Chapter 16
Formative Reading Assessments of Running Records and Miscue Analysis:
Limits and Possibilities for Literacy Learning

Yang Wang
University of South Carolina, USA

Catherine Compton-Lilly
University of South Carolina, USA

Lenny Sánchez
University of South Carolina, USA

ABSTRACT

This book chapter takes a close look at two well-known reading assessments – running records and miscue analysis - that are often not put in conversation with the other when evaluating a reader's process. In order to explore what happens when using these assessments in tandem, we designed a single student case study involving a fifth grade girl and eight sessions of interviews, running records and miscue analysis. Our findings highlight selected themes that emerged from the analyses to reveal patterns the reader used across the sessions and showcase different aspects of the reader's reading processes from the perspectives of both assessments. We argue that understanding the theoretical and empirical contributions of both reading assessments contributes to the development of teacher expertise about readers and their reading processes.

INTRODUCTION

Formative assessments are designed to inform teaching and suggest learning opportunities for students (Flippo, 2014). Reading educators have long argued that the best way to assess emerging readers is to listen to them read. Since the 1940s, reading experts have proposed a vast range of assessments designed to not only assess children's abilities as readers, but also to inform teaching (Johns & Lunn, 1983). These efforts have assumed three primary forms: Informal Reading Inventories (Johns, 2005; Leslie & Caldwell, 1995; Wheelock, Silvaroli & Campbell, 2011), Running Records (Clay, 1993/2002), and Miscue Analysis (K. Goodman, 1969; Y. Goodman, Watson & Burke, 2005). While on the surface these assessments may seem similar, when analyzed they are grounded in differing understandings of the reading process and offer different insights into emerging readers and their processing of text.

This chapter will explore the affordances of two formative assessments – running records and miscue analysis. Our goal is not to prove that one assessment is superior to the other. In short, we argue that each assessment has a valuable place in literacy programs; thus, teachers must consider which assessment is most useful for particular children, particular learning challenges, and children at particular ages. Furthermore, we believe that understanding the theoretical foundations of both assessments contributes to teacher expertise and the ability of teachers to reflect on children's reading to help all children develop as capable and confident readers. In this chapter, we review these assessments, identify their contributions, and consider their instructional affordances. We then present the case of Cailyn – whom Yang and Cathy worked with over a six-week period and is a daughter of Lenny. We use Cailyn's case to consider the different lenses offered by running records and miscue analysis and how these analyses position Cailyn as a reader and inform instructional responses.

HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS: INFORMAL READING INVENTORIES

While informal reading inventories appeared on the reading scene in the early 1940s (Betts, 1941), the roots of reading inventories emerged more than 25 years earlier. Influential reading scholars, including Waldo (1915) and Gray (1916), described various informal measures designed to track the rate of students' oral and silent reading, as well as students' abilities to decode words and understand what they read. These early assessments involved administration by trained reading educators, students reading paragraphs that gradually increased in difficulty, marking of student reading errors, and the use of comprehension questions (Johns & Lunn, 1983). These informal assessments shared many characteristics of what would become the informal reading inventories used extensively between 1940 and 1980.

During the early 1940s, these efforts were codified in the "subjective reading inventory" (Betts, 1941), which led to various commercially produced reading inventories that became available in the 1960s (Botel, 1966; McCracken, 1966; Silvaroli, 1969). These reading assessments generally featured graded word lists, lists of nonsense words, reading passages, and comprehension assessments. The goals of these reading inventories were to identify students' reading levels, monitor students' abilities to decode and comprehend text, and, thus, inform instruction.

While informal reading inventories provided a useful lens on children's reading processes and invited teachers to attend to what children did as they read, critiques of these assessments included difficulty in controlling for students' prior knowledge, the differing demands presented by informational versus narrative texts, and the complexities that accompany the assessment of comprehension (Caldwell, 1985;

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/formative-reading-assessments-of-running-records-and-miscue-analysis/240574

Related Content

Quantitative Analysis of Online Teaching and Learning Techniques and the 2019 English Language Proficiency Assessment Levels in a Tri-State Region
Theresa A. Paterra (2023). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement (pp. 1-15).*
www.irma-international.org/article/quantitative-analysis-of-online-teaching-and-learning-techniques-and--the-2019-english-language-proficiency-assessment-levels-in-a-tri-state-region/320655

Developing Communication and Inclusive Literacy Skills Among Children With Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities: The Role of Multi-Sensory Storytelling
Clarisse Nunesand Nuno David Oliveira (2022). *Modern Reading Practices and Collaboration Between Schools, Family, and Community (pp. 125-154).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/developing-communication-and-inclusive-literacy-skills-among-children-with-profound-intellectual-and-multiple-disabilities/302777

Aligning Information Systems Programs With the New ABET-CAC Criteria: The Case of the American University of Kuwait
Ahmad A. Rabaa'iand Aaron Rasheed Rababaah (2020). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement (pp. 79-107).*
www.irma-international.org/article/aligning-information-systems-programs-with-the-new-abet-cac-criteria/260749

Montessori Language Arts – The Excellence Path to Early Childhood Language Development: English for Specific Purposes
 Julia Selva Sundari S. (2020). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement (pp. 40-61).*
www.irma-international.org/article/montessori-language-arts--the-excellence-path-to-early-childhood-language-development/247110

Cyberbullying: The Dark Side of Digital Interactions
Michelle F. Wright (2019). *Handbook of Research on School Violence in American K-12 Education (pp. 286-304).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/cyberbullying/214256