# Sensitive Observation of Reading Behavior

Running Record Professional Learning Package

# PART TWO

Reading Recovery® Council
of North America

# Introduction to the Analysis of Running Records of Text Reading

**For whom is this professional learning package intended?**
This professional learning package is for classroom teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, specialist teachers, and pre-service teachers who want to learn to be careful observers of the reading behaviors of children in their early years of schooling. *Participants will have completed Part One*, learning the conventions for taking running records of text reading.

**What is the purpose of the professional learning package?**
The purpose of Part Two is for the teacher to develop skills in analyzing running records in order to learn about the reading behaviors of early readers. The primary focus in Part One was on the conventions used when taking a running record of text reading and on basic scoring procedures. Part Three will explore the use of running records to inform teaching decisions.

**Systematic Observation of Early Reading Behaviors**
*An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2002, 2006) comprises systematic observation tasks designed to assist the teacher in observing early literacy behaviors. The tasks represent a controlled form of observation requiring systematic and objective recording of exactly what the child does on each task. There is no teaching or teacher support. The teacher has to set aside time from teaching to become a neutral observer of the individual child. The Observation Survey includes standard tasks with standard administration and scoring procedures, providing sound measurement conditions. Read Chapter 1 in *An Observation of Early Literacy Achievement* for information about observation as an assessment tool and a tool for teaching. Chapter 2 is also helpful in relating observation to the processes of reading and writing.

**Observation of Text Reading**
When children read new books, they engage in extensive problem-solving by using their theories of the world and their theories of working with written language (Clay, 2005).

**We strongly recommend** that you use the book, *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement,* as a resource while using this Running Record Professional Learning Package. The Observation Survey text is required for Reading Recovery teachers.

Classroom teachers may choose to use Marie Clay's *Running Records for Classroom Teachers*.

When reading continuous text, children must become constructive in actively processing information by

- finding and relating information from different sources,

- bringing this information together,

- making a decision, and

- monitoring the effectiveness of their decision.

When learners monitor themselves and self-correct on parts of a new text, this provides some evidence of when messages from the outside and messages from the inside are coming together. When we follow children's progress over time and record carefully the evidence is very powerful. We are able to record what we see them do and track some of the changes in their problem-solving as their reading improves. (Clay, 2005, p. 100)

**Running Records of Text Reading**
One of Marie Clay's Observation Survey tasks is a running record of text reading (see Chapter 5 in the Observation Survey book). Running records are used to observe and record reading behaviors and track changes in a child's problem solving over time.

We strongly recommend that you use the book, *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2002, 2006) as a resource while using this Running Record Professional Learning Package. The Observation Survey text is **required** for Reading Recovery teachers. Classroom teachers may choose to use Marie Clay's *Running Records for Classroom Teachers* (Clay, 2000).

Running records provide teachers with an assessment of text reading as a child reads orally from any text by capturing what the child actually said and did while reading the text. Teachers can analyze these behaviors to inform their teaching decisions. Several sessions with a leader who is knowledgeable about running records will be needed before teachers can begin to use a running record as an assessment tool.

**Careful interpretation** of running records helps the teacher analyze a child's reading behavior and examine progress over time.

See pages 69–73 in *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* or pages 21–25 in *Running Records for Classroom Teachers*.

A careful interpretation of running records helps the teacher analyze a child's reading behaviors and examine the child's progress over time. (Refer to pages 69–73 in *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* or pages 21–25 in *Running Records for Classroom Teachers*). The teacher can make immediate decisions about text selection and teaching moves that will support the child's learning and can examine the child's progress over time.

*Analysis of errors* is one of the first steps in interpreting a running record. Remember that any error or problem that does not result in a correct response is counted as an error (repetitions do not count as errors). Analysis of an error leads us to examine what kinds of information the reader has used:

| | |
|---|---|
| meaning | M |
| structure or syntax | S |
| visual information | V |

Analysis also reveals whether the child used sources of information flexibly and strategically in order to get meaning from the text. Analyzing errors in this way allows us to determine if a child is paying too much attention to or ignoring any one source of information (Johnston, 1997).

*Analysis of self-corrections* is also important in interpreting running records. Clay (2001) says "that self-correction behaviours are evidence of one kind of executive control developed and mobilized by readers to keep them on track" (p. 186). A self-correction reinforces the reader for monitoring his or her own reading and detecting a problem, for searching and finding further information, for choosing a word that best fits, and for making the correction fit well with the message thus far (Clay, 2001). As teachers analyze a child's self-corrections, they will again think about the kind(s) of information the reader used to make the correction.

As you learn to interpret running records, you will look at the overall pattern of responses in order to write a summary of the child's errors and self-corrections. This statement about

All of the information in this package is adapted from the following sources:

Clay, M. M. (2000). *Running records for classroom teachers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Clay, M. M. (2002, 2006). *An observation survey of early literacy achievement* (2nd ed., rev. 2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Additional references:

Clay, M. M. (2001). *Change over time in children's literacy development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Clay, M. M. (2005). *Literacy lessons designed for individuals part two: Teaching procedures*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Johnston, P. H. (1997). *Knowing literacy: Constructive literacy assessment*. York, ME: Stenhouse.

sources of information the child used and neglected will guide your subsequent teaching of this child. You will also make a note at the bottom of the running record about how the reading sounded—Did you see some evidence of phrased and fluent reading? When appropriate, you will comment on the child's control of directional movement and evidence of cross-checking on information.

In this professional learning package, you will have opportunities to analyze running records of text reading with guidance from a leader and conversations with colleagues. Take time to read pages 69–73 in *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* or pages 21–25 in *Running Records for Classroom Teachers*.

**Continuing to Learn**

To become more proficient in interpreting running records, it is important to practice. Your leader will provide some running records for you to analyze. It will also be helpful to take and analyze running records of text reading with several children and discuss your analyses with colleagues and your leader. Remember that you can use any appropriate text; no preprinted texts are needed. [Note: Reading Recovery teachers will practice analysis of running records as directed by their teacher leaders.]

## Parts of the Running Record Professional Learning Package

The Running Record Professional Learning Package is published in three parts and is available from the Reading Recovery Council of North America at www.readingrecovery.org

- **Part One** focuses on the conventions used in taking running records.
- **Part Two** focuses on scoring and analysis of running records.
- **Part Three** focuses on using the records to inform instruction.