Knowing Readers

Why Knowing Readers Is Important

Diane Stephens

Teaching is, indeed, a noble profession. As teachers, we get to know others as learners and use that knowledge to decide how best to support each and every learner. We reflect on the process by which we make and carry out decisions and also gather data about the impact of our decisions. We use our reflections and insights to inform our subsequent decisions. In that way, we help our students develop a sense of agency about the kind of reading lives they have and can have.

In Part II, six educators describe their ideas for collecting information about students and/or organizing reflections. In the first engagement, Jean Anne Clyde describes how to use Shoebox Autobiographies as a way for you and your students to get to know about one another's lives in and out of school. Kathy Short's Cultural X-Rays focuses on how to help students understand that each of them, and everyone else, is a cultured being, and how that knowledge impacts their immediate learning community and helps shape what we learn about other cultures. Barbara Gilbert then explains Donald Graves's (1994) ideas about how it is important for each of us to know all our students as readers, writers, and learners in the context of their homes and cultures, experiences, and interests.

The next six engagements focus on knowing students as readers. Diane DeFord explains the Show Me Books she developed as tools for accessing what students understand about texts. Barbara Gilbert shows how to use the Burke Reading Interview to access how students think about reading and themselves as readers. Diane DeFord describes running records with young children, which are designed to assess the cues and strategies five-year-olds use when reading. Diane Stephens and Yang Wang detail miscue analysis in three iterations: skinny miscue analysis (Stephens, 2005), formal miscue analysis (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005), and retrospective miscue analysis (Goodman & Marek, 1996). All of these tools take you beyond what students say they do when reading to what they actually do. They reveal what cues in language students pay attention to and what strategies they use.

Diane Stephens next describes the Hypothesis-Test Process (Stephens & Story, 1990). Like the Responsive Teaching Cycle (Whitin, Mills, & O'Keefe, 1990), it is a framework for reflecting on data—a way of thinking and not a form to be filled out. Teachers explore "Could it be's?" and seek to understand the "conditions under which" students experience success.

All of these engagements are windows into knowing our students. When we know our students, we are in the best position to help them. Informed by our vision of what could be, we take steps to help all children experience success, grow as readers, and fall in love with reading. What could be better than that?

8. Formal Miscue Analysis

Yang Wang

Formal miscue analysis involves listening to students read orally, and marking and analyzing miscues to determine the degree to which students are using semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues when reading. It provides a "window" into their reading process.

Why?

Formal miscue analysis helps you:

- investigate readers' cue use, strategies, and comprehension, and identify strengths and needs.
- understand how the reader constructs meaning during and after reading; it provides a "window on the reading process" (Goodman, 1973).
- develop a "miscue ear," the ability to make quickly an informal assessment of cue and strategy use.

Who?

I recommend formal miscue analysis for English learners and native English speakers, K–12, who are not yet understanding what they read. It is a terrific assessment tool for use at the beginning or end of the grading period or school year.

How?

Materials

- **A book, article, or other text based on the reader's interests and reading proficiency, but one she or he has not read before.** The reader should know 94 to 95 percent of the words, which makes it challenging enough for him or her to generate some miscues, but still able to understand it independently. Ideally, the passage is long enough so the student makes at least 25 miscues; with young children, however, it should be about 100 words and the student should make five to six miscues.

- **A typescript of the selected reading material, for marking miscues and taking notes.** Type the text in a Word file, triple space, and number each line (see page 70 for an example). You can find ready-to-use typescripts at Park University: Watson Literacy Center (2018). Alternately, you can enlarge the passage on a copy machine, and record and number the miscues on that copy. Or you can use copies of texts provided by publishers of assessment systems like *Dominie Reading and Writing Assessment Portfolio* (DeFord, 2014), *Developmental Reading Assessment* (Beaver, 2012), or *Benchmark Assessment System* (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011).

- **A retelling guide.** For fiction, list characters, events, plot summary, and theme. For nonfiction, list major ideas. You can assign points for each part or do a holistic score.

- **A copy of the Miscue Analysis Classroom Procedure Coding Form** for use with each student (page 242 and scholastic.com/ReadingRevealedResources).

- **A device to audio record the reader's reading and retelling,** such as a digital recorder or smart phone with recording app.

- **A copy of the Burke Reading Interview** (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005).

Introducing formal miscue analysis to each student

Have an informal conversation with the reader to get to know him or her and build rapport. For example, you might say, "I think it would be fascinating to learn how you read. I would like you to teach me everything you know as a reader. I will ask you to read a little to me. While you are reading, I will jot down some notes to help me understand you as a reader. I will meet with you later and share what I have learned."

Either before or after oral reading, ask the reader the questions on the Burke Reading Interview (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005) to learn about his or her beliefs and strategies (see pages 50–53).

After the introduction

1. Find a quiet zone and sit side by side with your reader at the table. Say, "I found a book that I think you would be interested in."

2. Say to the reader, "Take a quick look at the cover of the book and let me know if you have read it before." Switch to a different book if the student has read it.

3. Ask the reader to read the story aloud: "Please read the book aloud just as you would read it by yourself. When you come to something you don't know, just do whatever you would do as if I were not here. When you read, try to remember everything. I will ask you

some questions after you read it. I will audio record your reading and take some notes when you read." If the reader is not comfortable with audio recording, mark as many miscues and take as many notes as possible while he or she is reading.

4. Retell and record. After reading, ask the reader to retell the book. "Now tell me everything you remember about the story." This is called an unaided retelling. You can follow with the question, "Anything else?" Then try cued retelling by saying "You told me…, can you tell me more?" To further support the child, try an aided retelling by asking some open-ended questions, for example, "Why do you think…? What in the story made you think that? What does this piece tell us about…? What message do you think the author wanted people who read this story to walk away knowing?" Take notes in the retelling guide if necessary.

6. Thank the reader for reading the book.

7. Afterwards, mark miscues on the typescript using the marks in the chart below.

8. Listen to the recording and mark the miscues. You may need to listen to it multiple times to ensure you catch and mark all the miscues the reader made. Complete the retelling guide if you were not able to do it earlier while the reader was summarizing the story.

Basic Miscue Marks

Omissions

Circle the word or words that have been skipped by the reader:

Mr. Baker is a ~~weatherman.~~ He talks a lot about the weather. When it's sunny, he says, "No clouds today, so no rain."

Substitutions

Write the reader's response above the word

Sometimes Mr. Baker *snuff* sniffs the air and *tastes* tests the wind. "The *tempare* temperature is going up during the night," he says.

Insertions

Use the insertion (^) mark and write the inserted word above the texts.

"There will be *a*^ fog tomorrow!"

Corrections

Write the reader's initial response above the text. Underline what the reader corrects and put a c above it.

He just amazes me. He can even name the clouds! The names are *along*^C long and they sound funny.

(Goodman & Burke, 1972)

Visiting Day

① $Visting
0101　Only on visiting day

0102　is there chicken frying

0103　in the kitchen at 6 A. M.

0104　and Grandma

$ huming
0105　humming soft and low,

0106　smiling her secret

0107　just-for-Daddy-and-me smile,

———

laying
0201　and me lying in bed,

0202　smiling my just-for-Grandma-and-Daddy smile.

———

②
0301　And maybe Daddy is

0302　(already) up,

0303　brushing his teeth,

0304　combing his hair (back) saying,

③
0305　"Yeah, that pretty little girl of mine is coming today,"

④
0306　with all the men around him

0307　looking on (jealous-like)

0308　'cause they wish they had

0309　a little girl of their own coming.

———

⑤
0401　Only on Visiting Day

0402　does Mrs. Tate come over

0403　when the sky is still pink,

0405　(heavy) with presents for her

Tom
0406　son, Thomas, saying,

⑥
0407　"Please, can you take these with you?"

⑦
0408　and Grandma taking the presents from

0409　Mrs. Tate's (arms)

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9. Number all the sentences on the typescript and then analyze them on the form shown on the next page.

10. Read each sentence as the reader finally produced it and record the coding in the right side margin of the typescript.

   Syntactic and Semantic Acceptability. For each sentence, ask yourself if it is syntactically acceptable/grammatically correct (Does it sound like English?) and semantically acceptable (Does it make sense?) in the reader's dialect and the entire text. Check Y for acceptable and N for not acceptable. If a miscue is coded N for syntactically not acceptable, also code it N for semantic nonacceptability.

   Meaning Change. If the miscue is coded Y for both syntax and semantics, ask yourself if the sentence changes the meaning of the entire text. Use N for no change in meaning, P for minor change, and Y for major change. For example, Juanita read, "Babies should have bowls." The text was *Babies shouldn't have bottles*. This sentence was coded Y for syntactic acceptability (it is grammatically acceptable), Y for semantic acceptability (it makes sense), Y for meaning change. Enter the codes in the coding form. When the reader does not make any miscues

in a sentence, code it as: Y (syntactic acceptability), Y (semantic acceptability), and N (no meaning change).

Word Substitution. Code substitution miscues. Write down the words from the text and miscues on the coding form. Code each substitution for graphic similarity and mark H for high degree of similarity, S for some degree of similarity, and N for no degree of similarity. When there are multiple substitution attempts, code the first complete one.

Graphic Similarity. In the previous example, Juanita substituted "shouldn't" for *should*. They look alike, so use H for graphic similarity. She substituted "bottles" for *bowls*, and that is also H for graphic similarity (both words have *b*, *o*, *l*, and *s*). If there are repeated miscues, only code the first one. Note the other ones on the form in the section "Repeated miscues across texts." Do not include them in the total number of miscues.

11. Tally the patterns of syntactic acceptability, semantic acceptability, meaning change, word substitution, and graphic similarity. Use each number divided by pattern total number, and then multiply by 100 to calculate the percentage.

12. Fill in the other information in the coding form as needed.

Miscue Analysis Classroom Procedure Coding Form (Adapted from Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005) (page 242 and scholastic.com/ReadingRevealedResources)

Miscue Analysis Classroom Procedure Coding Form

Student	Maddie								Date	10/1	
Text	Visiting Day								Grade	2	

Sentence No.	Syntactic Acceptability		Semantic Acceptability		Meaning Change			Word Substitution		Graphic Similarity		
	Y	N	Y	N	N	P	Y	Text	Miscue	High	Some	None
1	✔		✔				✔	visiting	$ visting	✔		
2	✔		✔		✔			humming	$ huming	✔		
3	✔		✔		✔			lying	laying	✔		
4		✔		✔			✔	Thomas	Tom	✔		
5	✔		✔		✔							
6	✔		✔		✔							
7	✔		✔		✔							
Column Total	6	1	6	1	5	1	1	Column Total		4		
Pattern Total		7	7		7			Total Substitutions		4		
Percentages	86%	14%	86%	14%	72%	14%	14%	Percentages		100%		

a. Total Miscues: 9   b. Total Words: 147   a ÷ b x 100 = ___6___ Miscue Per Hundred Words

Repeated miscues across text

N/A

Comments on Retelling

Remembered the plot and characters.

Analysis on Patterns

Relied on graphic information and pictures. Skipped unknown words.

Instructional Recommendations

Use context clues to predict. Make connections to the text.

13. Find the reader's strengths and needs and make instructional decisions. For example, if the syntactic and semantic acceptability percentages are low, meaning change percentage is high, and the retelling score is low, but the graphic similarity percentage is high, it suggests that the reader may rely on graphophonic systems for meaning more than syntactic or semantic systems.

Closure/Stepping Back

When the coding form is completed, use the percentages in each column to determine the reader's cue use patterns. Juanita's syntactic acceptability, semantic acceptability, meaning change, and graphic similarity percentages were high, and retelling was not strong. These results suggest that she attempted to read aloud the text word by word and did not focus on meaning-making. She did not correct the low quality miscues that changed the meaning of the texts, which suggests she was not yet self-monitoring. Based on the data gathered, Katy decided to have Juanita focus on making sense of what she read.

How's It Going? Informal Assessment

Formal miscue analysis provides opportunities for teachers to explore readers' reading processes and use that knowledge to inform instruction. It could be used to assess one student in the beginning of a year and later in the semester. For example, Katy noticed that Juanita's meaning-making percentage was low and graphic similarity was high. This information coupled with observations helped Katy design instruction for Juanita, which focused on meaning-making and self-monitoring. Katy could conduct another miscue analysis later to see if there were any changes. Ideally, the meaning-making percentage would be higher and cue use patterns would be more balanced. In this way, Katy could know if her instruction was or was not helpful.

Miscue analysis is time consuming, so you will likely not use it for every student in your class. An informal procedure alternative (Goodman, Watson & Burke, 2005) involves quickly tallying how many sentences read by the student make sense and how many do not make sense. Divide the number of sentences that do make sense by the total number of sentences for a quick comprehending score. For instance, if there are 43 sentences that make sense out of 50 total number of sentences, the comprehending score is 43/50 x100 percent = 86 percent.

For more information on Formal Miscue Analysis, see:

- **Legacy Title:** *Miscue Analysis: Applications to Reading Instruction,* Kenneth S. Goodman, Ed. (1973)
- *Reading Miscue Inventory: From Evaluation to Instruction* by Yetta Goodman, Dorothy Watson, and Carolyn Burke (2005)
- "Ideas That Work: Reading Miscue Analysis" from the National Center on Intensive Intervention at American Institutes for Research (2014)