

Running Records

Running records are a way of observing, scoring, and analyzing children's reading behaviour. They provide information on:

- Strategies children use to build meaning
- How readers process information
- How readers use different sources of information to solve unfamiliar words
- Whether the reading level of the text is appropriate to the child's reading level
- How children integrate the strategies during independent reading
- Whether children are choosing appropriate text levels for independent reading
- If children are monitoring their own reading by self-correction

Guidelines:

- Running records are taken one-to-one
- Recorder is "neutral observer;" no prompting or teaching
- Four permissible teacher interventions:
 - telling the passage title;
 - revealing a problem word (after a pause) if it cannot be recognized;
 - requesting to "try that again;"
 - saying, "you try it" after an appeal for help.
- Use blank sheet for greater recording flexibility
- Record all behaviors observed (see below)
- Purpose determines seen or unseen text
- Establish accuracy level and self-correction rate
- Analyze sources of information used (meaning, structure, visual)
- Summarize information
- Plan next learning steps

How Often to Take a Running Record

Running records are taken with greatest frequency at the earlier stages of reading. Children not progressing at the expected rate should be assessed even more frequently than the schedule suggested below.

- * Emergent readers: every 2 to 4 weeks.
- * Upper emergent readers every 4 to 6 weeks.
- * Early fluent readers: every 6 to 8 weeks
- * Fluent readers: every 8 to 10 weeks

Reading Behaviours

Beyond noting errors, teachers can learn a lot through observation of student reading behaviour:

Self-correction (SC)

Self-correction occurs when a child realizes his or her error and corrects it. When a child makes a self-correction, the previous substitution is not scored as an error.

Meaning (M)

Meaning is part of the cueing system in which the child takes his or her cue to make sense of text by thinking about the story background, information from pictures, or the meaning of a sentence. These cues assist in the reading of a word or phrase.

Structure (S)

Structure refers to the structure of language and is often referred to as syntax. Implicit knowledge of structure helps the reader know if what he or she reads sounds correct.

Visual (V)

Visual information is related to the look of the letter in a word and the word itself. A reader uses visual information when he or she studies the beginning sound, word length, familiar word chunks, etc.

Marking M, S, and V on a Running Record:

When a child makes an error in a line of text, record the source(s) of information used by the child in the second column from the right on the running record form. Write M, S, and V in to the right of the sentence in that column. Then circle M, S, and/or V, depending on the source(s) of information the child used.

If the child self-corrects an error in a line of text, use the far right-hand column to record this information. Write M, S, and V to the right of the sentence in that column. Circle the source(s) of information the child used for the self-correction.

(You may choose to administer a running record assessment without recording your observations regarding the child's use of meaning (M), structure (S), and visual (V) cues. Even without recording this information on the form, and you can still use the information on error, self-correction, and accuracy rates to place the child at a given reading level.)

How to Take a Running Record

- Select a book that approximates the child's reading level. Explain to the child that he or she will read out loud as you observe and record his or her reading behavior.
- With the running record form in hand, sit next to the child so that you can see the text and the child's finger and eye movements as he or she reads the text.
- As the child reads, mark each word on the running record form by using the symbols on the chart that follows. Place a check mark above each word that is read correctly.
- If the child reads incorrectly, record above the word what the child reads.
- If the child is reading too fast for you to record the running record, ask him or her to pause until you catch up.
- Be sure to pay attention to the reader's behavior as he or she reads. Is the child using meaning (M), structural (S), and visual (V) cues to read words and gather meaning?
- Intervene as little as possible while the child is reading.
- If the child is stuck and unable to continue, wait 5 to 10 seconds and tell him or her the word. If the child seems confused, indicate the point of confusion and say, "Try again."

<i>Sample Code for Marking a Running Record</i>	
Accurate Reading	✓ ✓ ✓
Substitution	<u>went</u> want (child text)
Repetition (R)	R or $\overline{\checkmark \checkmark} R$
Self-Correction (SC)	<u>went</u> sc want
Omission	<u>-</u> very
Insertion	<u>little</u> -
Told (T)	thought T
Appeal (A)	<u>sometimes</u> A
Try That Again (TTA)	[TTA]

Tallying Errors and Self-Corrections

1. Total each line separately going across the line of text. If a line is error and SC free, leave the error and SC column blank.
2. An uncorrected substitution, omission, or insertion counts as one error.
3. Unsuccessful multiple -attempts on one word count only as one error.
4. An error on a proper noun is counted only on the first error. Subsequent errors on that proper noun are coded but not tallied.
5. If a word is mispronounced due to a speech problem or a dialect, it is coded but not counted as an error.
6. Repetitions are coded but are not errors.
7. Waits are coded but are not errors.
8. Sounding the first letter is coded but does not count as an error if the word is subsequently read correctly.
9. TTA =1 error
10. Told = 1 error
11. Appeal that is not corrected is an error
12. Self-Corrections are not errors, even after an appeal. They are not included in the error column.
13. Contractions count as 1 error.
14. Each insertion counts as an error so that you could have more errors than text.
15. Inventing -just write invention at the top of the page unless just one page was invented - then count each error.
16. Skipped line - each word counts as an error.
17. Skipped page - subtract the number of words on that page. Do not count as an error. When in doubt, give the child the benefit of the doubt.
18. If the child misreads a proper name in a story, the error is noted one time only and not counted on succeeding errors.

Scoring a Running Record:

The accuracy of the child's reading is calculated by dividing the number of words the child reads correctly (including self-corrections, which are not counted as errors) by the total number of words in each selection (running words). The accuracy is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of words correct (includes self-corrections)}}{\text{Number of words in selection}} \times 100 = \text{\%}$$

Example:

Number of words read correctly: 18
 Self-corrections 2
 Total number of correct words: 20
 Total number of words in selection 25

$$\frac{20}{25} \times 100 = 80\% \text{ accuracy}$$

Accuracy Rate	Text Level	Support Level
96% - 100%	Easy	Little new learning taking place; text appropriate for independent reading
90% - 95%	Instructional	Text that requires the reader to problem solve (independently) new challenges while reading, while maintaining the meaning of the text
Below 90%	Hard	Text requires too much reading work: the child has to focus on word-by-word analysis and loses the meaning of the text

When analyzing their records of a child's reading, teachers should ask themselves:

- Is the child trying to make sense of what is being read? (semantic information)
- Is knowledge of language patterns being used? (syntactic information)
- Is knowledge of letter-sound relationships being used? (graphophonic information)
- Is knowledge of letters, words, and print conventions being used? (pragmatic information)
- Are confirmation and self-correcting strategies being used?
- Was the reading phrased and fluent?

References:

Teachers' Guide Levels D and E. Nelson. Thomson Learning.

Running records. Access: <http://specialed.about.com/runningrecords/>

4 Blocks Literacy Framework: Running Records. Access: www.k111.k12.il.us/lafayette/fourblocks/running_records.html [24/01/05].

Balanced Early Literacy: Assessment: Reading: Running Records: Miscue coding system conventions. Access: www.philaK12.pa.us/teachers/frameworks/bel/content/bel_k1b5.htm (24/01/05)

Running Records. Readinga-z. Access:[www.readinga-z.com/guided/runrecord.html] [24/01/05]

Assessing using Conferences:

A conference can be as informal as a discussion between the teacher and one of the children, or sometimes with a small group. In a one-to-one conference, the teacher can concentrate on skills and strategies that are specific to the child. For example, listening to children give an informal retelling of a story or asking them questions can offer insights into their level of comprehension. Teachers can ask the child about the strategies he or she finds helpful and model new strategies. In discussion a reading selection, teachers may also want to conference with a small group.

Use questions such as the following to:

- Prompt them to tell about the reading strategies they use (see prompts)
- Find out about their comprehension (e.g. What is the story about? What happened at the beginning, middle, end?)

- Find about their personal connections to the text. (e.g. How did you like the story? What does reading the story make you think about?)

Teacher Prompts to Support Early Reading Behaviours:

Teachers need to use consistent prompts to aid children at various stages of development in the reading process. Prompts are introduced over time and should be appropriate for the child's stage of reading acquisition. Sample prompts include:

One to one matching:

- *Read it with your finger. did you have enough words? Did you have too many words?*

Using known words to help with the reading of the text:

- *You know _____. Does that look like _____?*
- *Does _____ make sense here?*
- *Does _____ sound right?*
- *Can you find a word you already know in the new word?*

Cross-checking of information and use of self-monitoring:

- *You said _____. What would you expect to see at the beginning of _____? Were you right?*
- *Where's the tricky (hard) part? Check it. Does it look right? Check it. Does it make sense if you say it like that? Check it. Can we say it that way?*
- *Why did you stop? What did you notice?*
- *Look at the picture. Do you think it looks like _____? What would fit here?*
- *It could be _____, but look at it. Does it look the way you would expect _____ to look?*
- *You were almost right. Look at it again and think about what would fit there.*

Using all sources of information

- *You said _____. Does that make sense and sound right?*
- *Try that again and think about what would make sense and sound right.*
- *Do you know something in that word that can help you?*
- *What do you know that might help?*

Phrased and fluent reading:

- *Put the words together so they sound like you are talking.*
- *Make your voice go down when you see the periods and up when you see a question mark.*
- *What kind of voice do you use when you see dark print? italics? What does it tell you to do?*
- *What kind of voice do you use when you see an exclamation mark? What do you do?*

Assessing using Portfolios:

- *Portfolio assessment is an alternative assessment tool.*
- *Portfolios raise children's self-esteem, motivate student and encourage them to reflect and take ownership in their work.*

Arellano, N. & M. Dill. (1997). Let's Write. New York: Scholastic Professional Books.

Student portfolios usually contain a cross-section of records and examples of student work gathered over time. The information in the file can be used to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of particular children, to plan instruction, to conduct parent and child conferences, and to assist in making decisions about grouping and placement. The student portfolios might include:

- Audiotapes of children reading and discussing ideas
- Dated entries of self-evaluation formats
- Anecdotal records
- Writing samples and completed reading records with the teacher's and children's comments about what was achieved and newly set goals.
- Include all drafts. Clip the final draft at the front. Put the reflection sheet on top.
- Reading logs, book lists, and completed reading conference sheets
- An index of contents to illustrate the variety of activities included and the reasons for keeping them
- Running records of children's reading
- 'Eurekas' in learning
- Designed attitudinal questionnaires
- Reading log
- The student's toughest assignment and why.

Assessing using Portfolios

Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Thoroughly explains the decisions/rationale behind the inclusion of each item; explanations make detailed references to skills, concepts, knowledge and values	Explains the decisions/rationale behind the inclusion of each item; explanations reference skills, concepts, knowledge and values	Explains, with some assistance and guidance, the decisions/rationale behind the inclusion of most items; explanations intermittently reference skills, concepts, knowledge and values	May be able to explain, with much prompting and assistance, the decisions/rationale behind the inclusion of a few items; explanations infrequently reference skills, concepts, knowledge and values
Self-evaluation, reflection, and goal-setting sheets indicate the learner is a reflective practitioner	Self-evaluation, reflection, and goal-setting sheets indicate good awareness	Self-evaluation, reflection, and goal-setting sheets indicate some learner awareness	Self-evaluation, reflection, and goal-setting sheets indicate limited awareness
Included items consistently and appropriately reflect the criteria for each category	Included items fulfill expected criteria for each category	Not all items reflect outline criteria; items may be missing or inappropriate	Items reflect little awareness of the criteria required for each category

Teachers' Guide Levels D and E. Nelson. Thomson Learning. Cornerstones 4, Assessment Guide. Gage.

Speaking and Listening Assessment

Speaking is a vital component of each student's communication repertoire and is not adequately assessed with a one-time formal speech delivered before the class toward the end of a term or year. Oracy must develop through process and, in a classroom setting; there are many opportunities for students to practise their speaking skills. They share information in small groups, ask and respond to questions orally, retell stories, debated, provide explanations, prepare questions orally, retell stories, debate, provide explanations, prepare audiotapes and voiceovers for videotapes, discuss content and social issues, and make formal presentations and speeches. Every one of these activities provides an opportunity to determine growth and development in the area of speaking.

Just as with speaking, students have numerous opportunities to hone their auditory skills on a daily basis. From following oral instructions, to responding to questions, to providing feedback after presentations, to retelling based on teacher read-alouds, listening is an important skill that must be taught.

Speaking Scale:

Level 3 is the goal for most students.

Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Adjusts volume, tone, and pace to reflect content, purpose, audience needs, etc.; voice is expressive and appropriate	Uses appropriate volume, tone, and pace to reflect content, purpose, audience needs, etc.; experiments with voice	Attempts to adjust volume, tone, and pace but adjustments are occasionally misplaced or inappropriate	Often speaks in a monotone; volume and pace may be inappropriate (exaggerated in some way)
Address whole audience through eye contact	Addresses whole audience using some eye contact	Focuses on one area of audience; frequently refers to notes	Shows limited awareness of audience; reads from notes exclusively
Uses appropriate non-verbal gestures (body language such as facial expressions, hand gestures, etc.) to complement the presentation	Uses non-verbal gestures to emphasize important points	Occasionally attempts non-verbal gestures but movements are often distracting and misplaced	Non-verbal gestures are not evident
Consistently uses effective, appropriate vocabulary; good enunciation and pronunciation	Chosen vocabulary conveys message clearly; pronunciation is correct	Relies on basic vocabulary to convey meaning; mispronounces words on occasion	Words often inappropriate and mispronounced

Listening Scale:

Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Listens attentively and with interest; exhibits no distracting behaviours	Listens attentively; is conscious of, and tries to avoid, behaviours that might distract the speaker	Listening wavers at times; is easily distracted; engages in distracting behaviours on occasion	Has difficulty focusing listening skills; is regularly distracted; unaware of distracting behaviour
Retains all of what is said	Retains most of what is said	Retains some of what is said	Retains little of what is said
Follows oral instructions correctly and independently	Follows most oral instructions correctly and independently	Follows most oral instructions with limited assistance	Needs assistance to follow simple oral instructions

(Cornerstones 4, Assessment guide, Gage.)



Viewing and Representing Assessment

(Cornerstones 4, Assessment Guide, Gage.)

A viewing and representing assessment taps the student's thinking process when responding to various print and broadcast media, such as audiotapes, television, films, videotapes, advertisements, magazines, newspapers, and so on. Content, organization, issues, concepts, impact, bias, and stereotypes are the key components. The viewing scale can be used to measure the thinking behind a student's written, oral, visual, or performance-based response to media. The representing scale can be used to assess the students' design and creation of material for presentation to others, such as project work across the curriculum.

Viewing Scale:

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Type and Purpose	Can explain type and purpose of a variety of media	Can explain type and purpose of most media	Can explain type and purpose of preferred media	Lacks awareness of type and purpose of media
Content	Understands content; can identify and explain explicit and implicit messages	Understands content; can identify and explain explicit messages	Understands content at a basic literal level	Needs assistance to understand content at a literal level
Structure and Techniques	Identifies and can explain ways various media achieve a desired effect	Identifies and can explain ways common types of media achieve a desired effect	Identifies and can explain ways preferred media achieve a desired effect	Is unaware media utilize structure and technique to achieve a desired effect
Impact	Demonstrates thorough understanding of impact of concrete and subtle ideas; responds personally; explains other viewpoints	Demonstrates good understanding of impact of familiar concepts; responds personally but is aware that other viewpoints are possible	Demonstrates some understanding of basic concepts; may need assistance to respond from personal viewpoint	Has limited awareness of impact; needs assistance and prompting to respond from personal viewpoint
Bias	Identifies and explains overt and covert bias	Identifies and explains overt bias	Identifies personal bias only	Shows limited awareness of bias even in its most blatant, obvious forms

Representing Scale:

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Content	Content effectively conveys intended message; is appropriate for subject and audience	Content effectively conveys a clear message; is generally appropriate for subject and audience	Content sometimes conveys a vague message; is simple and may be inappropriate for subject and audience	Content indicates difficulty with focusing on one idea; conveys a sketchy, confusing message
Structure and techniques	Understands and consistently imposes appropriate structure to complement purpose; experiments with techniques for effect	Regularly imposes appropriate structure to complement purpose; experiments with techniques for effect	Occasionally imposes appropriate structure to complement purpose; techniques are simple and sometimes ineffective	Presentation lacks obvious structure; techniques, if attempted are frequently ineffective
Impact	Presentation is well suited to purpose; holds audience's interest; presentation is entertaining and informative	Presentation effectively complements purpose; holds audience's attention	Presentation is monotonous and may be ineffective for purpose; may occasionally struggle to sustain audience's attention	Presentation is disjointed and difficult to follow
Bias	Consistently avoids all forms of bias in presentations	Attempts to eliminate overt bias in presentations	Strong personal bias evident in most presentation	Personal bias may be present but inconsistent