Using running records data in planning for literacy instruction

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Using running records data in planning for literacy instruction

Abstract
Running records are an assessment tool that allows teachers to monitor the sources of information readers are using. Many teachers have learned to take running records, but they may not be as comfortable analyzing the running records and using the results of the analysis to inform instruction. This graduate, final project presents a professional development program that will help teachers learn not only to take running records, but also to analyze and use the results in their instruction.
Using Running Records Data in Planning for Literacy Instruction

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INTRODUCTION

Title I teachers use running records to guide instruction of individual students or students in small groups. The purpose of this project is to research the importance of running records in order to create a professional development plan to meet the needs of classroom teachers as they use running records as a tool to inform their teaching decisions. Classroom teachers take running records on students while in small groups but often times do not effectively use them in planning literacy instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). As a reading teacher within my school, I have the opportunity to work with teachers and their literacy practice. After observing teachers and having conversations with them about their practice, I realized that many classroom teachers either do not use running records or are not sure how to use the information they provide to guide their instruction.

Small group and one-to-one settings enable a teacher to take running records which provide an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses students may have in reading. A general Title I teacher instructs students in small groups, where as a Title I teacher trained in Reading Recovery instructs students chosen for Reading Recovery in one-to-one instruction. A classroom teacher usually has a large group literacy lesson followed by smaller guided reading groups. These guided reading groups allow the teacher to individualize instruction. In all three of these small group or one-to-one settings, teachers can take and use the information from running records to guide their instruction.

Ross (2004) demonstrated a high correlation between teachers’ frequent use of running records and students’ reading achievement. Reading Recovery teachers are
expected to take a running record every day on each student and then use that data to plan each next day's lesson. In reviewing the literature on the use of running records by classroom teachers, two thematic questions emerged: 1) What can teachers in the regular classroom setting learn from taking and analyzing running records? and 2) How can teachers use the information from a running record to guide their instruction in literacy? I intend to use the answers to these questions to design the content for a sequence of professional development sessions. These sessions will be designed to help teachers make use of the information they gather by taking and analyzing running records.

**Key Terms**

The following terms are used extensively in the paper, and therefore need to be defined.

1. Reading Recovery: According to the Reading Recover Council of America (RRCA), "Reading Recovery is a short-term intervention for first graders who have extreme difficulty with early reading and writing. Specially trained teachers work individually with students in daily 30-minute lessons lasting 12 to 20 weeks. Research shows that after a full series of lessons, about 75% of these students reach the grade-level standard" (RRNCA, n.d., para. 1).

2. Running Records: A written documentation of a child's oral reading, taken during the act of reading orally by the child, followed by an in depth analysis of the documentation. Clay (2002) suggests that a running record is a method of assessing a child's reading level. By examining both accuracy and the types of errors made a teacher can better understand how a student is processing text while reading aloud. It
is most often utilized as part of a Reading Recovery session in school or by classroom teachers to assess a child's oral reading performance. Information from a running record gives the teacher an indication of text difficulty for a particular child. It serves as an indicator of a child's literacy processing. For example, noticing that a child frequently makes word substitutions that begin with the same letter as the printed word, will inform the teacher that the child is noticing the beginning letter(s), but not looking beyond the first letter(s) of a word.

3. Literacy: In broad terms, literacy is the ability to make and communicate meaning from and by the use of a variety of socially contextual symbols. Literate people can use language flexibly transferring knowledge from one literacy situation to another literacy situation. Literacy happens because it is not just isolated bits of knowledge but in a students' growing ability to use language and literacy in broader activities (Moll, 1994). Literacy is dynamic, evolving, and reflects the continual changes in our society. The use of the term literacy has, for instance, expanded to include literacy in information, communication technologies, and critical literacy (Cunningham & Farstrup, 2000; Harste, 2014; Leu, 2002; Moll, 1994; Paris, Lipson & Wixson, 1994; Yopp & Singer, 1994).

4. Errors: An oral reading phenomenon where the reader pronounces a word differently from the intended text. Goodman initiated the term miscue to describe an "unexpected response cued by the readers' linguistic or conceptual cognitive structures" (Goodman & Goodman, 2013, p. 105).
5. Accuracy: Accuracy is defined as reading words in text with no errors (Glossary of Reading Terms, 2013).

6. Accuracy rate: The number of words read correctly, typically timed within one minute. Accuracy rate is defined as taking the total number of words read correctly divided by the total number of words in the text (Glossary of Reading Terms, 2013).

7. Self-correction: Self-corrections occur when a child corrects a previous error without any prompting from the teacher (Clay, 2000).

8. Self-correction rate: Expressed as a ratio that tells the rate at which a reader corrects errors he has made compared to the total amount of errors actually made. For example, if a student has a self-correction ratio of 1:5, this indicates that the student corrected one time for every five errors that were made (Clay, 2000).
METHODOLOGY

As our school was seeking ways to differentiate instruction as well as match interventions to students, we needed a tool that would help us to meet these needs. One tool that was already in place was the use of running records. Since this was a tool that I was already using and I saw the results of using the data from that tool to guide my own instruction, I felt that the classroom teachers could be doing the same thing. I began by searching three main sources.

My first resource was to turn to my own library of reading recovery resources and resources relating to the Comprehensive Intervention Model. Knowing that the materials I use on a daily basis to help with planning and instruction could help me to develop the foundation for my paper.

The next source I used was Rod Library’s online database of scholarly articles. When searching I used several key terms including reading recovery, running records, literacy, miscues, accuracy, self-correction and self-correction rate. I tried to find materials that were specific to using the data from assessment to guide instruction. I also wanted to locate an author that who had done extensive research on running records. Marie M. Clay, Ken and Yetta Goodman, and Peter Johnston were all authors that I have found that had a great deal of information about running records and using assessment to guide instruction. The same method of searching was done when using the Rod Library database and when searching on Google Scholar.

Once I had collected the articles, I skimmed through them and made notes on them in order to get a better idea as to whether the article had enough information to use as a resource. Then I began reading through those articles I kept. As I read
through the articles, I made more detailed notes as to what part of my paper the information would fit into. Then I began writing and I used the information I had gathered to assist me in developing the literature review and the project.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading is a process that involves complex processing in the mind. McKenna and Picard (2006) state since the 1970’s, teachers have learned to analyze the errors children make in oral reading with the goal of informing instructional decision making. Having a child read out loud allows a teacher to record observed behaviors which can later be analyzed. By analyzing and hypothesizing the source of the errors, teachers can use the information to help guide their instructional planning (Clay, 2005).

There are different ways to look at and analyze mistakes children make while reading. Using Goodman’s (1969) miscue analysis, teachers can analyze mistakes made while reading. According to Goodman and Goodman (2013) “miscues are unexpected responses cued by readers’ linguistic or conceptual cognitive structures” (p. 105). Miscues are not made randomly; instead, readers use their understanding of the reading process while reading, which informs the miscues they make. Goodman (1969) recognized that there are three basic kinds of information children rely on when problem solving while reading aloud. He suggests that readers use letters within the word (graphophonic cues), the word within the sentence (semantic cues), and the structure of the sentence in which the word is found (syntactic cues). He also suggests a fourth source of information that informs a reader’s miscues, that of pragmatic cues, where the reader uses the purpose and context for reading to inform the miscue process.

A running record is a way of recording and analyzing oral reading. This helps analyze how a reader is processing text. Clay (2005) developed the running record as
one way to observe, document, and assess literacy learning. She refers to mistakes made in reading as "errors" (Clay, 2000 p. 11). What may have led a child to make a particular error is determined by the adult conducting the running record as a logical process of elimination of influences Clay (2005).

The following review examines key literature to provide information on defining a running record, administering a running record, and analyzing the behaviors revealed through the running record process. In addition, this review examines the use of running records for planning and scaffolding classroom instruction. Research on effective professional development will also be addressed.

**Running Records - Capturing and Attending to Reading Behavior**

Dorn and Jones (2012) suggest that teachers listen to students read every day. Listening to students read every day can provide a teacher time for "observation and responsive teaching" (Dorn & Jones, 2012, p. 6). The process of observation can allow a teacher to "acknowledge what the child knows" and use that "known information as a bridge to activate new problem solving" (Dorn & Jones, 2012 p. 6). Dorn and Jones suggest that brain theory research shows that it is important to connect "individual sources of knowledge to a larger network of information" (p. 6). Listening to a student read is not by itself an effective way to analyze how the student is problem solving in reading and how the child is processing text while reading. Clay (2005) developed a way to record children's oral reading using what she referred to as a running record. Her conception of a running record is a written documentation of a child's oral reading. Her intent is to capture the child's problem solving that can be observed. It also is a record that documents where the student is failing to use
strategies to accurately problem solve the unknown words the student is reading in
continuous text. Clay (1991) developed the running record to provide teachers with
feedback on how a child problem solves during reading. According to Clay,

> What the teachers can observe are the overt behaviors. From these they infer
things about covert strategies or operations which the children are carrying out
in their heads. If teachers observe the overt behaviors carefully they are more
likely to make helpful assumptions about how the covert behaviors are
operating. (p. 156)

In her system of documenting reading through a running record, Clay noted that a
reader may use the meaning of the text, the structure of the sentence and/or the visual
information to help decode what is being read. Clay suggests that reading is an active
process. As young children explore environmental print, “they develop concepts
about books, newspapers and messages, and learn a little about what it is to read
these” (Clay 2005, p. 9). Clay (2005) also suggests that when young children explore
environmental print, “this leads them to form primitive hypotheses about letters,
words or messages both printed and handwritten” (p. 9). Clay argues that
“observation rather than experimentation” is a better method of enquiry (p. 9). Clay
argues that when a teacher listens to a student reading aloud, the teacher can observe
what the reader is doing in order to gain understanding of the problem solving process
or lack of problem solving. Once a teacher analyzes the reading behavior while the
reader reads aloud, the teacher can infer the in-the-head processing being used by the
reader while reading silently. By analyzing reading behaviors, Clay suggests that a
teacher can provide immediate feedback to the reader and use the information from
the running record to plan future reading lessons that address the child’s needs using
the child’s strengths. Clay suggests that “when children enter school we need to
observe what they know and can do, and build on that foundation whether it is rich or meagre” (p. 10).

Johnston (2000) further supports Clay’s (2005) idea of running records as a way to record a student’s oral reading.

Running records of oral reading are basically a vehicle for error analysis—the imaginative challenge of figuring out the logic of error. There is always a reason for them. If you can figure out the reason, then you know where to best use your instructional expertise and how to avoid confusing the student. (p. 1)

When Johnston uses the term imaginative challenge, he refers to the teacher making a hypothesis about what may have caused the error to occur. Once a running record has been taken, the teacher analyzes the errors to see what may have caused the reader to make that particular error. This analysis is part of Johnston’s imaginative challenge—finding the plausible cause for the error. When the teacher analyzes over time or over an extended text, there is the opportunity to determine if there are any patterns of errors. These patterns can show what the reader is attending to or neglecting while reading, thus supporting or reshaping the teacher’s hypothesis.

Successful readers are using the meaning, sentence structure and visual information when reading continuous text. Clay (1991) referred to negotiating these many sources of information as “integrating the meaning and sound systems of language with visual analysis controlled by directional constraints” (p. 157). Clay suggests that readers perform a number of tasks at the same time in order to quickly decode text. Goodman and Goodman (2013) support this idea by stating that “the integration of all the language systems (syntactic, graphophonie, semantic, and pragmatic) are necessary in order for reading to take place” (p. 115). The Goodmans
also suggest that successful readers need to identify the letters, associate the sounds with those letters or letter combinations, blend the sounds together fluently and put words together to create phrases. The Goodmans (2013) argue that good readers also need to know what most of the words mean. Readers need to be able to discern what makes sense in order to successfully read text. Both Clay (1991, 2000, 2005) and the Goodmans (2013) agree that by attending to information provided by the text a reader can more successfully read the text. Information provided by the text includes a variety of aspects of language that help the reader make meaning, such as letters, blending sounds, word phrases, and word meaning.

According to Clay (1991) when analyzing a running record, a teacher needs to be less concerned with random errors and more focused on discovering patterns of errors. Clay suggests that these patterns of errors give the teacher more information to effectively plan for future reading lessons. She also suggests that records kept over a period of time may help to inform about reading progress and instruction.

Records kept for several weeks would: provide a record of progress over that time, help in evaluation of which kind of text experience the child should have, and allow the observation that sequenced movement across print is smoothly and easily integrated with language responses. (p. 158)

Clay (2005) suggests that a series of running records can help the teacher to see the pattern of a reader’s problem solving on unfamiliar text or the lack of problem solving on such text. The knowledge gained from the series of running records can lead the teacher to more individualized and scaffolded instruction based on both what and how the reader attempts to problem solve unfamiliar text.

Text selection. There are many things to consider when choosing a text for a running record (Clay, 2000). Although a running record can be taken on any text, it
is most helpful when analyzed at a child’s instructional reading level (Clay, 2000). When choosing a text for taking a running record, the teacher should consider the amount of text, illustrations, and the familiarity with the subject in the text and the complexity of the sentence structure (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The number of sight words that are present in the text should be considered as well. Fountas and Pinnell explain that the lowest level text will include mostly high frequency sight words, an illustration on one of the pages and one line of text on the other page. At this level, the illustrations greatly support the text and the text is predictable. Mid-level text includes fewer sight words, two or more lines of text and illustrations on either or both pages (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). At this level, Fountas and Pinnell suggest that illustrations become less supportive and the text is less predictable. Higher level text includes more complex sentences, with more complex words as well as three or more lines of text on a page (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). At this level, there are fewer pages that include illustrations and more pages that include text. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) suggest that “the selection of any book begins with the children’s strengths, interests and needs” (p. 130).

Another important aspect in text choice for a running record is to consider using an instructional level for reading difficulty. Johnston (1997) provides a clear rationale for focusing on an instructional level when using and analyzing a running record.

Running Records are most valuable when the text is in the learning range because with this kind of text there are not enough errors to disrupt meaning, but it is difficult enough so that many of the strategies used by the reader are overt and able to be recorded. (p. 213)
He refers to an instructional level text as a "learning text" (Johnston, 2000, p. 22). Johnston suggests that a learning text is a level where students need some support from the teacher as they encounter new words but they are also able to learn from the errors they make. Johnston also argues that his level of text gives the teacher information on how the student is processing the text. If the teacher uses a text that is too easy, the reader's performance will be fluent and near error-free; from this type of reading there is not enough information to help the teacher hypothesize how the student is processing text. If the teacher uses a text that is too difficult then the preponderance of errors made by the reader impacts meaning making, which limits the teacher from seeing how the student is pulling everything together while reading. According to Clay (2000), "If the challenges are too great the record will not show how the reading process comes together" (p. 8). Clay (2000) argues that running records are most informative when the text can be read with 90% to 94% accuracy; she refers to this as the "instructional level" (p.9).

Clay (2001) also suggests that

> When a text is too easy there is little need and little opportunity to self correct. When text is hard there is little problem solving of errors or unknown words and therefore little self correction. However, if the text is around the child's instructional level; neither too easy nor too hard, then readers produce self corrections which are very informative for reinforcing and shaping processing behaviors. (p. 194)

Clay (2001) argues that using a text that is at the child's instructional level provides the teacher with information that can be used to further inform their teaching. Instructional level text can also allow the child some opportunities to make self-corrections. Clay (2001) suggests that providing opportunities for students to
make self-corrections is important because it provides a window into how the child is processing text (p. 194).

Clay (2005) recommends that when choosing a text for a child, the teacher needs to select books that the child “will want to read, can relate to some personal knowledge, will succeed with, will enjoy and will use to establish new competencies” (p. 90). Clay (2005) argues that although any text can be used for taking a running record, it is best when a text is used that is going to yield information about how the student is processing the text. According to Clay (2000), using an instructional level text and following specific procedures for documenting a child's oral reading enables the teacher to better capture how the learner is making sense of text.

**Procedure for Capturing Reading Behavior**

Once the running record procedures are learned, taking a running record is a very easy process. Clay (2000), Fountas and Pinnell (1996), and Johnston (1997) suggest that when taking a running record, teachers sit beside students so they can see the text that the student is reading and can record the correct and incorrect responses as the student reads aloud. Clay (2000) suggests that as the student reads aloud, the teacher records correct responses “with a tick (or check)” p. 11. The teacher records any incorrect responses above a line and then captures the actual text below the line. Figure 1 shows text that was used in the following example running record found in Figure 2. Figure 2 shows the marking system a teacher would use to record the child’s oral reading of the text. This marking system captures the running record.

*Error* and *miscue* are both terms used to refer to a student’s incorrect response to the text being read aloud by the student. According to Johnston (1997), “detailed

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**Figure 1. Original text excerpt from the story, Soccer at the Park* (Giles, 1997)**

*This text was used in a running record example.
### Analysis of Errors and Self-corrections

Information used or neglected (Meaning (M), Structure or Syntax (S), Visual (V-whole word, letter form, letter-sound relationships, word part))

- **Easy**
  - Instructional: Used mostly visual and structure cues; need to use more meaning cues.

- **Hard**
  - Instructional: Used mostly visual and structure cues; need to use more meaning cues.

**Cross-checking on information (Note that this behavior changes over time):**
- [Is the child checking one kind of information against another? Which two sources of information does the child seem to be comparing?]

**Analysis of Error**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Information used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Text Title:** Soccer at the Park

**Error Analysis:**
- **Corrected by:** RW + E
- **Error Rate:** 13 errors in 93 words
- **Accuracy Rate:** 92%
- **Self-corrections Rate:** 1/5

**Directional Movement:**

- **Easy**
- **Instructional**

**Figure 2.** Running record of a child’s oral reading of Soccer at the Park, displaying marking system used to record the child’s oral reading performance.
In order to be consistent and to make sense of a child’s oral reading, standard procedures were developed by Clay (2005) for recording a running record. Clay (2000) intended for teachers to be able to use running records to compare performances in reading, either examining one child’s reading performance over time or examining within group performance for a particular moment in time. According to Clay (2005) correct responses are recorded with a tick or check mark and “the record must mimic the layout of the lines in the text the child is reading” (p. 56). When a student makes an error, there is a specific way to record that error so that it can be analyzed. Clay established a procedure to distinguish between the child’s correct responses and errors by developing a marking system for oral readings. When a child makes an error, the error is recorded as if it were a type of word fraction with a line used to separate the child’s error (listed above the line) from the original text (listed below the line). Clay suggested that this standard procedure allows the teacher to accurately capture the child’s processing behavior. For example, in Figure 2 above, the child read *liked* for *looked*. In this example, *liked* was written above the line (representing the child’s response), and *looked* was written below the line (representing the text).

Clay (2005) documented four types of errors that are recorded during a running record, including the omission of a word (leaving out a word), an insertion of a word not found in the text, and a substitution of a word by a different word. In addition, it is considered an error when the teacher tells the child the word. Clay also provides a procedure for documenting a child’s successful attempt to correctly identify a word after an initial partially correct attempt.
**Omissions.** Clay (2005) suggests that when a child leaves a word out when reading a text, it is recorded as an omission. Johnston (1997) suggests that, “Sometimes, deliberately or accidentally, readers skip over a word” (p. 196). Clay’s (2005) system for recording an omission involves the teacher marking a dash above the drawn line (representing no word being stated by the child) and recording the missed text below the line. For example, in Figure 2, on page 6 in the text the student omits the word *big* from the actual text. A dash was drawn above the line and the omitted word *big* was written below the line.

**Insertions.** Clay (2005) suggests that when a child adds a word to the text, it is recorded as an insertion. According to Johnston (1997), it is not uncommon for “children [to] add words to the reading that are not in the text” (p. 198). Clay’s (2005) system for recording insertions has the teacher record the added word above the drawn line and record a dash below the line representing the absence of any actual text. For example, in Figure 2, on page 4 the student inserts the word *to* while reading the text. An important part of documenting insertions is the child’s inclusion of the text words before and after the insertion of the additional word.

**Substitutions.** When a child states a word that is different than the original text, it is recorded as a substitution. Clay’s (2005) system for recording substitutions involves the teacher writing the word the child stated above the drawn line and the actual text word below the line. For example, in Figure 2 on page 12 the student substituted the word *kick* for *kicked*. The word *kick* was recorded above the line and *kicked* was written below the line.
**Telling the child a word.** According to Clay (2005), a teacher tells a child a word when the child is unable to proceed. This may occur because a child is not sure how to decode that particular word. Clay suggests that another reason the teacher may have to tell a child a word is because the child has attempted the word but is unsuccessful in decoding the word and has stopped, unable to continue reading. Sometimes children will verbally indicate that they are unable to continue reading by asking for help. A non-verbal appeal from a child may be displayed by the child turning and looking at the teacher. Another non-verbal appeal may happen when the child simply stops reading. Clay (2005) recommends that when a child appeals for help, the behavior is recorded as an \( A \) above the line (representing an *Appeal*). If the child has already made an incorrect attempt before asking for help, Clay suggests that the teacher then provide the word. Clay also recommends that the teacher provide the word any time the child shows signs of shutting down, whether the child has not yet made an attempt or has stated part of the word correctly but stopped. Clay’s system for documenting a teacher providing the word is to mark a \( T \) below the line. This type of marking represents the ongoing attempts related to that one word, showing both the child’s response or lack of response above the line, and the original text and any teacher’s support (if needed) below the line. In the example in Figure 2 on page 6, the student attempts the word *little* but is partially successful with a response of *lit-...lit-*. At this point the child then appeals for help from the teacher, which is marked separately as an \( A \). This appeal is followed by the teacher telling the child the word, which is marked by a \( T \) below the line (Clay 2000).

**Successful completion of a partially correct attempt.** In the example in the previous section, the child’s attempt at reading the word *little* resulted in a portion of the
word being stated. Since the first attempt of the word *little* was partially correct (*lit*), if
the child then continued by stating the correct word (*little*), this response is considered a
correct reading of the word and a separate marking is written above the line as a
checkmark indicating a correct response (Clay, 2005). A correct response following a
partially correct response is not considered an error. However, if the child answers
incorrectly after the initial partially correct attempt, the additional response is recorded
and counted as an error.

*Other Types of Recorded Information.*

Other types of information that are recorded on a running record include the self-
correction of a word (when the child corrects an error made with no prompting) and a
repetition of a word or phrases within the text. These are recorded and documented for
later analysis but they are not counted as an error.

*Self-corrections.* Clay (2005) suggests that when a child self-corrects an error,
this is seen as a realization that what was read was incorrect followed by the child
correcting the error. While the original error is marked and counted as an error, the self-
correction is not seen as an error, and is documented in the running record and counted
separately as a self-correction of the error. According to Clay (2005), when a child
recognizes that an error has been made and then proceeds to correct that error, it is
recorded as a self-correction. Clay suggests that this behavior is recorded by writing an
*SC*. For example, in Figure 2 on page 10, the student read *away* for *and*, realized it did
not match, and self-corrected the error. The word *away* was listed above the line, with the
word *and* listed below the line. The *SC* for the self-correct was marked on the same level
as the original error as this was an action taken by the child. This second action was
separated by a vertical line to distinguish the first attempt (away) from the second attempt (a self-correction, stating the correct word and).

In the final analysis of the running records, errors and self-corrections are totaled and used to determine ratios and scores. In the final tally, any original error that has been self-corrected is not counted toward the error total. For example, in Table 1 on page 2, the reader errors and says dall for the word ball. He then repeats the entire sentence followed with a self-correction of the error. In the final analysis of number of errors made, this original error would not be counted toward the final error tally because it was self-corrected.

Repetitions. Sometimes readers repeat words or phrases when they read. This is noted as a repetition. Johnston (1997) suggests that there are several reasons students repeat themselves. They might reread because what they first read did not seem to make sense, or they might reread to help themselves figure out a difficult word. Finally, they might reread to make what they read sound more smooth and fluent because they had to problem solve several difficult words in the sentence. When the student has repeated the word once, the teacher records a capital R separately next to the checkmark for the word. For example, in Figure 2 on page 8, the child repeats the word went once so the teacher records an R next to the checkmark. If the child repeats an entire phrase, a capital R is recorded to the right of the checkmark by the last word in the phrase and then an arrow is drawn from the capital R over top of the phrase to the point of the beginning of the phrase. If a word or phrase is repeated more than once, the number of times the word or phrase is repeated is recorded to the right of the letter R. For example, in Figure 2 on page 2, the student repeats a series of words in the sentence as he is moving toward self-
correcting the original error. If the child repeats a correct response, it is not counted as an error. If a child repeats an incorrect response, the original error is recorded as one error. Clay (2005) states that a repetition sometimes happens when a student confirms a previous attempt as in the example discussed above. This sometimes results in a self-correction (which would be a separate marking in the running record as an SC). Clay (2005) suggests that a record of a repetition is useful because it may indicate how a child is sorting things out while reading. Rereading provides an opportunity for students to confirm what they read or make changes in what they read. This behavior is encouraged because it prompts the reader to monitor or confirm what they have read.

Coding and Analysis

McKenna and Picard (2006), using the work of Goodman (1969) and Goodman and Goodman (2013), present three types of cueing systems that a reader uses when reading a text. These include semantic cues (meaning), syntactic cues (structure of language), and grapho-phonemic cues (letter-sound relationships). Clay (2000) referred to these cueing systems as "different kinds of information" (p. 24) or sources of information. Goodman’s (1969) cueing systems and Clay’s (2000) sources of information are often times used interchangeably because both phrases refer to similar phenomena about reading text. These sources of information include meaning, structure and visual.

According to Goodman (1969) and Clay (2000), semantic cueing systems refer to the use of meaning in order to solve unknown words. It is more than just the meaning of an individual word, it is the meaning created by the text or words around that unknown word. Both Goodman and Clay suggest that syntactic cueing systems refer to the use of
the structure of the sentence to problem solve an unknown word. In another sense, it refers to word order or grammar. The grapho-phonemic cueing system refers is a part of the larger cueing system discussed by Clay (2000, 2005), known as visual cues. Clay argues that a reader uses visual cues in order to problem solve an unknown word. Visual cues refer to those print conventions such as directionality, spaces, letters, beginnings or endings of words and punctuation.

After recording the student’s reading behaviors, the teacher begins the process of coding the errors and the self-corrections (Clay, 2000). The teacher uses this information to analyze and make decisions about instruction. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) explain this process as examining evidence.

The teacher looks for behavioral evidence of cue use and evidence of the use of strategies such as cross-checking information and searching for cues. She examines each incorrect attempt and self-correction and hypothesizes about the cues or information sources the child might have been using. In Clay’s analysis, cues refer to the sources of information. (p. 92)

Decoding requires readers to use different sources of information as they are reading a text. Teachers then hypothesize what led the reader to an error or self-correction, such as meaning, structure, or visual information. Johnston (2000) agrees, arguing that “analyzing running records this way leads us to examine each deviation from the print to see what type of cues readers have used: meaning (M), structure (S), or visual (V) cues” (p. 30). After documenting the running record, the teacher analyzes the reading. If the child appears to have used meaning, an $M$ is recorded on the right side of the running record. If the child appears to have used syntactical or structural cues, an $S$ is recorded. A $V$ is recorded if the child appears to have used visual/grapho-phonemic cues in any part of the word to elicit the response (Clay, 2005; Ross, 2004). In order to analyze a child’s
response in comparison to the text, the coding of cues used by the reader is limited to substitutions only. Omissions, insertions, and words that were told to the child are not analyzed for cues as these types of errors are void of either a reader’s response or the text context in order to make a comparison analysis. Using the cues of meaning, syntax, and visual information in analyzing a child’s oral reading requires an understanding of the dynamics involved within each cuing system.

According to Clay (2005), when readers use meaning or semantic cues, they are using the information from the text to decode the text. Because the teacher can only hypothesize why the student did what they did, Clay recommends that teachers think about whether or not the reader is using meaning to problem solve while reading. When analyzing reading behavior to determine whether the reader used meaning, Clay suggests asking, “Does what the student say make sense?” (p.69) For example in Figure 2 on page 6, the student substituted the word at for the word to. The original sentence was *You are too little to play soccer with us*. With the substitution of at for to, the sentence changed to *You are too little at play soccer with us*. Reading beyond the error, the sentence does not make sense. However, reading the information up to the point of the error, it can be hypothesized that this miscue was probably made because the reader was trying to keep the structure of the sentence. (*You are too little at...*). In this example, the reader is using syntax (coded with an S) because the same type of word (a preposition) replaced the target word.

When a child uses structure or syntactic cues, Clay (2005) argues this is an attempt by the reader to make the text sound right or fit their oral language. Syntax refers to use of grammatical structures in a text. When analyzing reading behaviors to
determine whether the reader used syntax or structural, Clay (2005) suggests asking, "Does the structure of the sentence up to the error influence the response?" (pg. 69) For example, in Figure 2, the student inserts the word to and changes the word playing to play. This miscue was coded with an S because the student was trying to make the sentence sound structurally correct. In this example, the reader is also using some visual cues to choose the word play as a substitution.

Visual cues or grapho-phonemic cues refer to what the text looks like if the reader says a word that has visual similarities in terms of actual letters and groups of letters to the text (Clay, 2005). The child has probably noticed the print. When analyzing reading behaviors to determine whether the reader used visual information, Clay suggests asking, "Did visual information from the print influence any part of the error – letter, cluster or word?" (p. 69). The example in Figure 2 on page 6, shows the reader stating lit...lit... for little. Though the word was not correctly identified by the reader, the attempt indicates that she noticed the visual information found in the first part of the word.

When readers make errors, they are neglecting some or part of the information available. An example of using only one source of information occurs in Figure 2 on page 12 when the reader read kick for kicked. This error does not make sense, the teacher hypothesized that the source of information neglected was structure (S). When the student made this error, the teacher hypothesizes that the only source of information used was visual information. Visually these words look similar and students sometimes leave off endings of words. This can be attributed to the reader not looking at the entire word, or attempting to make sense of the sentence by choosing a word that seems to fit (Clay, 2001, 2005). Other times when readers make an error, they might use multiple sources of
information and still miss the word. In Figure 2 on page 9, the reader read *to* for *at*. This error is coded as *M* and *S*, as it holds the overall meaning of the original sentence and is structurally correct (preposition for a preposition).

Coding self-corrections uses a similar process, focusing on meaning, structure, and/or visual information used by the reader to self-correct. The example in Figure 2 on page 2, shows that the reader read *dall* for *ball*. Then the reader returned to the beginning of the line of text and repeated the phrase. The reader recognized the initial letter in the word *dall* was visually different from the text (ball) and then self-corrected the word immediately without prompting from the teacher. The letters *SC* are recorded above the line to show that the child succeeded in correcting a previous error. This action of self-correction is coded as *MV* in the column to the right of the running record labeled *SCMSV*. The *V* was used because the child used visual information when recognizing that the first letter in the text (ball) was not a *d*, but rather a *b*. The teacher recorded an *M* because the meaning was lost when the child substituted *dall* for *ball*.

**Tallying totals.** After tallying the total number of errors, self-corrections and sources of information (*M*, *V*, *S*), the teacher must then proceed to figure various calculations. The errors total is needed to calculate several different pieces of information (error ratio, accuracy rate and self-correction ratio). Then the teacher counts and totals the number of coded *M*-meaning cues, *S*-structure cues and *V*-visual cues. The totals for *MSV* are needed in order to discuss patterns of responding in the written summary provided after the teacher analyses the running record.

**Error ratio.** Once all the errors are counted and the columns totaled, the teacher proceeds to calculate an error ratio. Error ratios can reveal how well the child is
processing the text while reading aloud. According to Clay (2005), if a child’s error ratio is 1:10 or above, there are “good opportunities for teachers to observe children’s processing of texts” (p. 66). However, if the child’s error ratio is 1:9 or below, “the reader tends to lose the support of the meaning of the text” (p. 66). Clay suggests that an error ratio is calculated by finding the total number of errors divided by the total number of errors which equals one. Next you calculate the total number of running words divided by the total number of errors. Then you record these totals of the previous two calculations as a ratio. The following is what the formula would look like on the running record: Errors + Errors/Running words ÷ errors. This calculation is then written as a ratio of 1: #. For example, in Figure 2, the total number of errors is eight and the total number of running words is 101. Eight (number of errors) divided by eight (number of errors) equals one. 101 (number of running words) divided by eight (number of errors) equals 12.6. The teacher then records this as a ratio of one error for every 12.6 words read (1:12.6).

**Accuracy rate.** After taking a running record, the teacher counts the number of errors and the number of self-corrections that were marked on the running record. Types of recorded errors that are counted include omissions, insertions, substitutions and telling the child a word. A tally is recorded on the right side of the running record under the column labeled with a capital E for errors. For example, in Figure 2 on page 2 when the student substituted *liked* for the original text *looked*, one tally was placed under the column marked with an *E* to the right of the text to indicate one error. Clay suggests that the accuracy is calculated by counting the number of words read correctly by the child in the text, excluding the title. Then divide that by the number of total words. For example
in Figure 2, there are 93 words read correctly and there are 101 words in the text. The teacher divides 93 words read correctly by 101 running words, which equals 0.92. This translates into an accuracy rate of 92 percent.

Clay (2005), states that once the accuracy percentage is determined, the teacher then determines whether the accuracy level of a child’s reading on that text was independent/easy (95%-100% correct), instructional (90%-94% correct) or frustration/hard (93% correct and below). The independent/easy text level is a level that the child can easily read with few miscues. The instructional text level is a level that the child can read with some opportunities to problem solve unknown words and with some help from the teacher. The frustration/hard text level is a level that the child reads with several miscues and learning and fluency are compromised because of the effort needed to problem solve multiple miscues.

**Self-correction rate.** According to Clay (2000) a self-correction happens when a child who is reading a text makes an error and then without any prompting corrects the error. A tally is recorded on the right side of the running record under the column labeled with a capital SC for self-corrections. This tally of self-corrections is then totaled. The teacher then calculates the self-correction rate as follows: the number of errors plus the number of self-corrections are divided by the number of self-corrections. For example, in Figure 2, eight (number of errors) plus two (number of self-corrections) equals ten. Ten divided by two (number of self-corrections) results in a self-correction rate of one self-correction to every five errors (1:5). Clay (2005) suggests that when a child is self-correcting this is an indication of self-monitoring. This analysis then provides some insight into how to scaffold instruction for that particular student the next day or during
the next lesson. In this example, since the child is showing signs of self-monitoring, such reading behaviors can be reinforced by prompting for continued use of self-monitoring.

**Why Use a Running Record?**

Close observation or "following the child" (Estice, 1997, p. 4) allows the teacher to observe what the child can do, determine what the child needs to learn to do and helps provide her appropriate learning opportunities for the child. Such close observation can be accomplished by taking a running record as the child reads aloud. Keep in mind that the running record only captures reading behaviors. During the Reading Recovery lesson, the teacher closely observes the child's reading behaviors in order to look for patterns in the way the child responds during reading. Information can aid the teacher in determining the types of teaching decisions that will be made. Running records allow teachers to carefully consider this information.

(Clay, 2000) suggests three reasons that a teacher should use running records for

- Determining appropriate text level, based on accuracy levels
- Capturing fluency
- Showing growth over time

**Determining appropriate text level.** One reason that a teacher would use a running record would be to see if the child is reading at an appropriate text level for instruction. Clay (2000) suggests that "one use of Running Records is as a check on whether students are working on materials of appropriate difficulty, neither too difficult nor too easy, but offering a suitable level of challenge to the learner" (p. 4).

If the student is reading unfamiliar text at an independent/easy level (95%-100%), the teacher should move the child to a more difficult text level. If the student is
reading at an instructional level (90%-94%), the teacher knows that the student is reading appropriate text for instruction. If the student is reading text that is too hard, the teacher should move the child to an easier text.

Accuracy is not the sole determinant of an appropriate text for a child, but oftentimes it is the first. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) suggest that a teacher also needs to consider, however, the amount of text, the number of lines of text, the number of high frequency sight words, the interest level to the student and the pictures provided to support the text. Both Gillet and Temple (2000) and Clay (2005) state that a running record can be used for determining the appropriate text level for the student as well as determining whether a student has chosen a book that is at the appropriate text level for them. Clay (2005) and Fawson, Ludlow, Reutzel, Sudweeks and Smith (2006), adds that taking and analyzing a running record informs the teacher of what reading strategies the child is using and helps the teacher to determine if the student is receiving the appropriate instruction. Running records help teachers make decisions about further instruction or interventions for the student. According to Davenport (2002) “Miscues allow [teachers] to see the cues that readers are using effectively, those they’re using but confusing, those they’re not integrating with other cues and those they’re not using at all” (as cited in Shea, 2006, p. 81). Miscues help teachers to see into the mind of a child. During the analysis of the running record, a teacher hypothesizes what led the student to make the miscue. The analysis also may provide information about what sources of information the student is neglecting or confusing.

The teacher should consider all the challenges that the child may encounter when reading the text. Teachers are looking for certain patterns of responding or lack of
patterns of responding as the student reads. This observation will provide information about the types of cueing systems the student is or isn’t using when reading.

A student will sometimes use one cueing system more than another. Johnston (2000) states that “Although readers should show a balanced use of sources of information, they should also use the information flexibly and strategically in the source of meaning” (p. 30). If a child is not using all cueing systems in a balanced manner then the child is not being an efficient reader. The student may tend to overuse one or two cueing systems which may cause the reader to read a word incorrectly or insert a word into the text. For example in the sample running record, the reader used more visual cues in both the creating of the miscues and the self-correcting of the miscues. She used some meaning cues and some structure cues as she read through the text. Using this information the student’s teacher can plan lessons that address her use of structure when she is reading a text. An ideal strategy to utilize could be encouraging the student to think about whether what was read made sense.

Beginning readers and struggling readers will often use only one cueing system, but effective readers use a variety of sources of information to problem solve unknown words efficiently as they read through text. As readers progress they begin to use more than one cueing system or source of information. Rumelhart (2013) suggested that “a skilled reader must be able to make use of sensory, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic information to accomplish this task” (p. 864). Once the teacher has determined which cueing systems or sources of information are being used or neglected, then the teacher can develop lesson plans that address strategies that help the child attend to those cueing systems or sources of information. For example in Figure 2 page 4, the reader said to
play for playing. She used meaning and structure when inserting the word to play in place of playing. It can be inferred that the reader used meaning because the inserted words didn’t change the meaning of the sentence. It can be further inferred that structure was used because the structure of the sentence was not compromised by the insertion of the word to and changing the word play to playing. It can be inferred that visual cues were used because play is visually similar to the actual text, playing.

Capturing fluency. Another reason that a teacher would use a running record would be to assess how fluently a child reads. Hudson, Lane, and Pullen (2005) suggest that the reading fluency component has gained recognition as an important element to consider as a teacher is working with struggling readers.

According to Dorn and Soffos (2012),

Fluency is much more than fast reading; it is an indication of the reader’s ability to transfer knowledge of spoken language to written language in order to construct meaning. This language process is defined as prosody, which can be observed in the reader’s voice as he or she strives to understand the text. Prosodic behaviors include pitch variations, stress or emphasis, intonation, meaningful phrasing and syntax, and pausing at appropriate places: a compilation of spoken language features that result in expressive reading. (p. 37).

Dorn and Soffos (2012) suggest that listening to a student read may also reveal how fluently they read unfamiliar text. Accuracy is one component of a larger concept of fluency. Teachers can use running records not only to assess accuracy but also other components of fluency. These components all come together to promote comprehension, which is the overall goal of reading.

Clay (2000) states that “after a running record a teacher should be able to ‘hear the reading again’ when reviewing the record” (p. 7). The running record reveals if the student was able to read with or without laboring over words. For example if the student
had to struggle with every other word, the teacher can infer that the student did not have automaticity or was not using meaningful phrases. Both of which are components of fluency.

**Showing growth over time.** The last reason that a teacher would use running records would be to assess a student’s progress over time. In the recent years running record assessment has been used by teachers as a diagnostic tool as well as a progress monitoring process in order to monitor their students’ reading progress. Gillet and Temple (2000) suggest that taking a running record is a “helpful way of documenting a reader’s progress at systematic intervals because they take place during authentic reading tasks and can be done during ongoing instruction without interrupting the flow of a lesson” (p. 55). Clay (2005) also believes that by taking a running record at “selected intervals will plot a path of progress” (p. 51) of the reader. After taking several running records at different levels, a teacher can compare how the student was working on text at each level. This will show the teacher any progress or lack of progress the student has made. Johnston (2000) suggests that “when talking about change over time we can look at changes in readers’ cues use and integration, range and flexibility of strategy use, persistence, fluency, book difficulty, expression, and confidence” (p. 39). During a closer look at running records taken on one student, teachers need to look at any patterns that begin to surface when comparing those running records taken over several days or weeks.

Though the literature for the most part is consistently supportive of running records as a tool to examine readers’ understanding of text, not all researchers agree. Blailock (2003) has raised questions about the use of running records for instructional
planning. He takes a closer look at the running record procedure and questions the reliability and validity of the running record technique. However, a great majority of professional literature (Clay 1991; Clay 2000; Clay 2001; Clay 2005; Estice 1997; Johnston 2000; McKenna & Picard, 2006) have found running records to have a high rate of reliability and to have the potential to be very helpful in determining appropriate instruction.

If running records do appear to be a useful tool, perhaps the knowledge about running records would be helpful in enabling all teachers to better plan for students’ needs. How might a professional development program be created that would provide teachers with the information on how to effectively use the data gained from a running record to guide instructional decision making?
Adult learning theory addresses several of these areas in designing professional development for teachers. Lieb (1991) stated that the research on adult learning is a field that was greatly informed by Malcom Knowles. He identified six characteristics of adult learning that should be present in professional development in order for it to be effective. Those six characteristics are as follows:

1. Adults are self-directed
2. Adults have accumulated life-experiences and knowledge
3. Adults are goal oriented
4. Adults are relevance oriented
5. Adults are practical
6. Adults need respect

The first characteristic of adults being self-directed involves the learner having input into what they would like to learn as well as giving the learner opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, the leader of a professional development session could ask the participants to tell what they already know about the topic of the session and to ask them what they want to know more about the topic. Self-directed learners also take responsibility for deciding what they need to learn, create goals for themselves, and evaluate their learning. One way to accomplish this task involves having teachers complete an input survey prior to the professional development sessions. After gathering the information from the input survey, the presenter would use that information to help decide what information needs to be included in the professional development.
The second characteristic of adult learners involves knowing that these learners come to professional development with a wealth of information and knowledge. For this project, the input survey could also be utilized to help inform the presenter about some of the schema that the teachers already possess as it pertains to running records. This information also allows the presenter to be able to connect already known information to the new information being presented. For example, before professional development begins, as the presenter I could talk with teachers at the school site to determine what they already know about the content (running records). This would be accomplished through an input survey (see Appendix A). This information can then be used to plan the initial session for the professional development.

The third characteristic of adult learners involves having clearly defined goals. Clearly defined goals provide the presenter (as well as the participants) a way to gauge what will be presented in the professional development. For example, my goals for my sessions include reviewing the basics of taking running records and marking running records, analyzing running records, and using the results of running records to plan for instruction.

The fourth and fifth characteristic of adult learners involves presenting information that is relevant and practical to their teaching. Knowing what information is relevant and practical to those in attendance guides what information is included in the professional development as well as what information needs to be expanded upon. For example, the teachers may have been incorporating running records into their daily routines. A possible result from an input survey may indicate that teachers want more
information and support on how to analyze running records and how to use the data from those running records to plan for instruction.

The sixth and final characteristic of adult learners involves treating them with respect through valuing their thoughts and experiences. One way to value teachers' thoughts and experiences would be to have the participating teachers share their previous experiences with running records and share their thoughts about their experiences during the professional development sessions. This would aid teachers in thinking about developing their own learning goals for the professional development experience, as well as guide them in determining if they have accomplished their goals at the end of the professional development sessions.

Hawley and Valli (2000) suggested that professional development for teachers must be designed around current student and teacher data. Along with using current data, professional development needs to follow the change process that is happening within that community at that time. In other words, the professional development needs to connect to what is actually happening within the school and the current changes that the school is attempting to make. Unrelated professional development only frustrates teachers and others in the community (Hawley & Valli, 2000, p. 5).

According to Cohen, McLaughlin and Talbert (1993), professional development should increase teacher knowledge and skills, improve teaching practices, and contribute to personal, social and emotional growth. Recently there has been a change in the way that professional development is structured. Teacher learning is most effective when it is interactive and social. According to Desimone (2011) there are a core group of features that must be present in professional development for it to be effective. Those core
features include content focus, active learning, coherence, duration and collective participation. Some of Desimone’s (2011) features of professional development (content focus and active learning) are similar to the characteristics Lieb (1991) listed above. Content focus refers to making sure that the information being delivered during professional development is related to how students learn as well as the content being taught in the classrooms. Active learning refers to giving the teachers the opportunity to analyze student data, observe other teachers or give and receive feedback on techniques that have been implemented in the classroom. However, Desimone includes three extra components. These components include coherence, duration, and collective participation. Coherence refers to providing teacher with professional development that aligns with the district beliefs and policies. Duration refers to creating enough opportunities for the contact hours needed to fulfill the requirements of the district. This also includes opportunities for multiple exposures, opportunities to learn and opportunities to reflect on their learning. Collective participation refers to working together as a team in order to reach the same goal. In order for professional development to make an impact on teachers and students, there must be a shared sense of community. This community must believe that change can and will happen and they must be willing to work together to make that change happen. Members of this community must also be willing to become a learning community themselves.

After taking the above features of professional development into consideration, Desimone (2011) suggests that successful professional development is most beneficial when the following considerations are taken into account. First, he suggests that teachers actively participate in professional development. Lieb (1991) also supports this idea, and
further explains active participation as being a self-directed learner, suggesting that learners come to professional development with their own schemata for learning. Second, professional development should encourage a change in attitudes and or beliefs of the teacher. Third, opportunities should be given for teachers to use the new knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs to improve the content of their instructions, their pedagogy or both. And finally, instructional changes that the teacher introduces to the classroom should boost student learning and achievement.

**Project Overview**

This professional development project involves four professional development sessions. Each session will be provided one month apart in order for participants to have time to apply what they have learned in their own settings. These sessions include information about running records as well as time for teachers to practice taking a running record. These sessions will also provide time to discuss their running record experiences with other participants and with me as the professional development leader. During these engagements participants will have an opportunity to delve into specific issues around how to take a running record as well as how to use the results of a running record to plan further instruction for individual students or students within a small group. Finally, participants are provided the opportunity to sign up for times in which they can observe peers while taking a running record, followed by discussions over how to code the running record and use the results for instructional purposes.

**Target audience.** The target audience for this professional development series includes practicing teachers at the elementary level (grades K-4) and administrators who
work with elementary populations. The professional development sessions are designed

Table 1

*Professional Development Schedule of Sessions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Focus (Topic/Content)</th>
<th>Participants will learn (Knowledge)</th>
<th>Participant will do (Behavior)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Session 1 | • Determine participant needs with input survey  
• Running record overview | • Review how to take a running record and what the marks on a running record mean. | • Participants will fill out an input survey to help guide future professional development sessions.  
• Take a running record on a student and bring that running record to share in small groups during session 2.  
• Participants will sign up for a time to observe a peer taking a running record if they feel they need to observe this process. |
| Session 2 | • Coding of a running record and miscue analysis | • How to mark a running record correctly as well as analyze the marks made on a running record. | • Practice taking a running record along with discussing why they coded the running record the way they did.  
• Review the running record they picked to bring and discuss with their small group.  
• Teachers will sign up for a time to discuss running records they have analyzed with a peer if further guidance is needed. |
| Session 4 | • Revisit a running record taken on a student and the actions taken because of the results. | • Reflect on teaching decisions made based on information gained from a running record. | • Work together in a small group of two or four participants and share the results of the past running record. As well as share the teaching decisions that were made as a result of the information gained from the running record. |
specifically for this population in the focus on procedures, purpose, and application in the classroom as it relates to instructional planning.

**Session 1.** I will start by having the teachers take an input survey (see Appendix A) so that I could use that information to help me plan further professional development sessions. Then I will review with the participants the background of running records, using a power point and prompt-driven discussion. At the beginning of this professional development, I will have the teachers discuss the question: what is a running record and how do you use the results? I will then have the group share out what they discussed. Then I will share the running record review power point. This should take about 45 minutes. Teachers can also sign up for a time to observe any of our literacy team teachers performing a running record.

**Session 2.** During the second session I will review with all the certified teachers the different types of miscues and how to code each of those miscues by using some examples and by having the teachers take a running record on an audio file of a student. When the participants come in, I will have a piece of paper with all the conventions for recording and then have the participants match the convention with the label/name of the convention. Then I will show them each code and the correct label/name for that code. We will discuss why it is important to be consistent in coding a running record. We will listen to a struggling reader and the participants will take a running record making sure to use the codes we just reviewed. Then I will discuss how we coded the running record at our table. After that I will reveal the correct coding for that running record and we will discuss how and why it is coded that way. I will ask that each participant bring a running record that they have taken so that it can be discussed at the next professional
development session. This should take about one hour. Participants can sign up for a time to discuss a running record they have taken with peers.

**Session 3.** During the third session I will review with all the participants how to analyze the results of the running record and then how to use those results for future lesson planning for their students. I will have two or three different running records on the table and have the participants work together to decide what their next lesson plans will address. Participants can sign up for a time to discuss the next steps to take in planning instruction for a particular student or small group of students.

**Session 4.** During the fourth session I will have the participants bring a running record that they have scored and analyzed. The participants will be in small groups and they will share the teaching decisions made based on the analysis of the running record. They will also discuss what will be addressed in the next lesson for that particular student or small group of students.

**Professional Development Plan**

The following presents the professional development plan to be implemented across the three professional development sessions. The plan begins with an overview of the district and building goals related to teachers learning about running record use in their classrooms and their teaching. An explanation of the professional development plan is discussed in terms of the Iowa Core, the rationale for inclusion of running records training for teachers, and the site specific information regarding the professional development plan (including materials and costs). Following the overview, the Professional Development sessions are discussed.
**Goals**

The following district and building goals provide an overview of the focus of the professional development project. The sessions will reflect these goals in both content and activities.

**District goal.** The following is the district goal addressing the connection made to student learning through assessment and instruction.

- To tie assessment to application and instruction; are students using what they have learned when doing real reading and writing?

**Building goals.** The following two building goals reflect the specific connections the administration and teachers at the school site make to the larger district goal by delineating specific goals to address both alignment of instruction with student needs (as determined from assessment and observation), and the development of authentic literacy experiences for learners.

- To align instruction with student needs.
- To assign authentic literacy tasks based on assessment data/results.

**Alignment with Iowa/Common Core**

The Iowa Core specifically aligns with literacy. In training teachers to use data from running records they take on books the students are reading, teachers can use that data to develop authentic literacy tasks that address student needs. Also, the philosophy for literacy instruction for students of Waterloo Community School District aligns with the Iowa Core as explained below:

Literacy is synonymous with learning. It involves the integration of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing, connecting, with the ever-increasing knowledge
base for each content area. It provides the means for thinking among and between concepts and ideas. It is an active process.

Rationale

As differentiation in all areas has been a focus at Lincoln School for the last few years, looking for ways to improve these skills is a primary goal. Running records are one tool that can assist teachers in achieving this goal. An informal survey lead to the teachers wanting to know more information about how they could use the data gained from running records to guide their reading instruction. This is done to establish the needs of the faculty. The staff needs to understand running records and how to use the data from running records to guide instruction. This information will help to establish the needs of the staff as the professional development sessions are created.

Site Specific

In designing a professional development plan I took into account what information had already been provided to the staff and where the staff were still struggling. I also wanted to make sure that the presenters of the professional development could relate with the staff; therefore, I have used teachers and groups within the building as presenters if at all possible.

Materials Needed for the Professional Development Sessions

The following provides the materials needed along with the costs for each item, and a summary total cost (see Table 2). This table includes the costs of books, curriculum guides, and personnel needed for the professional development sessions. These materials will be used across all the professional development sessions.
Table 2

*Materials and Costs for Professional Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Item Cost</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running Records for Classroom Teacher&lt;br&gt; <em>By: Marie Clay</em></td>
<td>$16.98/book</td>
<td>$339.60 (20 copies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Team Members</td>
<td>No Cost</td>
<td>No Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo Schools Elementary Curriculum Guide for Literacy</td>
<td>No Cost</td>
<td>No Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$339.60</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional Development - Session 1

**Time Allotted:** 45 minutes

**Audience:** Teachers, Interventionists, and Administration

**Goal:**
- Participants will review the background information related to running records.
- Participants will sign up for a time to observe peers taking running records (see Appendix F).

**Materials Needed:**
- Promethean board
- Running Record Review Power Point #1
- 3-2-1 Reflection Sheet
- Sign-up sheet for observing taking a running record

**Resources:**
- Running Records handout: [http://www.jmeacham.com/balanced%20literacy/balanced.literacy.guided.reading.htm](http://www.jmeacham.com/balanced%20literacy/balanced.literacy.guided.reading.htm)

**Schedule:**
1. (5 min.) Welcome the participants and thank them for taking their time to learn more about how to use running records to help them plan future lessons. The facilitator tells the participants to meet in grade level teams as they enter the media center.
2. (5 min.) The following questions will be on table tents for participants to discuss. The facilitator will inform the each group about the following discussion questions:
   - What is a running record?
   - How do you use the information gained from a running record?
3. (5-7 min.) The facilitator will invite the group members to share ideas with the whole group that they shared out in the smaller group.
4. (30-35 min.) Facilitator will share the Running Records Review power point.
5. (5 min.) Participants will sign-up for a time to observe peers taking running records.
6. (5 min.) Exit ticket: reflection sheet (Waterloo Community Schools, 2013). (See Appendix G.)
Professional Development - Session 2

Time Allotted: 60 minutes
Presenter:
Audience: Teachers, Interventionists, and Administration
Goal:
- Participants will review how to code each of the miscues used in running records.
- Participants will practice taking running records.

Materials Needed:
- Promethean
- Running Records Power Point: Using Running Records Data to Plan Instruction
- Running Records Conventions sheet
- Running Records sheet (1 for each person in this session)
- Pencils/Pens
- 3-2-1 Reflection Sheet

Resources:
- http://www.jmeacham.com/balanced%20literacy/balanced.literacy.guided.reading.htm

Schedule:
1. (5 min.) Welcome the participants and thank them for taking their time to learn more about how to use running records to help them plan future lessons. The facilitator tell the participants to meet in grade level teams as they enter the media center.
2. (10 min.) On the Promethean board will be a copy of the conventions sheet the teachers will have on their table. Facilitator will ask the teachers to fill out the sheet to inform the participants as well as the facilitator about current understandings of the conventions used on a running record.
Using Running Records Data

Running Records Conventions
Record how you would mark each convention under the Marking column.

Child = What Child Says
Text = What Is In The Book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Marking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct Word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insertion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-correction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal and Told</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. (5 min.) Facilitator will share with the participants the correct marking for the miscues and we will discuss the importance of being consistent when marking running records.
4. (5 min.) Facilitator will review some of the main points from the Session 1.
5. (15 min.) Facilitator will share the Running Records: Using Running Records Data to Plan for Instruction Power Point
6. (10 min) Facilitator will allow time for participants to sit down with peers to discuss the results of running records they have taken. At this time participants can sign up for a time to discuss running records they have analyzed with a peer.
7. (5 min.) Exit Ticket: reflection sheet (see Appendix G)
Professional Development - Session 3

Time Allotted: 60 minutes

Presenter:

Audience: Certified teachers, Interventionists, and Administration

Goal:
- Participants will review how to analyze the results of Running Records.
- Participants will learn how to use the data from Running Records to help them plan future lessons for students.

Materials Needed:
- Running records for classroom participants to analyze and discuss

Resources:

Schedule:
1. (5 min.) Welcome the participants and thank them for taking their time to learn more about how to use running records to help them plan future lessons. The facilitator tells the participants to meet in grade level teams as they enter the media center.
2. (5 min.) We will also review how the results of the running records guide our instruction.
3. (15 min.) Each table will have 2 or 3 running records on them and the participants will discuss what they think the next steps will be in the instruction for the students.
4. (15 min.) Facilitator will ask the groups to share out what they discussed at the table about each running record. We will discuss what we think the data is telling us in order to plan for the future lessons.
5. (10 min) Facilitator will allow time for participants to sit down with peers so that they can discuss the results of a running record and what teaching decisions will be based on the information gained from the running record. At this time, participants can sign up for a time to discuss the next steps to take in planning instruction for a particular student or small group of students.
6. (5 min.) Exit Ticket: reflection sheet (see Appendix G)
Professional Development - Session 4

Time Allotted: 30 minutes
Presenter:
Audience: Certified teachers, Interventionists, and Administration
Goal:
- Participants will reflect on teaching decisions made based on information gained from a running record.
- Participants will work together to make decisions on future lessons for their students based on information gained from a running record.

Materials Needed:
- Running records for participants to analyze and discuss

Resources:

Schedule:
1. (5 min.) Welcome the participants and thank them for taking their time to learn more about how to use running records to help them plan future lessons. The facilitator asks participants to meet in grade level teams as they enter the media center.
2. (20 min.) Facilitator will instruct teachers to share the decisions they made after taking and analyzing a running record they have taken. Also have them ask for suggestions from colleagues.
3. (5 min.) Facilitator asks participants to share some insights they gained from sharing their decisions they made based on the information gained from the analysis of the running record.
Conclusions

The purpose of this professional development project is to provide practicing classroom teachers with the needed support to understand, to implement, and to effectively interpret running record data. This knowledge should then inform their instructional decision-making. The critical nature of connecting assessment with instructional decision making is crucial in developing a thoughtful and meaningful plan of instruction for not only children who are struggling with reading and writing, but for all learners. This project is intended to both inform educators and revolutionize in a microcosm context the way in which schools use daily and weekly observation of students’ reading.

The following provides my thoughts on how I see the impact of this project influencing teaching practice. By having an informed teacher population within a school, the instructional dialogue about learning and planning for teaching will change. The ways in which teachers and administrators address student learning and classroom instruction will change. While this seems like a small-scale project for informing practice, it has the potential for large scale change in the ways that teachers think about data, and the ways in which teachers use data to inform their practice.
References


Appendix A

Survey about using Running Records
Survey on Using Running Records

Please answer the following questions and indicate on which end of the scale you feel most comfortable in taking, analyzing, and using a Running Record.

Not comfortable at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very comfortable and easy

1. What is your comfort level in taking a Running Record?
   1 2 3 4 5

2. What is your comfort level in analyzing a Running Record?
   1 2 3 4 5

3. What is your comfort level in choosing an appropriate book for taking a Running Record?
   1 2 3 4 5

4. What is your comfort level in using the results of a Running Record to plan for your instruction?
   1 2 3 4 5

*If you have any additional comments or questions please write them below.
Appendix B

Running Records: Review (Power Point #1)
Running Records: Review

What?

Running records are a quick method of taking notes on how a student is attempting text. It gives the teacher a view of the reading behaviors being performed by the reader.

Why?

- Quick
- Evidence of change over time
- Used to determine student needs in reading
- Evidence of strategies being used or neglected
- Evidence of how students are putting things together as a reader
- Asses text difficulty

Marie Clay Suggest:

"The Running Record provides evidence of the kinds of things that this child can do with the information he gets from print"

Conventions and Calculations

Analyzing Running Records

Running Records: Using Running Record Data To Plan Instruction (Power Point #2)

- Why?
- To see how accurately the child is reading at a given text level
- To see patterns in the types of cueing systems that a student is using while reading a text
- To assess how fluently a child reads
- To assess the appropriate text level of a student
- To assess a student’s progress over time

How do you use the results of the running records you take?

Talk with our table mates and discuss ways that you use the results of your running records to plan for instruction.
• Conventions and Calculations
• Practice
• Your job:

Take a running record

Compare your markings with a partner

• Analyze
• What is this running record telling you? What is this student showing you she can do? What is it telling you that she needs?
• Discuss with your table what this student is showing you she can do and what is this student struggling with.
• Instruction
• How many of you look back at your running records to help you decide what it is that you need to focus on next with your students?
• Revisit the running record we just took and discuss with the people at your table what instruction you would provide for this student.
Appendix C

Text of Audio for Running Record Practice
Like You Were Mine (Gunther, n. d.)

I remember very well the day you were born. Mom went into the hospital. I was only eight years old and I wasn’t allowed in the hospital room. So I sent mom a necklace and a note. I bought the necklace from the school store. It was a heart charm with a flower in the middle and a note that read:

Dear Mom,

I hope you are o.k. I hope you like the present I got you. I hope the baby is a girl.

Love, Maria

Mom did like the present. And she was o.k. And you were a girl.
Appendix D

Running Record Example
## RUNNING RECORD SHEET

**Name:** Susan  
**Date:** 10/30  
**D. of B.:** 10/3/39  
**Age:** yrs 0 mos.  
**School:** Plainview Elementary  
**Recorder:** J. Smith

### Text titles Errors Error Ratio Accuracy Self-correction Ratio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Running Words</th>
<th>Error Ratio</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Self-correction Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional</td>
<td>“Like You Were Mine”</td>
<td>9/100</td>
<td>1: 11.11</td>
<td>91 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Analysis of Errors and Self-corrections

**Information used or neglected — Meaning (M), Structure or Syntax (S), Visual (V)**

**Easy**

Instructional: Meaning and syntax cues are used most frequently, with visual cues aiding in self correction.

**Hard**

Cross-checking on information (Note that this behavior changes over time)

Meaning and syntax are sometimes cross checked with visual cues

### Count

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<th>E</th>
<th>SC</th>
</tr>
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<td>know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>remember</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>emergency room</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>hospital</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>alike</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>allowed</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Running Records Conventions
Running Records Conventions
Record how you would mark each convention under the *Marking* column.

Child = What Child Says
Text = What Is In The Book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Marking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct Word</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Insertion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-correction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal and Told</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

Sign Up Sheet for Observation
### Sign-up Sheet for Observation

(The Literacy team member will e-mail you times they are available for times you can observe them or times you can sit with them or discuss analysis of a RR or discuss using the data to plan for instruction. Write the team member and the purpose.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Literacy Member you want to:</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>observe taking a RR/ discuss coding of a RR/discuss using data to plan for instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Member:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Member:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Member:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Purpose:</td>
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<td>Team Member:</td>
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<td>Team Member:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose:</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Reflection Sheet
Reflection Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List 3 things that you learned:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List 2 things that you need to remember:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List 1 question you still have:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>