

## Get to Know Your Readers' Strengths and Needs With Miscue Analysis

As many students have been plunged into remote learning, assessing their oral reading behaviors is more important now than ever. Once you've identified students who would most benefit from a Formal Miscue Analysis, set aside time for one-on-one conferences with them as soon as possible.

During the conference, listen for ways the student problem-solves her way through the text. For example, when she miscues (i.e., omits, substitutes, or inserts a word or phrase) and self-corrects, to what extent is she relying on the syntax/grammar of a sentence, relying on the overall meaning, and/or attending to the letters and sounds? Each child's miscues will tell you what you can build on in your teaching and where that student needs extra support to put the most useful strategies into place regularly when reading.

Here are some tips for conducting Formal Miscue Analysis remotely.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- **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.
- **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. Alternately, you can enlarge the passage on a copy machine, and record and number the miscues on that copy.
- **Device to record the reader's reading and retelling.**
- **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.
- **Miscue Analysis Classroom Procedure Coding Form** (provided on this site).
- **Basic Miscue Marks Sample** (provided on this site).
- **Modified Burke Reading Interview** (optional; provided on this site).

## THE ORAL READING AND RETELLING

### If students have online access and a device at home:

1. Use your videoconferencing platform to livestream with the student. Start by having 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.”

Another option is to ask the reader the questions on the Modified Burke Reading Interview to learn about his or her beliefs and strategies, either before or after oral reading.

2. Ask the student to access the pre-selected book or text. You may make the text available to the student by sending home a copy, having him or her access a digital version of the text on a device at home, or launching a digital version of it yourself and sharing your screen so the student can see the pages, or simply holding a copy of the text to your computer’s camera.

3. Start recording the session.

4. Ask the student to read the text aloud: “Please read the book to me 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. I will be taking some notes as you read. As you read, try to remember everything. I will ask you some questions when you’re finished.”

You may mark your typescript of the text as the student reads, or you may wait until after the session to mark the typescript by listening to the recording.

5. When the student has finished reading, ask him or her to retell the text. You can:

- Start with an unaided retelling: “Now tell me everything you remember about the story.” You can follow with the question, “Anything else?”
- Move to a cued retelling: “You told me..., can you tell me more?”
- And then an aided retelling: Ask 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 on the retelling guide if necessary.

6. Thank the student for reading the book and end the session.

### **If students have limited or no online access:**

Send home the pre-selected book or text and simple instructions for the parent or caregiver, such as these:

- Record your child’s oral reading of the text on any audio- or video-recording device, such as a smart phone.
- Sit quietly next to your child and ask him or her to read the text 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.”
- Allow your child to read without helping or correcting him or her. It’s important for your child to problem-solve independently. You can, however, supply an unknown word if your child is completely stumped and unable to guess.
- After reading, ask your child to retell the text.
- End the session and send the recording to me.

### **SCORING THE FORMAL MISCUE ANALYSIS**

#### **Mark the Typescript**

Listen to the recording you made or that the child’s parent or caregiver sent you. Mark the miscues on the typescript of the text using the marks on the Basic Miscue Marks Sheet. You may need to listen to the recording multiple times to ensure you catch and mark all the miscues the reader made.

#### **Fill in the Miscue Analysis Classroom Procedure Coding Form**

Number all the sentences on the typescript and then analyze them on the Miscue Analysis Classroom Procedure Coding Form. Read each sentence as the reader finally produced it and record the coding in the right margin of the typescript.

- **Syntactic and Semantic Acceptability.** For each sentence, ask yourself if the student’s reading 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 semantically not acceptable.

- Meaning Change.** If the miscue is coded Y for both syntax and semantics, ask yourself if the student's reading of 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.

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.

Complete the retelling guide if you were not able to do it earlier while the student was summarizing the story. You may need to listen to the recording again. Add your comments about the retelling and fill in the other information on the coding form as needed.

When you've completed coding form, use the percentages in each column to determine the reader's cue use patterns. 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. Based on the data gathered, you may decide to focus your instruction on helping the student sense of what she read.