

Retrospective Miscue Analysis Reflection

I had a fascinating experience with "Alex" during the retrospective miscue analysis. Alex has previously stated that he thinks he is a bad reader because he reads "too slow." Also, when I began playing the recording of his reading for him, he immediately said, "I sound like a girl. I'm a bad reader." Thus, Alex definitely came into this experience with a negative self concept and was not realizing anything positive about the way he reads.

Once we listened to a few minutes of his reading, I stopped the tape and pointed out several things I noticed about his reading behavior: he often self-corrects, he sounds out unfamiliar words, and he sometimes has good expression. After I briefly explained to Alex what this all means, I told him that these are all things that good readers do. As soon as I said this, his face lit up, he smiled, and said, "So I'm a good reader?!" Clearly, pointing these positive strategies out to him boosted his confidence and is helping him see that he is not actually a "bad reader."

When I asked him for input, he noticed that he was reading slowly. I asked him why he thought this was the case, and he replied "I didn't like the story." He noted that he did better on .the second story he read to me because he liked it "a little better." He went on to say that this text was too easy and that he was bored. This completely makes sense! He read in a monotone voice and did not sound like he was excited to be reading. I asked him if we were to do this again, what he would want to read instead, and he answered, "Nonfiction." Thus, I now have a better idea about what Alex does enjoy reading, and maybe he would read with more expression if he was more engaged with the text.

Overall, I am glad I had the opportunity to do this with Alex. It seemed to really empower him, and it strengthened our teacher-student relationship. Plus, we both learned something new!

Journal: Friday, April 21, 2006 – Retrospective Miscue Analysis

We were asked to do a retrospective miscue analysis with one of our students for Linda and Fredi's class this week. I was honestly a little nervous about it. I was doing a miscue with "Shauna" anyway (and had cleared it with Amy ahead of time), and was recording it, so felt like I was "supposed" to do the retrospective analysis part of playing the tape recording back to the student during this time. But, I wasn't sure how the miscue was going to go. The last miscue I did with her had a great deal of self-corrections and repetitions (and I wasn't ready to discuss it with her right after her reading).

However, the miscue yesterday was much smoother. And, at the end of the retelling, I asked Shauna how she felt about her reading. She replied that she thought she was "getting better" and I asked her if she would like to hear what she had just read. She excitedly nodded, and we smoothly transitioned to the retrospective miscue process. I think Shauna was a good choice for this activity – well, I actually think that most students could benefit from it, but Shauna is more comfortable talking with me, thinking about her own reading/academics, and is very interested in knowing precisely how she is doing. Maybe what I mean is that she was a good choice for *my* first attempt at retrospective miscue analysis.

As she listened to her own reading, closely following along with the text, I noticed her nodding her head at the miscues she had corrected. At the end, she observed that "every time I messed up I went back to the word or sentence and started over." I noticed this as well, and although there were a few miscues she did not correct, I left it as a discussion of her strengths, and I too would have named this as one of them. She specifically talked about a hard sentence with "had had" in it – and how this was unusual for her to see in writing. At the end, she again said she felt like she was getting better, and when I asked her how she knew, she replied that "a long time ago, I would stop for every word. Now I'm more faster and I look and pronounce it faster. I learned that strategy." We then talked about reading with fluency, or "like you're talking."

Right now I'm feeling like this is a potentially useful activity, although I couldn't, and wouldn't, use it with every student all the time. It was hard to find the time to leave the classroom to do this, and I am only the student teacher – there's another teacher in the room. Thinking about finding the space to do this in my own classroom is somewhat daunting, although I think it is potentially extremely useful, especially with older students.

Retrospective Miscue Analysis (RMA)

In the conducting of my RMA, I chose to work with Anita, the fifth grade student with whom I had conducted the initial miscue analyses. We discussed the miscue process and I explained to her that, unlike during our meetings in the past, we would listen to and reflect upon her previous recording. Anita seemed excited by this idea and anxious to begin.

Both Anita and I followed along on a written text as we listened to the recording. I shared my notations with Anita and posed the following questions: Does this [miscue] make sense? Does it change the meaning of the sentence? What are you doing as a reader/what patterns do you recognize in your reading?

Anita remarked (as she has done in the past) that she is "a fast reader" and that sometimes she "messes words up, because [her] brain goes too fast." 96% of the miscues that Anita made (within the 200 word text) were semantically acceptable. She commented, "I read the beginning of the word and the end, but forgot the middle," upon her realization that she had said "had" for "happened" (before self-correcting): At one point, she switched the words "had" and "just," stating: "it made more sense to me that way [in the sentence]." The only miscue that led to a syntactic discrepancy was when Anita deleted the article "a" in a sentence. "I guess I just went too fast," she said. We discussed the fact that, often, Anita is doing the things that "good readers" do: making predictions, self-correcting the miscues that don't make sense, and reading past the ones that do. "Maybe I need to slow down," Anita commented thoughtfully. This was a change from our last meeting when Anita claimed, "That's just what I do . . . I can't go any slower."

I believe that the RMA was a beneficial experience for Anita (and for me!). It removed some of the "mystique" of the miscue analysis process for Anita and helped her to recognize her patterns as a reader. Additionally, she was able to take a closer look at both her reading strengths and challenges. As a teacher, it provided a valuable opportunity to strategize with a student based on her previous work. I look forward to conducting more RMAs with students in the future.

Retrospective Miscue Analysis project

In February I first interviewed Carl, a bright and energetic five year old in the kindergarten class where I am student teaching. In spite of being a Spanish learner in this Two-Way Immersion Spanish program, Carl was one of the early readers. When I worked with him in the winter, he was reading some simple sight words and was trying hard to use his knowledge of letter sounds to sound out unfamiliar words. On the words where he struggled, he was unable to put the individual sounds together to make one word. This made it difficult for him to progress to the next level of leveled books, level four.

When I met with Carl again last month, he had made significant progress and was able to use the-same sounding-out strategy with much more success. He had advanced to the next level in the leveled book series, and was reading with confidence. Today, I had a chance to talk with Carl about his reading.

First, we read another book at the same level. I started with a general question: does he like to read? He answered yes, and explained that he reads "all the time." He said that his parents read to him every day, and that he is starting to read to his brother. I pointed out to him that I thought he had read the book very well, and that I noticed that he was stopping less during reading. Did that make a difference? He said that he had learned that he needed to "go faster to remember the words." This was an interesting comment, because I saw Carl using his finger to follow his words, and actively heard him sounding out unfamiliar words, so that when he was struggling, he was actually not reading very fast. I interpret his comment to mean that he has learned to be fluid, and somehow has developed the ability to remember the context as he reads, as the mechanical aspect of reading is getting easier for him. I did manage to point out these strategies (using his finger to keep his place; using letter sound knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words, etc.), so that he could identify for himself what he is doing that is making the reading easier. Carl referred to the alphabet chart on one occasion (for the p "q") and I complimented him on his use of the classroom resources to help him.

Another comment that Carl made during this conversation was also telling: during his retelling of the book, he stopped and said, "When I used to read I didn't understand very much. Now I understand." He was noticing his improved vocabulary in Spanish, and this is significant because it shows that before, he was learning the mechanical aspect of reading, but had not reached the level on conversational ability that he now has to connect the words on the paper to what he heard around him. I used this as an opportunity to make the connection for Carl between his improvement in reading and his improvement in Spanish.

Was I

Nice use of this technique with a kindergarten or English?