacy growth. They determined what skills and strategies they had used effectively while reading and what skills and strategies need to be strengthened to meet their individual literacy goals.

## **Introduction**

As a reading interventionist at Roland Elementary School (all names used are pseudonyms), I want to help my students become successful readers. My role as a reading interventionist is to provide small groups of students, who are performing below grade level, with focused lessons on using and implementing literacy skills and strategies. I am responsible for gathering data to show student growth and to provide analysis of their growth.

Data appeared to be taking on a greater role in my job at the expense of what my students were learning. I felt like I needed a different approach to analyze students' growth. The data that I am currently collecting includes MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment, Performance Series) and a CBM (Curriculum Based Measurement) fluency measure (See Appendices A, B and C for examples of these measures). MCA is from a standardized state test in reading that meets the requirements of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It is given every year to measure student performance against the Minnesota Academic Standards which specify what students in a particular grade should know and be able to do.

Roland Elementary uses Performance Series assessments at regular intervals for benchmarking and monitoring student progress. Performance Series is a, "computer-adaptive assessment in reading that provides reliable, valid, and norm-referenced assessments" that, "delivers scaled scores and statistically valid results that provide vertical growth mapping" (Scantron, 2014). Performance Series assessments are given to the whole school in the fall, winter and spring. Each of these assessments has a place in the school setting, but I wanted an assessment that was individually tailored to my students' needs.

A new principal and lack of intervention curriculum steered me in the direction of using a Guided Reading approach in my intervention classes. After initial training and implementation I

soon discovered running records and conferring and the power they had for a different type of individual assessment. One component of running records that showed great promise in meeting a student's individual needs was miscue analysis. Combining miscue analysis and conferring opened doors to working one on one with my students and developing individual learning outcomes. I now had the means to address their literacy needs and bring about change in their reading. Miscue analysis and conferring could be accomplished using a wide range of appropriate leveled text without the need to invest in a specific curriculum or library of leveled text. I wanted to further explore if my use of miscue analysis and conferring did make a difference in my student's literacy outcomes.

Students who I work with are referred to intervention through a process outlined by our district. A team collaboratively looks at student data taken from MCA, Performance Series and CBM. Students who have scores less than the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile on these benchmark assessments are then referred to intervention. The team looks at the student data, individual classroom teacher input, as well as classroom and interventionist schedules. Once all the information is compiled, qualifying students receive focused instruction based on their literacy needs provided by the reading interventionist. Parental permission is sought prior to students being pulled out for intervention.

The purpose of my research was to answer the following research questions:

- What information could I take from my students' running records?
- How can this information guide and inform individualized student instruction?
- What is an effective means of sharing this information with my individual students?

Prior to last year, I was using Reading Mastery a scripted reading intervention curriculum. I felt I was not individualizing and improving my students' literacy needs. Using running records

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for miscue analysis and individual conferencing, I will be able to address individual students' literacy needs and bring about desired reading outcomes.

## **Literature Review**

### **Role of Response to Intervention in Small Group Instruction**

In today's elementary schools, teachers have the means to gather data and make informed decisions on what is best for individual students. Many schools use the RTI (Response to Intervention) format when choosing how best to use an interventionist and which students would benefit most from Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. RTI is a three-tier intervention system:

- Tier 1 – Primary intervention is provided by the classroom teacher.
- Tier 2 – Secondary intervention is supplemental intervention provided in addition to classroom reading instruction.
- Tier 3 – Tertiary intervention is the provision of reading intervention at an even greater intensity (Special Education) (Denton, 2012).

RTI identifies struggling readers and then provides intensive reading instruction so these students can catch up to their peers (Mokhtari, Porter and Edwards, 2010). The studies done by Mokhtari and Denton looked at the process and the instruction needed to help struggling readers. Both articles highlighted the need for differentiation so all students could receive instruction targeted to meet their individual reading needs. Key components of all three tiers include the ability to monitor progress, using results to inform instruction and review student placement within the three tiers. There is a strong link between implementing high quality instruction and teacher professional development (Denton, 2012).

Effective RTI instruction is purposeful and targeted (Denton, 2012). Explicit instruction would include the use of progress monitoring for mastery of key skills and strategies and

differentiating instruction so all students receive instruction targeted to meet their reading needs. Gersten (2008) stated “effect duration and frequency of Tier 2 intervention is three to five times per week for 20 to 40 minutes for a reasonable amount of time before providing a more intensive daily Tier 3 intervention.” Roland Elementary Tier 2 intervention adheres to this model. Implementation of RTI in the classroom includes assessing students individually through both formal and informal assessments. This data should be used to inform instruction both for small group, whole class, and individual. Students are progress monitored individually and in groups and are grouped according to similar needs. Finally, teachers document and reflect on how students respond to instruction (Mokhtari, 2010).

Looking at the high rates of reading failures in the United States indicates that what we have been doing doesn't work; however, RTI models may have the ability to address this situation (Denton, 2012). By developing a framework for reading within a classroom centered on the use of progress monitoring to inform instruction, the number of students needing Tier 2 or Tier 3 instruction may be reduced.

### **Role of Running Records in Changing Students' Reading Outcomes**

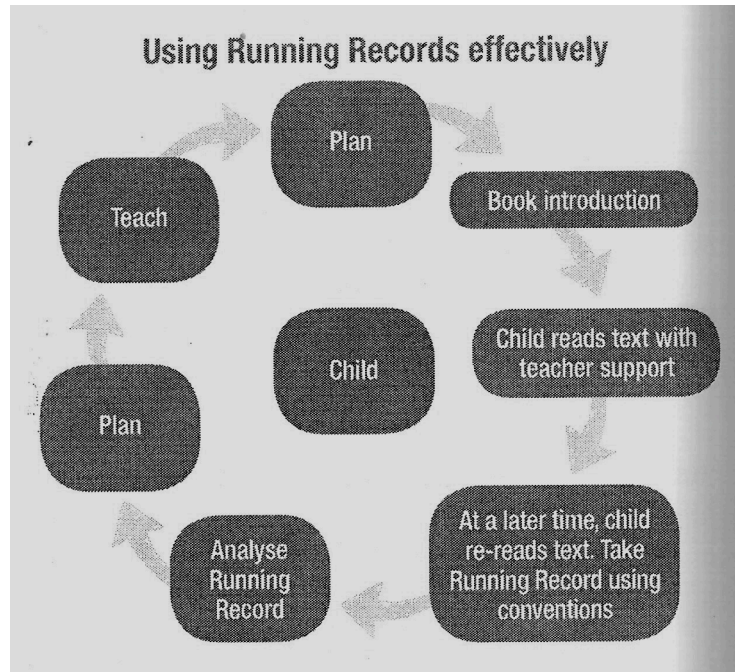
Running records are a type of assessment tool used by teachers to evaluate a student's reading performance. Marie Clay, a major theorist of child literacy acquisition and developer of Reading Recovery, originally developed running records. Clay began developing and implementing reading recovery in 1976. The program's intention was to improve the reading of the lowest children in a classroom to the average student's reading level within a classroom (Anderson, 1999). In New Zealand in 1963, Clay began first studying and documenting the process of literacy development. Clay needed a way to gather data and she needed to develop observational assessments that were detailed and reliable in order to document change over time.

Her study included one hundred students studied over the course of a year (Gaffney & Askew, 1999). Marie Clay developed several techniques to observe, document and assess literacy learning. She provided a detailed explanation of how to conduct running record observational assessments in An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement (2005). “A Running Record is a tool for coding, scoring and analyzing a child’s precise reading behaviors.” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 89). Key components of a running record are standard recording and scoring procedures by the teacher and continuous oral reading by a student. Running records are used to inform teaching decisions and are a means to observe changes in a student’s reading over time. Running records are mainly taken at the earlier stages of reading (Fawson, Ludlow, Reutzel, Smith & Sudweeks, 2006). Running records are taken for a variety of reasons including to guide teaching, to match readers to appropriate texts, to document growth over time, to observe strategies and to group and regroup students for instruction (Lipson & Wixson, 2012).

Assessments used during Reading Workshop can include Running Records, Observational Notes, and Reading Continuums (Mounla, Bahous, & Nabhani, 2011) (See Appendices D, E and F for examples). The effective implementation of Readers’ Workshop starts in September with the administration of benchmark running records. These benchmark assessments are used to identify independent and instructional book levels for individual students. Students then begin to read “just right” text and to use reading strategies for comprehension, decoding tricky words, identifying the main idea and key details and analyzing characters’ traits and feelings. The school year ends with benchmark running record assessment and reading continuums, which are “set rubrics that teachers use to check the work of a student progressing towards a standard” (Mounla, Bahous, & Nabhani, 2011). The benchmarked running records serve as a springboard to the use of running records in guided reading lessons.

Within guided reading instruction the use of running records is to gather different information. While administering a running record I can determine error, accuracy, and self-correction rates. The qualitative analysis of a running record is based on observations that are made during the running record. It involves observing how the student uses the three-cueing systems (graphophonemic, syntactic and semantic) to help her/him read. At the same time it involves paying attention to fluency, intonation, and phrasing. All of these observations help teachers to form a picture of the student's reading development. Analyzing miscues helps determine to what extent a student is using each of the three-cueing systems (McKenna & Picard, 2006). Knowing which cueing system is or is not being used can drive what strategies a student uses well and what strategies need to be introduced.

Research shows a link between teachers' use of running records and a student's reading achievement (Ross, 2004). Frequent administration of running records helps teachers monitor students' reading performances. Teachers are able to track student reading levels and reading miscues. Ross (2004) compared the scores of running records with schools that used action research as an alternative reading assessment tool. Participants in this research included principals, teachers, and selected students. He found that students from schools participating in the running records treatment outperformed students from schools participating in action research. Analysis of the findings showed that running records permitted teachers the opportunity to aid student reading outcomes by assessing reading performance and informing instructional decisions. Figure 1 shows how information flows, providing teachers and schools with systematic classroom use of running records.



*Figure 1.* Using Running Records effectively (Ross, 2004)

There are concerns involving running records. Some claim we cannot base literacy policy using running records if they aren't valid and reliable (Fawson, 2006). Two reasons for this unreliability include the text itself and how teachers assess running records. If the context is unknown to the student, the student is unable to make text-to-self connections because the student lacks the knowledge to do so. Another consideration is accuracy of scoring and experience in scoring by teachers. Teachers' interpretations of a student's response could pose potential risk to the reliability of running records. This risk may be removed by increasing the number of teachers scoring and then averaging their scores. Increasing the number of passages read and averaging their scores also removes risk (Fawson, 2006).

Assessments like running records can influence student reading outcomes by matching students with "just right" text, providing teachers a means to analyze reading behavior and determining further reading instruction. Running records, when implemented through a

purposeful, appropriate, and structured framework, can be an effective and reliable reading assessment tool.

### **Role of Conferring in Changing Students' Reading Outcomes**

Conferring involves meeting with students one-on-one to talk about reading in order to facilitate tailoring teaching to each student. In Patrick Allen's book, *Conferring the Keystone of Reader's Workshop* (2009), the author shares his expertise on the importance of conferring. He maintains that conferring lays the foundation for successful reading instruction. Conferring is a conversation between the teacher and an individual student. While conferring the teacher guides the student through comprehension strategies that help improve the reader's progress. The goal of conferring is to create independent readers (Allen, 2009). One key idea on conferring includes talking with students as reader to reader. A teacher gathers information about the reader and their reading strategies. Secondly, a teacher provides feedback in the moment for the reader. Most importantly conferring needs to be regularly maintained as a time to listen (Allen, 2009).

Reading conferences should follow consistent protocols. The conference takes place between an individual student and the teacher. In a literacy conference a student will be asked to summarize or retell the passage they just read. If the student is not able to supply all the necessary details a teacher can prompt the student through specific questioning. In a reading conference, it important that students take the lead (Porath, 2014). The use of authentic questioning during conferring will help guide instruction as what the student's needs truly are and not what the teacher perceives his or her needs to be. Questions need to be asked in a manner that allows for authentic student feedback. Students need to be able to clarify their own thoughts and needs without the teacher bias. This type of questioning will allow students to do more of the talking and allow the teacher to listen and respect the students' responses. Conferring is one

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means of building collaboration around a community of learners. Teachers who recognize the importance of full student engagement in the reading conference will enhance this creation of a community of learning (Porath, 2014).

The use of conferring strategies enables students to be a part of their reading outcomes. In Figure 2, a barometer showing the effects of teacher feedback highlights that conferring can have a powerful effect on student learning (Hattie, 2009).

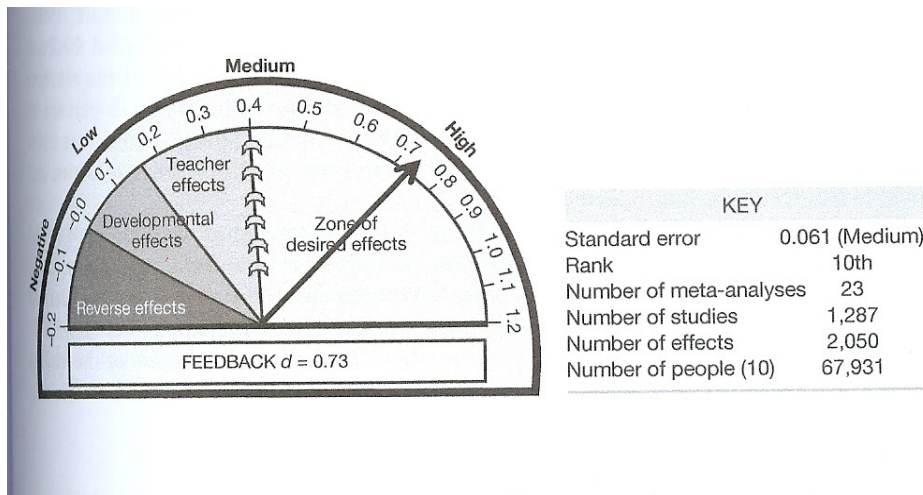


Figure 2. Feedback Barometer

There are many types of feedback that can be offered in a reading conference. Effective conferring begins with “Where am I going?” This question addresses the need to have students buy into their own educational success. Student goals are often set by teachers, parents, peer groups and can include motivation by competition, incentives, and punishment. Students need to feel they are a part of setting their own goals. By sharing in this commitment to their own goals, they are more likely to seek and receive feedback. Teachers cannot assume students share this same commitment of “Where am I going?” without honest feedback.

Students need to ask, “How am I getting there?” The answer needs to be supplied by peers or the teacher. They provide feedback about progress. Too often students find this question leads to

assessment or testing. Tests are just one method teacher's use with results that are not always relevant (Hattie, 2009).

An empowering question that students also need to ask is "Where to next?" Students need to be able to think about how they will use their acquired strategies to move forward in their education. Many times students find the answer to this question is more information and more tasks. This is at the expense of their motivation and their joy in learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

These three questions illustrate the journey students need to undertake to succeed in learning. During conferring it is important for the classroom teacher to be able to ask students, "Where am I going?" "How am I going?" and "Where to next?"

Classroom based data provides the most effective information to drive instruction (Risko, Walker-Dalhouse, 2010). When conferring with students several forms of qualitative data can be taken. Sticky notes are one way to gather data and disseminate instruction. Students can record their thoughts; teachers can record observations and assessment (Risko, 2010). The most effective type of feedback is student-to-teacher while the least effective is self-feedback (Hattie, 2009). It is important to understand this to create effective conferences. Feedback cannot stand-alone; it needs to be combined with effective classroom instruction and assessment. When there is authentic student-to-teacher interaction, student-reading outcomes can be observed in the classroom. Conferring allows the student to assess their strengths and allows the teacher to provide explicit instruction on an individual basis.

This review of the literature addresses the significance of both miscue analysis of running records and conferring in bringing about changes in students' reading outcomes. The gathering of data using a reliable reading assessment tool, such as running records, can be used to

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determine a student's reading performance. Conferencing with students provides teachers opportunities to use authentic questioning that will help guide instruction to what students' needs truly are and not what the teacher perceives their needs to be.

### **Methodology and Procedure**

The purpose of this research was to answer the following research questions: What information could I take from my students' running records? How can this information inform my instruction of individual students? What is an effective means of sharing this information with my individual students? I used action research to answer these questions.

### **Setting and Participants**

Roland Elementary School first opened its doors in 1919. The school is located in a small historic city on a river. There are 3,500 residents within the town's limit. Students from Roland Elementary are part of a larger school district, including eight other elementary schools, two junior high schools and one high school. Roland Elementary is a traditional school with an enrollment of 350 students. The school has two classes per grade in kindergarten through sixth grade. Self-contained classrooms are designed to deliver educational programs based upon the Minnesota State Standards. There is an active parent group, which encourages a strong partnership between school, parents and the community.

In my position as reading interventionist, I work with small groups of students in grades three through sixth. I meet four times a week with each group for thirty-minute sessions. The intervention I deliver is based on a pullout model. Intervention is provided in a small office. Four male participants took part in my action research. They were fourth graders who attend Roland Elementary School. Research participants were identified for intervention through MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment) and Performance test scores. Eligibility was based on

scores of less than 30% (national normed percentile). After being identified for intervention, invitations were sent to parents/guardians. Intervention is a pullout program requiring parental/guardian approval. As I delved deeper into my research I choose to highlight one participant. He is an ELL student who did not qualify for ESL intervention. I will be referring to the participant as Charlie (pseudonym).

### **Procedures**

I used a guided reading instructional approach with my groups (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). This approach provides a framework in which I can work with students who have similar needs and reading levels. Students read text at their instructional level, which enables them to decode text, strengthen comprehension and read fluently. Leveled readers with modified text are matched to students' instructional and independent reading levels. I used benchmarked reading levels from the past spring as a starting point. I also benchmarked participants to ensure reading level fidelity, as well, as conferring with classroom teachers for the most up to date assessed levels. Individual assessment takes place through the use of running records. I relied on running record analysis for three different assessments: identifying "Just Right" text (independent, instructional and frustration levels) analyzing language cuing systems and analyzing the reader's use of strategies.

### **"Zooming in" on One Reader**

For the purpose of my action research, I analyzed the miscues of one of the participants in order to gain a better understanding of his literacy needs. During benchmarking he showed the most errors using the three linguistic cueing system of all the participants. I wanted to be able to analyze what cueing systems he was failing to use or used inconsistently. My next step for this reader was to confer. The reading conference consists of four parts:

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- Research – What is he doing as a reader and naming it?
- Decide – What is one thing that will make the biggest difference in his reading?
- Teach – Can I show you how to do something readers do?
- Link – Document the reading strategy used on a bookmark, providing the participant with a means of looking back and incorporating the strategy into independent reading time.

I created a bookmark as an aid to use during conferring and independent reading. This bookmark has a front and a back. On the front is printed, “I am a strategic reader!” listing reciprocal teaching strategies: questioning, predicting, summarizing, clarifying and evaluating (www.eduplace.com, 2008). The back is printed, “Today and everyday readers....” While conferring with the reader, I will record his reciprocal reading strategy on his bookmark. Bookmarks can then be used during independent reading to help monitor use of strategies to change their reading outcomes.

My new classroom is an office. Privacy for conferencing is not possible within the student space. I usually administer running records and confer one on one in the hallway with the door partially open to my other students. Because of this arrangement I have students working independently in our class space. The students are working towards the privilege of reading and working in pairs. Noise is also an issue because I cannot control who is in the hall moving from room to room.

### **Findings**

In order to analyze the student’s miscues, I looked at many aspects of the oral reading. I recorded the student’s WCPM (words correct per minute), Accuracy Rate (expressed as a percentage calculated by total words read – total errors divided by total words read x 100), Error

Rate (expressed as a ratio calculated by total words/total errors), Self-Correction Rate (expressed as a ratio calculated by number of errors + number of self-corrections divided by number of self-corrections) and a miscue analysis.

For the purpose of my research I concentrated on the miscue analysis of Charlie. Miscue analysis is an analytical procedure for assessing Charlie’s reading comprehension based on samples of his running records. Miscue analysis is less concerned with the number of miscues than with the type of miscues he uses (Maury County Public Schools, 2014). I wanted to find out how his attempts to make sense of the text correlated with his experiences and language skills. By using his running records I could observe the cueing systems in use and then identify individual teaching points when conferring. I have used several reading miscue inventories (RMI). Table 1 shows how the cueing systems are coded on the running record and also how they correlate with Clay’s (2005) questions to ask students that prompt self-correction.

<b>3 Linguistic Cueing Systems</b> (Goodman, Watson & Burke, 2005)	<b>Code in Running Records</b>	<b>Questions to ask about the miscue</b> (Clay, 2005. P.69)
graphophonemic	V (visual cue)	“Did visual information from the print influence any part of the error-letter cluster or word?”
syntactic	S (syntax)	“Did the structure (syntax) of the sentence up to the error influence the response?”
semantic	M (meaning)	Did the meaning or message of the text influence the error?

*Table 1. Cueing Systems*

By examining Charlie’s miscues I could look for which cueing systems he was using and those which he needed to practice. I converted running records to a miscue form ([www.mauryk12.org](http://www.mauryk12.org)). The first column shows the word as it appeared in the text. The next

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column shows Charlie's miscues. The next three columns use the three linguistic cueing systems shown in Table 1 and the last column shows any self-corrections made by Charlie. The miscues and strategies used for two passages are shown in Table 2.

Story/Passage: Home for Lunch

Level: K

Word as it appears in the text	Student's miscue (What the student says)	<b>M</b> Does the miscue make sense up to the error?	<b>S</b> Does the miscue sound correct in the English language up to the error?	<b>V</b> Does the miscue look similar to the word in the text?	<b>SC</b> Was the miscue self-corrected?
Slices	slice	Y	N	Y	N
Refrigerator	refr-	N	N	Y	N
Slabs	omission	N	N	N	N
Held	hold	Y	N	Y	N
On	of	Y	N	Y	N
	TOTAL	3	0	4	0

Story/Passage: Vampire Dentist

Level: L

Word as it appears in the text	Student's miscue (What the student says)	<b>M</b> Does the miscue make sense up to the error?	<b>S</b> Does the miscue sound correct in the English language up to the error?	<b>V</b> Does the miscue look similar to the word in the text?	<b>SC</b> Was the miscue self-corrected?
Crept	creeped	Y	N	Y	N
Leaning	learning	N	N	Y	N
Inspected	is-inspec	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cuspid	caspid	N	N	Y	N
Trembling	trou	N	N	Y	N

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Fangs	fang	Y	Y	Y	N
Cried	omission	N	N	Y	N
Medicine	med-	N	N	Y	N
	TOTAL	3	2	8	1

Table 2. Charlie's Miscue Analyses

The data found in these tables illustrates how Charlie is over relying on the graphophonic system or visual clues. He does not yet know how to gather meaning from language. He also is not self-correcting.

Following the administration of running records I conducted a reading conference. I created a conference log using several examples provided through the school district. Table 3 shows the conference record for Charlie.

**NAME:** Charlie

Date	Title	Level	Focus Lesson	Comprehension	Self Corrects -Corrects	Fluency	Strategies for figuring out unknown words	Comments
10/9	Home for Lunch (Reading A-Z)	K	Benchmark Passage	NA	No SC	96%	Prompts not necessary during retell	Independent reading level
10/23	Potato: A Tale from the Great Depression (Soar to Success)	L	Summarizing	Sequence of Events	No SC	92%	No prompting necessary in the retell. Able to summarize events in order	Engaged with story which resulted in organized retell
10/30	Vampire Dentist (Reading A-Z)	L	Retell	Analyze Character	1	94%	Relied on appeal	Needed prompting, new vocabulary added to retelling difficulty

Table 3. Conference Record Checklist

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This table allowed me to compare what was discussed during conferences. I would fill in the first five columns prior to conferring with Charlie. The four columns on the right were left blank and filled in during conferring. I keep the conference checklist on a clipboard one for each participant. It was during conferring that I would also write on Charlie’s bookmark “Today and Everyday Readers....” The reading strategies that Charlie is working on include: reread for clarification of vocabulary and meaning, when summarizing include main ideas and details and lastly check does it sound right. Table 4 shows the bookmark.

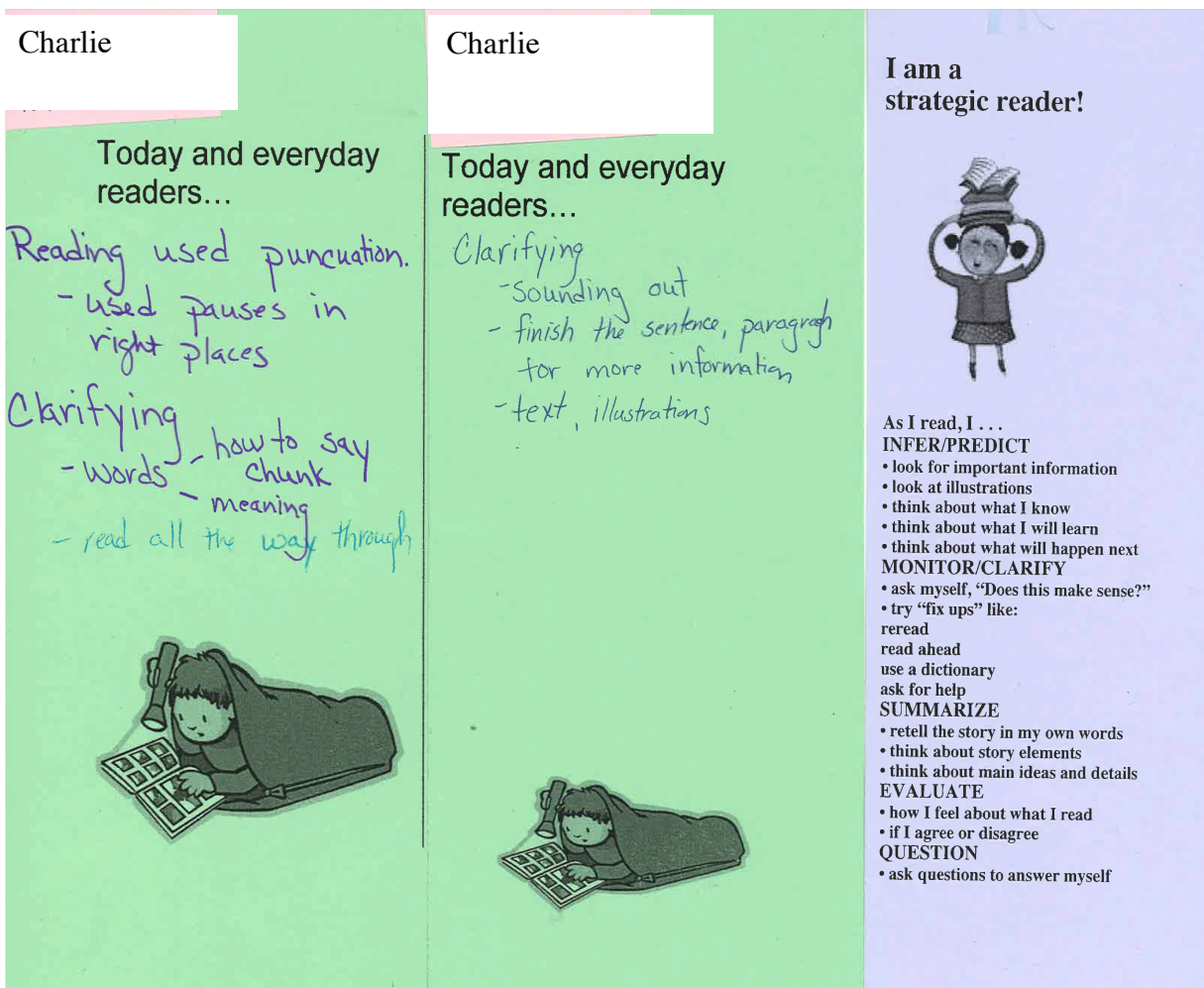


Table 4. “Today and everyday readers...” Bookmark

**Interpretations of Student Data**

Miscue analysis explores the reasons behind miscues. When Charlie substituted *hold* for *held* he was relying on visual cues and meaning but not structure. When he substituted *of* for the word *on* he was using meaning (semantic). Another miscue that Charlie made was the omission of *slabs* a new vocabulary word that he did not know. Charlie would pause and make an appeal to me instead of making use of meaning and syntax cues.

The data I documented shows Charlie’s reliance on visual clues. He would look at the beginning of unknown words and attempt to chunk them:

Word as it appears in the text	Student’s miscue (What the student says)
refrigerator	refr-
inspected	is-inspec
trembling	Trou
medicine	med-

Or he would not read through the words using only visual and meaning cues:

slices	Slice
crept	Creeped
leaning	Learning

This reliance on visual cues does affect Charlie’s comprehension, especially in his ability to move to a different reading level. He was able to successfully retell at the level K and L levels shown in Table 3. As he works on clarifying strategies to improve meaning he also needs to monitor his comprehension. The chart shows his lack of self-correcting. He only used self-correcting in one story. His lack of self-correcting does affect his ability to comprehend. He is not able to correctly decode longer words such as refrigerator and trembling. These are words he


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could be chunking. If he would use chunking, this would also help him to recognize word endings. These additional strategies should bring change to his reading outcomes.

Name: Charlie

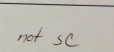
## Reading Conference

Date: 10/9	Title: Home for Lunch	Level: K
Running record: Fluency - 96% (Independent) Retell - No prompts needed		
Something great: Fluency Used Punctuation Nice use of expression	Something to work on: Clarity - Vocab * chunk * use necessary from text	
Lesson: Retell Character Analyze		

*Move up a level*  


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Date: 10/23	Title: Potato	Level: L
Running record: Fluency - 92% Retell - No prompts		
Something great: Able to retell sequence of Events	Something to work on: Clarity - does not see * use text go back	
Lesson: Summarizing		



Name: Charlie

## Reading Conference

Name: Charlie

## Reading Conference

Date: 10/27	Title: Vampire Death	Level: L
Running record: Fluency - 94%		
Something great: Attempted on self correction	Something to work on: Clarity - Use text & illustrations for mapping to help with decisions	
Lesson: Retell Analyze Character		




Table 5. Reading Conference Log

I have included two examples of Charlie’s Reading Conference checklists in table five. These conference checklists allow me to go back and see what strategies Charlie was working on. By looking back I could see the strategy and then check what gains or losses he has made through progress monitoring of oral fluency. If his oral fluency continues to show growth, the strategy at the moment could be the reason. If not, an adjustment of reading strategies would make sense.

The reading conference checklist shows Charlie’s ability to retell. He is able to retell sequence of events using details from the stories he read. During the first two retells he did not need any prompting but as the level of reading became more difficult he did need more

prompting. One skill he was working on was self-correcting during reading. A strategy discussed during conferences was the use of text and illustrations. We talked about reading through the sentences and paragraphs to check on the meaning of the passage. Once the meaning of the passage was clarified than Charlie could reread for self-correction. I noted the use of self-correction in the passage from October 29<sup>th</sup>. Reading for meaning and the use of decoding strategies will continue to be an emphasis during our conferring time.

During small group instruction teaching is continuously tied to clarifying, summarizing, questioning and predicting. By including individual student bookmarks I had the student work on more individualized strategies of word chunking, reading through the words, rereading for meaning and identifying how nouns and verbs are used in sentence structure for language syntax. These individual strategies for Charlie are shown in Table 4.

### **Conclusions and Discussion**

When I began this research I was teaching students in first through fourth grades. I had seen a need for some type of assessment with emergent and early readers to help me understand how their miscues affected their fluency and comprehension. I learned that miscue analysis of their running records could provide the answers I was looking for.

Charlie's greatest weakness was using syntax cues to clarify and elicit text meaning. As his teacher and reading interventionist I need to decide how to ask questions during conferring that can bring about changes in his reading outcomes. Questions I plan to use during future conferring to help Charlie strengthen his structural cues will be based on:

- Does the miscue sound right in the English language up to the point of the error?
- Can you say it that way in the English language?
- Is what he/she said possible in an English sentence?

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- I heard you read \_\_\_\_\_. Does that sound okay?
- Here's how I would say that in English. Which way sounds better?

While working on my literature review I had the opportunity to read research related to miscue analysis and running records. One common thread in the research was running records were most effective when used with emergent and early readers (Fawson, 2006). I found this to be true with my fourth and sixth graders. As fluency improves and WCPM increases it becomes more difficult to record miscues. At that point recordings would be helpful but creates another demand on a teacher's time to go back and listen. Another factor with older readers is they have more skills in decoding and this makes running records less valuable.

In my action research only one-fourth grader, Charlie, had warranted a miscue analysis. He had omitted endings, could not chunk words, and was not able to self-correct. In the case of Charlie, I was able to make an in depth analysis of his miscues and confer with him regularly in order to incorporate missing reading strategies. During the reading conference I would research what he was doing as a reader and name it. Then I would choose one thing that would make the biggest difference in his reading based on that text. Next I would teach and model for him what other readers would do. Finally I would link the reading strategy we conferred on to his bookmark and my conferring checklist. By providing Charlie with a bookmark, he could incorporate the strategy into his independent reading during intervention, in his classroom and at home.

This analysis will help guide my instruction going forward. I plan to include specific word work in Charlie's guided reading time. I am reminded that the one shoe fits all analogy doesn't work when it comes to literacy acquisition. A teacher's toolbox needs to contain many tools.

Conferring is the newest tool in my interventionist toolbox. Conferring provided me with an opportunity to build trust with students at my new school. Building trust was vital in connecting with the struggling readers. As I taught, I was able to push students to take more risks within their guided reading time. Maintaining connections and building strong relationships is paramount to bringing about changes in student reading outcomes. Conferring provided valid reading strategies that students could utilize and synthesize over and over.

I recently completed progress reports for my students and they are all showing improvements in their reading outcomes. Outcomes are measured with progress monitoring reading fluency probes and quick check comprehension assessments. I have even observed students using their bookmarks and prompts during independent reading time.

There are some limitations to this study. This year I changed schools and was assigned third through sixth grade intervention. Limitations I experienced during the action research were: a new school, new students and a new teaching space. At my old school I had the use of an actual classroom. Having the large space allowed me the chance to confer with individual students in the same room where the other students were reading in pairs or individually. Students stayed on task. In my new school I am in an old office space. When I do individual assessments I step outside the room with one student. I leave the door open into the space. I provide independent reading tasks for those students left in the room. I can hear what is happening in the room but there is not direct eye contact. Students are off task at times.

### **Next Steps**

I will continue to use running records and conferring with my reading intervention groups. Running records and miscue analysis will be administered only with students who show a need for a more in-depth analysis based on their decoding and self-correction skills. I will

confer with all groups using the model of Research, Decide, Teach and Link. This semester I began using a conference record checklist and am hoping to be able to use the checklist more effectively as I move forward. I am also learning what language to use during conferences and how my questioning can bring about change in students' reading outcomes.

One other follow up to my research is to complete a miscue analysis on one other fourth grader. His classroom teacher and his parents voiced concerns at a parent teacher conference about his reading outcomes. As previously mentioned, the miscue analysis is one more assessment to help students attain the best possible individual reading outcomes.

### **Implications for Further Research**

Conferring provided students with opportunities to verbalize their strengths and weaknesses. Taking ownership in their learning proved to be a valuable motivation. Further research into conferring and motivation would be interesting particularly relating to fourth through sixth grade students reading outcomes. It would also be interesting to research and compare other miscue analysis results of ELL students to see if syntax is an area of weakness. How does a language affect reading outcome for students who have English as a second language?

Miscue analysis and feedback are useful tools for an interventionist. Miscue analysis provides clues about how students use the three linguistic cueing systems for decoding. If students struggle with decoding skills comprehension will be affected. I found through the use of timely conferring, I was able to analyze and notice how students incorporate reading skills and strategies into their learning. By taking the time to confer with individual students through the use of running records, student-reading outcomes will improve. The ultimate goal in intervention is to release students back into their classrooms.

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## Appendix A

### MCA – Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

#### Reading Test General Directions to the Student

- This test contains three segments. You will be told when to begin each segment.
- Read each story, article, or poem and answer the questions. Mark your answers to the questions in your answer document.
- As you read each story, article, or poem, you may take notes and highlight in your test book.
- This test has multiple-choice questions.

Answer each multiple-choice question by filling in the circle in your answer document that matches the answer you think is best. The circle must be filled in completely for your answer to be scored. Look at the sample question that shows how to do this.

**Sample Question:**

In the article, what does the word sprout mean?

- A. To dig
- B. To weed
- C. To grow
- D. To watch

**Sample Answer:**  A  B  C  D

- When you finish a segment of the test, stop and check your answers. Then use the sticker given to you to seal it. Once you seal a segment, you cannot go back to it. Each segment must be sealed before you move on to the next segment.

**NOTICE: THESE TEST ITEMS ARE SECURE MATERIALS AND  
MAY NOT BE COPIED OR DUPLICATED IN ANY WAY.**

**READING ITEM SAMPLER**  
Directions listed here reflect the actual test.  
This Item Sampler may be reproduced.



## Appendix B

### Performance Series Sample

Performance Test Example  
12/11/2014

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**                   **Read each question carefully and select the correct answer.**

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Once there was a little pig who lived on a farm. He loved the farm because all of his friends lived there too. Every morning he would wake up in his sty and march out to the field. He liked to say hi to all the animals each morning.

One morning he was making his daily rounds when he saw a duck. The duck was a new member of the farm. The little pig walked up to the duck and said, "Hi, my name is Pat the Pig. What's your name?"

The duck answered, "My name is Allison. I am new here. Do you want to be my friend?"

"Sure, that would be great. Why don't you come over to my sty and play this afternoon?" asked Pat.

"Okay. That sounds like fun!" answered Allison.

Later that afternoon Pat cleaned his sty. He wanted it to look nice for his new friend. His mom helped him clean. When Allison finally arrived, Pat was very excited. He loved making new friends. He was sure they would become close buddies. Allison and Pat played all afternoon. They rolled around in the straw, had mud fights, and ate some slop the farmer had left for them.

Pat and Allison decided to go to the far end of the barnyard. They found an empty log, which they decided to make into a fort. They called the fort Camp P&A after themselves. Pat and Allison made a deal not to tell anyone about their new fort. Then they returned back to the main area of the barnyard.

At the end of the day, Allison needed to return home to her mother and the rest of her duck family. She thanked Pat and his mom for the fun time and waddled home. From that day on, Pat and Allison played together. They became close friends.

1. Which title would best fit the story?
  - A. "The Farmer's Day"
  - B. "A Day at the Beach"
  - C. "The Farm Friends"
  
2. What did Pat and Allison do when they played together?
  - A. raced in the field
  - B. rolled in the hay
  - C. cleaned the barn
  
3. Which activity did Allison and Pat not do?
  - A. roll in the hay

## Appendix C

### Oral Fluency

Alan was a very brave and adventurous boy. He enjoyed learning	11
new things and exploring the land behind his house. One morning	22
before he went exploring, he packed his backpack. He put many things	34
inside. He packed a flashlight, a candle, matches, a compass, popcorn,	45
a hard hat, and his lunch. Then he journeyed into the woods to his new	60
secret spot.	62
The previous day he had discovered a cave, and today he wanted	74
to explore it. Long, thick weeds hid the mouth of the cave. Alan pushed	88
the weeds to the side and looked into the cave. It was too dark to see	104
anything. He turned on his flashlight and looked inside again. The cave	116
was only five feet tall. Alan just fit when he stepped inside.	128
Alan put his hard hat on. It would protect his head from the roof of	143
the cave. He shined his flashlight around the cave. It was dry and cold	157
inside. He walked around and explored the cave. He dropped popcorn	168
behind him as he walked. He found old dishes in the cave. The cave	182
walls displayed several paintings of animals.	188
Alan didn't know what he might find. He had dreamed about finding	200
a lost treasure or some buried gold, but he knew he was more likely to	215
find only mud and rocks. As he worked his way deeper into the cave, he	230
discovered small waterfalls and sharp points of rock hanging from the	241
ceiling.	242
When Alan reached the back of the cave, he stopped to eat his	255
lunch. He was very hungry. But just as Alan finished eating, his	267
flashlight went out. The batteries had died. It was very dark in the cave.	281
Alan struck a match so he could see. The flame lit up the cave.	295
Then he lit the candle he brought. He carried it carefully. He followed	308
the popcorn all the way back to the mouth of the cave. Alan had	322
enjoyed the cave, but he thought he should pack more batteries for	334
future explorations.	336

Appendix D

Benchmark Running Record



LEVEL **N**

Benchmark Passage Running Record

**Backyard Crocodile Relatives**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Word Count: 129

Have the student read out loud as you record. Assessed by \_\_\_\_\_

word count	E = errors M = meaning	S-C = self-correction S = structure V = visual	E	S-C	E			S-C			
					M	S	V	M	S	V	
6	Reed had just learned that crocodiles										
13	were relatives of dinosaurs. He told his										
20	dad about it as Dad served pancakes.										
26	"That's great," said Dad. He grinned.										
32	"Later, let's look for more crocodile										
36	relatives in our backyard!"										
41	Reed glanced outside. Two blackbirds										
48	pecked at grain in the bird feeder.										
53	Reed felt uneasy. "What crocodile										
59	relatives would be in our backyard?"										
67	he asked. He began to fear what his										
75	dad would say. What was Dad talking about?										
82	A dove landed on the bird feeder.										
91	"There's another one," said Dad. "I've now seen three										
100	crocodile relatives today." Dad smiled at his son's blank										
107	look. "The closest living relatives of crocodiles										
113	and alligators are birds!" he explained.										
124	"I didn't know that," said Reed. He felt relief. "I'm glad										
129	they eat grain, not people!"										
			<b>Totals</b>								

WCPM:

Error Rate:

Accuracy Rate:

Self-Correction Rate:

Appendix E

Reading Continuum (Phinney/Ward 2002/2013)

COMPREHENSION							
	Pre-Verbal (Awareness)	Pre-Print (Enactment)	Emergent (Exploration)	Print Focused (Work)	Consolidation (Possibility)	Silent (Personalization)	Flexible (Essence)
<b>Does the reader: make and confirm predictions?</b>	— anticipate content based on previous experiences by action or babbling?	— predict content verbally based on visual cues or previous experience?	— make logical predictions for new stories introduced through read-aloud or storytelling? — self correct oral narrative based on familiarity or prior knowledge	— read simple predictable books? — make logical predictions from illustrations and print in books read independently? — use context by re-reading sentence or phrase — use context by reading on — self-correct meaning-loss miscues	— make predictions based on familiarity with a genre, or author's previous work? — self correct within context of paragraph or page	— make predictions based on plot and character patterns within a series or text set?	— make predictions based on a combination of factors and familiarity with a wide variety of genres?
<b>demonstrate understanding of genres?</b>	— generalize interaction with book features from previous experiences?	— appropriately identify content of illustrations in picture books?	— recognize the relationship between text type and corresponding product or action? — recall and reconstruct the elements in predictable texts? — explain some information gleaned from a non-fiction text?	— begin to differentiate between fiction and non-fiction? — identify key ideas from informational texts?	— differentiate among more obvious fiction and non-fiction genres?	— identify more subtle differences among story elements within the same genre (myths/legends, plays, series books, historical/contemporary fiction, etc.)? — access non-fiction genres appropriate to purpose? — demonstrate understanding of various poetry forms?	— integrate a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction genres related to a topic of study or interest?
<b>demonstrate understanding of themes and ideas?</b>	— generalize responses to categories of content?	— verbally relate an illustration or text idea to a familiar person, place, object, or action?	— develop a broad-based interest in a thematic topic? — make connections among read-aloud stories or non-fiction texts on the same theme or topic?	— make connections among self-read stories or non-fiction texts on the same theme or topic? — draw on background knowledge to develop themes and ideas read?	— locate and use texts related to a thematic unit? — infer ideas from a variety of texts? — use writing to explore ideas?	— discuss abstract ideas triggered and supported by text content? — identify and discuss universal themes?	— demonstrate the ability to synthesize ideas from varied texts? — use writing to revisit past experiences and apply them to present situations and goal setting?
<b>demonstrate understanding of</b>		— cohesively retell an event from a familiar	— refer to a sequence of remembered events?	— orally sequence the main ideas of a self-	— provide detailed, complete retellings of	— provide detailed, complete retellings of	— incorporate multiple variables to produce a

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3-13-14


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Appendix F

Observational Notes

Name: Charlie

# Reading Conference

Date: 10/9	Title: Home for Lunch	Level: K
Running record: Fluency - 96% (Independent) Retell - No prompts needed		
Something great: Fluency Used Punctuation Nice use of expression	Something to work on: Clarify - Vocab * chunk * use meaning from text	
Lesson: Retell Character Analyze		Move up a level 

Date: 10/23	Title: Potato	Level: L
Running record: Fluency - 92% Retell - No prompts		
Something great: Able to retell sequence of Events	Something to work on: Clarify - does not SC * use text go back reread	
Lesson: Summarizing Sequence of Events		