RUNNING RECORDS

A Running Record is a record of reading behaviors, that readers make as they are reading. Running Records were developed by Dr. Marie Clay, as a way for teachers to quickly and easily assess their students' reading behaviors "on the run", so to speak. Ken Goodman says that reading "miscues" are "windows into the reading process". They can give you a clear picture of the cueing systems that each student knows how to use and which systems s/he needs to learn. Having this kind of information about your students is invaluable when planning your next teaching steps and when working with individuals and small groups. The most common miscue is the substitution of another word for the one that is in the text. However, other miscues include omissions, insertions or repetitions. At one time, all deviations from the text were regarded as errors that had to be corrected.

To understand what miscues reveal about the reading process, you need to know something about the cueing systems:

1. **Semantic or meaning cues** - applying background knowledge and the context of the sentence or passage to identify words

2. **Graphophonic or visual cues** - applying what is known letter-sound correspondences to decode words

3. **Syntactic or sentence structure cues** - applying what is known about how our language goes together to identify words

In order to be able to read and comprehend a book independently, a student should be able to read a book with at least 94% accuracy. With the support of an adult, or within the confines of a guided reading group, a student will make the most progress reading at instructional level, accuracy rate of 90% - 94%. At that level, the student can read enough words to give him a context within which to solve reading problems, learn new words and understand the ideas. Below 90% accuracy (frustration level), a child is apt to miss too many words to comprehend fully. At frustration level a student is not able to employ enough reading strategies to experience success; too much energy is expended at the word level, and ideas are sacrificed.

Although word-perfect reading is not the goal, a child should be self-correcting at a rate that allows for good comprehension. A 1:2 self-correction rate is very good; that is, the student self-corrects half of all initial errors. At 1:5, the self-correction rate is poor; the student is not monitoring himself carefully enough. The teacher must take into account the type of errors made by the student in order to determine the importance of the errors. A child who misreads *a* for *the*, for example, is making a much less serious error than another child who misreads *house* for *horse*. The type of errors made by the student often gives the teacher a good indication of the student's comprehension of the passage or story.

**Running Records are intended to help teachers:**
- monitor ongoing student progress in reading
- find out which particular skills and strategies students are using
- focus on specific needs of individual children
- group together children with similar needs for reading instruction
- choose books at an appropriate level for your students
Taking the Record
1. Sit the child beside you and explain that you want her to read the book independently. Read the title of the book to the child.

2. Give the child the book and use a record form or a blank sheet of paper to mark her reading behavior and record miscues. (A chart with 100 squares might be used to record one word per square to make word counts easier.)

3. When a child stops during reading, it is important that you allow enough time for her to work on a problem before you supply the word. It is also important that you do not wait so long that she loses the meaning of the story while trying to solve the unknown word.

4. Use a standardized system to record words read correctly, substitutions, omissions, deletions, and deletions.

5. Also take note of self-corrections. When a student corrects a miscue herself, it is an indication that she is monitoring her own comprehension.

6. You may also wish to note hesitations, repetitions and other reading behaviors which may not affect accuracy but provide information about the strategies the reader is using.

How to Take a Running Record
As the Running Record is an assessment tool, it is not a time for instruction. The teacher's role is passive, and the reader should be given at least five seconds to think before the teacher gives him the word. If the child appeals for help, the teacher marks A above the word, and a T below, if she tells him the word. If the student appeals for help too often, the teacher may say "you try that" at first, and give help if the student is unable to proceed. If the reader loses his sense of the story and gets mixed up, the teacher may say "Try that again," noting with TTA and putting brackets around the passage that is being repeated. The TTA response is counted as a single error, and the second reading, not the first, is counted.

The teacher places a check on the paper for each correctly-read word, and notes any errors above the correct word. When using a blank Running Record form the teacher places the row of checks to correspond with the lines of text in the book being read. It is important to write the page number in the left-hand column and separate the pages with a short line, to facilitate finding the place in the book later if clarification is necessary.

Some common teachers' notations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>student's error</th>
<th>teacher's notation of error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>told (teacher gave word)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>self-correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>skipped word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^</td>
<td>inserted word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTA</td>
<td>&quot;try that again&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>←</td>
<td>repetition to a starting point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>wait (student hesitated awhile before reading correct word)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>appeal (student asked for help)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The teacher notes each error and self-correction. Misread words, but not self-corrections or repetitions, are counted as errors. If the child misreads a proper name in a story, the error is noted one time only and not counted on succeeding errors. Contractions are counted as one error, rather than two. The teacher determines the error and self-correction rates by dividing the total number of words by the number of errors; 10 errors in 100 words is computed as 1:10 (one error in every ten words) and translated into a percentage of accuracy, 90%. It is helpful to keep a chart handy which easily converts the error rate into a percentage. To figure the self-correction rate, add the errors and self-corrections together, and divide by the number of self-corrections. A student who makes three errors and three self-corrections has a 1:2 self-correction rate (3 errors + 3 self-corrections / 3 self-corrections). Establishing the self-correction rate can be done quickly and approximately. If the number of self-corrections is approximately 1/2 the number of errors, the rate is 1:3. If the number of self-corrections is approximately 1/3 the number of errors, the rate is 1:4, and so forth. The exact mathematical equivalent is not so important as is the awareness of how much self-monitoring is occurring. Not figured into the percentages but equally important are notes about the student’s reading behaviors. The margins and bottom of the Running Record sheet are places to make note of the child’s fluency, flexibility, interest, independence, self-awareness, risk-taking, enjoyment, and any other pertinent observations.

Analyzing the Running Record

Later the teacher analyzes the errors and self-corrections as M, S, or V (Meaning, Structure, Visual), aiding her understanding of the cueing systems the student relies on when reading. Meaning cues are generally noted in a first grade reader who looks at the picture to help him determine the correct word. Structure cues involve syntax, and are generally noted in the student who re-reads a passage to determine what sounds like. Finally, Visual cues, also called “grapho-phonics” cues, are visible when a student analyzes a word phonetically or attempts to recall it from prior experience.

In analyzing the errors and self-corrections using M,S,V, the teacher will begin to see patterns. The student may rely consistently on one cueing system to read, at the expense of the other two, or may have begun to rely on more than one. One student may rely on the visual cueing system, ignoring Meaning as he "whacks and hacks" at words. Another student may rely on meaning and read words which look visually nothing like those on the page but which make sense within the context of the sentence. Still another may use Structure and Meaning initially, but monitor himself and self-correct using the visual cueing system. Self-monitoring and cross-checking are strategies used regularly by good readers and are to be encouraged. They lead to good comprehension and independence in reading. The goal for each teacher should be to help each child become a balanced reader, making use of many strategies and cueing systems, self-monitoring as he does so.

Modified from http://ww2.chandler.k12.az.us/tarwater-elementary/teacherresource/Running%20Records.htm
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading behavior</th>
<th>Marking convention</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accurate word reading</td>
<td>✔ above each correctly read word.</td>
<td>The brown fox………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution (one error if not self-</td>
<td>Write each word attempted above the actual word.</td>
<td>✔ brave ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrected; record one error regardless</td>
<td></td>
<td>The brown fox………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the number of incorrect substitutions</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔ ✔ ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission (one error)</td>
<td>— (long dash)</td>
<td>✔ — ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insertion (one error)</td>
<td>(\wedge) at point of insertion with the inserted word above it</td>
<td>✔ (\wedge) ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of one word (no error)</td>
<td>R (one repetition)</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R2 (two repetitions)</td>
<td>The brown fox………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R3 (three repetitions)</td>
<td>✔ R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of phrase (no error)</td>
<td>R with line and arrow to the point of where the reader returned to repeat.</td>
<td>✔ ✔ ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-correction (no error)</td>
<td>SC after the error to indicate child has corrected error.</td>
<td>brave/SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention / student confused</td>
<td>Write TA if you need to tell student to &quot;try again&quot; and point to where he or she</td>
<td>✔ TA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and unwilling to try again</td>
<td>needs to try again. Place brackets around part of the text that the child had to</td>
<td>[The brown fox]………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(one error)</td>
<td>try again.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention / unable to read a word</td>
<td>Write T above word if you tell the child the word after a 5-10 second wait.</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(one error)</td>
<td></td>
<td>The brown fox………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning sound (no error)</td>
<td>Mark the beginning sound above the word if the child says it first, then a (check)</td>
<td>✔ / ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>if he or she follows with the correct word.</td>
<td>The brown fox………</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Reading a-z Running Record

**Level D**

**Student's Name**: Matt Jones  
**Date**: 1/28/02  
**Words**: 99 words  
**Assessed by**: B. Castillo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>E = errors S-C = self-correction</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>S-C</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>S-C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M = meaning S = structure V = visual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MSV</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M5V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals**: 8 3

**Accuracy Rate**: 92%  
**Error Rate**: 1:12  
**Self-correction Rate**: 1:4
Analyzing and Scoring a Running Record

Qualitative Analysis
The qualitative analysis is based on observations that you make during the running record. It involves observing how the child uses the meaning (M), structural (S), and visual (V) cues to help him or her read. It also involves paying attention to fluency, intonation, and phrasing. Think back to the prompts you offered and how the child responded to the prompts. All of these things help you to form a picture of the child's reading development.

Scoring
The information gathered while doing a running record is used to determine error, accuracy, and self-correction rates. Directions for calculating these rates are given below. The calculated rates, along with qualitative information and the child's comprehension of the text, are used to determine a child's reading level.

Error Rate
Error rate is expressed as a ratio and is calculated by dividing the total number of words read by the total number of errors made.

\[
\text{Total words} / \text{total errors} = \text{Error rate}
\]

\[
\text{TW} / \text{E} = \text{ER}
\]

Example:
120 / 6 = 20
The ratio is expressed as 1:20. This means that for each error made, the child read 20 words correctly.

Accuracy Rate
Accuracy rate is expressed as a percentage. You can calculate the accuracy rate by using the following formula:

\[
(\text{Total words read} - \text{total errors}) / \text{total words read} \times 100 = \text{Accuracy rate.}
\]

\[
(\text{TW} - \text{E}) / \text{TW} \times 100 = \text{AR}
\]

Example:
\[
(120 - 6) / 120 \times 100 = \text{Accuracy rate}
\]

\[
114/120 \times 100 = \text{Accuracy rate}
\]

\[
.95 \times 100 = 95\%
\]

You can use accuracy rate to determine whether the text read is easy enough for independent reading, difficult enough to warrant instruction yet avoid frustration, or too difficult for the reader. The breakdown of these three categories is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category description</th>
<th>Accuracy rate range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy enough for independent reading</td>
<td>95 - 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional level for use in guided reading session.</td>
<td>90 - 94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too difficult and will frustrate the reader</td>
<td>89% and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-correction Rate
Self-correction is expressed as a ratio and is calculated by using the following formula:

\[
(\text{Errors} + \text{self-correction}) / \text{self-correction} = \text{Self-correction rate}
\]

\[
(\text{E} + \text{SC}) / \text{SC} = \text{SC rate}
\]

Example:
\[
(10 + 5) / 5 = \text{SC}
\]

\[
15 / 5 = \text{SC}
\]

\[
3 = \text{SC}
\]

The SC is expressed as 1:3. This means that the child corrects 1 out of every 3 errors.

If a child is self-correcting at a rate of 1:3 or less, this indicates that she or he is self-monitoring her or his reading.
After the Reading

Retelling
After the child reads the benchmark book and you record a running record, have the child do an oral retelling of the story. Ask the child to close the book and then tell you about the story in as much detail as she or he can remember. If the child has difficulty retelling parts of the story or remembering certain details, you can use prompts such as "Tell me more about (character X)" or "What happened after..." Analyze the retelling for information the child gives about the following:

- Characters
- Main idea and supporting detail
- Setting
- Plot
- Sequence of events
- Problem and solution
- Response to text-specific vocabulary and language

Retelling Checklist

- Can the child tell you what happened in the story or what the factual book was about in his or her own words?
- Does the child include details about the characters in the retelling? Can she or he explain the relationship between the characters?
- Can the child describe the setting? How detailed is the description?
- Can the child recall the events of the story, and can he or she place them in the correct sequence?
- Can the child identify the problem and the resolution?
- Does the child use vocabulary from the text?
- Does the child's retelling demonstrate minimal, adequate, or very complete and detailed understanding of the text?

Student Talk
After the reading, talk to the child about some of the things he or she did during the reading. Reinforce and praise certain behavior with comments and questions that focus on specific behaviors. For example, after the child reads the text, you might focus on a self-correction and ask, "How did you know it was people and not persons?"

Observation Checklist
In addition to the things revealed by the running record and retelling, there are other behaviors you should also be looking for. The things you should look for will vary with the reading level. They include the following:

- Does the child have mastery of directionality, one-to-one correspondence, return sweep, etc.?
- Did the errors made by the child make sense or sound right?
- Did the child attempt to self-correct?
- Did the child use the meaning, structure, and visual cues to identify words and get meaning from the text? Did he or she use them in an integrated way, or did he or she rely heavily on one particular source of information?
- Did the child make an attempt to read a word before asking you to help?
- How was the child's fluency? Did she or he just word-call?
- Did the child seem to recognize phrases?
- Were there many pauses? Were the pauses lengthy?
- How was the child's expression or intonation?

Assessing children's reading progress is key to moving them along at the proper developmental rate. The combination of information gained from the analysis of a running record, qualitative analysis, and analysis of a child's retelling will help you select the appropriate books for your children's reading levels. Remember, it does the reader little good to be placed at a reading level that is too difficult for him or her. Running records will help you match children with the appropriate level of reading materials.

http://www.readinga-z.com/newfiles/evels/runrecord/runrec.html
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANALYSIS</th>
<th>002</th>
<th>220</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals:

- Cuddled in bed: 1
- Knitted the ready and held for his head: 1
- The knits more than socks: 1
- His socks on his feet: 1
- He knitted his hair: 1
- The dog down the street: 1
- He knits when he walks: 1
- And knits on the plane: 1
- Grandpa knits holes: 1
- Child 2: 1
LEVEL ONE ANALYSIS

RUNNING WORDS
ERRORS
SELF-CORRECTIONS
ACCURACY
SELF-CORRECTION RATE

CHILD 1  CHILD 2

56  56
4   4
2   2
94-94%  94-95%
1:3  1:3

LEVEL TWO ANALYSIS

ERRORS
M  S  V
CHILD 1  CHILD 2
5  5  3  2  2  0

SELF CORRECTIONS
M  S  V
CHILD 1  CHILD 2
1  1  1

LEVEL 3 ANALYSIS

CHILD 1
Re-reads when a mismatch appears
Re-reads after being told a word
Nearly always predicts when unsure
Seeks help when necessary

CHILD 2
 Doesn’t reread
 Doesn’t reread
 Doesn’t often predict
 When unsure
 Doesn’t seek help when necessary