Equipping Literacy Assistants

Running Records and book leveling

A Running Record

- A test to see how well a student can read.

- The test is conducted one-on-one, by asking the student to read a short story or piece of information. (This is called a **text**).

- Whenever the student makes a mistake, it is marked as an **error**. The errors are counted and a score is given.

- The test results show us whether the text is too easy, too difficult or at the right level for the child.

Why Running Records?

- In one class, there will be a wide range of reading ability levels.

- One standard reading book will not be suitable for all children in the class.

- Those who cannot cope will be left behind

- Therefore, children should be reading texts suited to their own reading ability level.

Text leveling

- Texts are leveled from 1 to 30

- Level 1 is very simple, suitable for someone just starting to learn to read, e.g. beginning of Year 1

- Level 30 texts are the most difficult, suitable for students who can read very well.

- A school student could reach Level 30 by the end of Year 5 or 6

- BUT reading levels are not fixed to Year levels. Every child progresses at their own rate.

Individual reading levels matched to individual reading texts

- ONE reading book for one class will not be enough. The book might be too hard for some children. There must be MANY reading resources for each class… Simple texts and more advanced texts.

- Our literacy resource kit contains many texts at different levels.

- These can be printed out and laminated in order to make strong, long-lasting reading cards.

- Laminated cards are much more affordable than books.

How texts are leveled

Levels 1 - 2

- Direct match between text and pictures

- One line of text per page plus a picture.

- Word count between 0 and 50 words.

- Repetitive sentences using sight words. Students rely on pictures for meaning.

Levels 3 - 5

- 1-5 lines of text per page

- Direct speech used – "said" and "asked"

- Beginning to make use of phonics, including 3-letter words

Levels 6-12

- Sentences may contain more than one idea.

- A full range of punctuation used.

Level 18 up

- The story may be in episodes.

- A more complicated story

Activity

- Look at some of the leveled reading cards in your Literacy kit.

- Now get out your "Running Records" folder and look through it, in preparation for the next piece of information.

Testing a new student

- Imagine that you are meeting a student for the first time. You do not know how well they can read.

- You will have to find out which level the child is at. In this case use the "Quick Test".

- The Quick Test starts at Level 3. If the student makes 2 errors or more in the first line, we know that the student is below Level 3.

Activity: Look at the "Quick Test" and watch a role play of a student being tested on the "Quick Test".

What next?

- We have found out that a student cannot read the first sentence on the "Quick Test".

- So now we will test the student on the "Level 1" test in the Running Records file.

How to take a Running Record

- Give a copy of the text to the student and take a copy of the text for yourself.

- Sit next to the student. Read the story title to them.

- Ask the student to start reading.

Take a record of every word that is:

- unknown (give about 3 seconds)

- incorrect

- left out

- added.

Also record words that the child self-corrects (not errors).

- Note that the title of the story is not counted in the score because YOU read it to them.

Recording

Name:

Date:

Recorded by:

Errors	S C
/ / / / /	/ / /

Total errors:

Total sc:

Percentage:

Comprehension

Comments:

Scoring

- The aim is to find out the percentage of words read correctly.

- If there are 99 words in the passage, and the child makes 8 errors, then his score is 91 out of 99.

- Convert this to a percentage: 92%

- "Self-corrections" are not marked as errors.

Activity

- We will be conducting a Running Records test.

- Someone will read the text to you as if they were the student. They will make mistakes. You have to record every mistake they make. Also note the self-corrections.

- Remember to look for: words left out, words added, words unknown, wrong words

- words left out

- words added

- words unknown

- wrong words

Do not help the student. Just make a mark for every word that is an error or self-correction.

The wheel comes off the truck.

It rolls down the hill, faster and faster.

The wheel rolls along the road.

It rolls past the houses, faster and faster.

The wheel rolls past the gate.

It rolls past the farm, faster and faster.

The wheel rolls towards the river.

It rolls over the bridge, faster and faster.

The wheel rolls into the school.

It rolls out the door, faster and faster.

The wheel rolls through the town.

It rolls past the policeman, faster and faster.

The wheel rolls into the garage.

It stops rolling.

The wheel is on the truck.

99 words

SC: 3

Errors: 8

Score: 91 out of 99

As a percentage: 91/99 x 100/1 = 92%

Let's look at the errors

The actual text (correct)	The child's reading effort (with errors)
The wheel comes **off** the truck.	**'of'** Self corrected to 'off' (SC)
The wheel rolls **along** the road.	The wheel rolls **over** the road.
The wheel rolls towards the **river**.	The wheel rolls towards the **water**.
It rolls out the door.	It rolls out **of** the door.
The wheel is on the **truck**.	The wheel is on the **track**.

This child uses meaning to work out unfamiliar words, but makes little use of phonics.

Comprehension and fluency

- Ask a few questions after the child has read a story, to test comprehension.

- Fluency refers to the speed of reading, the expression and observance of punctuation.

- Make your own comments on fluency at the bottom of the Running Records assessment sheet.

- If a child scores over 95% for word accuracy, but is poor on comprehension and fluency, then they stay on the same level for a while and practice these.

How to use the test results

- **Independent level** – 100% accuracy. A good level to use for take-home books.

- **Instructional level** – 95% accuracy with good comprehension. This is the text level you work on with the student.

- **Frustration level** - less than 95% accuracy and poor comprehension. This text is too hard for the child.

The little red hen

The little red hen has six chicks.

She wants to make some food.

She gets some wheat and some water.

"Who will help me to make the food?" she says.

The dog will not help.

The cat will not help.

The pig will not help.

Will her little chicks help?

Yes they will.

The little red hen and the little chicks make the food.
The little red hen and the chicks eat the food.
The dog will not get any.
The cat will not get any.
The pig will not get any.
They did not help to make the food.

100 words

Keeping records organized

- One sheet for each child

- Record date, score and comments

Take a look at the sheet on which you record the Running Record scores and dates

How often to test

- If we find out that a new student is on Level 1, they must read all the stories in the **practice folder** at Level 1. Then they sit the Level 1 test again.

- If they get 95% or more they go on to read the Level 2 stories in the practice folder.

- Do not use the Running Records stories for reading practice!

- NO COACHING, NO PRACTICING, NO HELPING on the Running Records tests!

Summary

- Count the number of errors.

- Count the number of self-corrections. (This shows you how fluent their reading is.)

- Work out the percentage of errors.

- Ask a few questions about the text to see if they have understood what they read, (comprehension)

- Write some comments, e.g. How fluent? Do they use expression? Do they stop at full stops? Did they understand what they read? Can they sound out words?

Keep a record of all tests

- Keep a Running Records progress sheet for each student.

- This should be kept in their manilla folder.

How to test sounds

- Write the sounds a – z vertically down the side of an A4 sheet of paper.

- Show the student the alphabet letters chart and ask them to say the sounds.

- On your A4 sheet of paper, put a tick for the known and sounds and a cross for those unknown.

- Write a summary when you have finished the test: "Sounds unknown".