Running Records

Why do running records?

- Evidence for reporting to parents – they allow teachers to describe how the child is working on text.
- Determining child's instructional and independent level
- Information on what strategies the child is using to work on text
- To assist with organization of reading groups, and the type and/or level of instruction necessary for each group

Which students should I do running records on?

- ALL students! On-level students: once a month; Below-level students: every week or every other week; Above level students: once every 6-8 weeks.

What books should I select?

- Text that is what you perceive to be the child's instructional level - if it is too hard or too easy, select another text (On 100 words, more than 10 errors is too hard, 5 errors or less is too easy)
- Text should consist of a minimum of 100 words.

There is a lot of debate about whether a student should be given a new book (cold read) or a familiar book. If you want an unbiased record of their reading behaviours and abilities then a cold read would be the most effective choice. If you want to see how the student is using strategies you have already discussed when the story was initially read, then a familiar story would serve that purpose. I, almost always, use a "cold read" story on the student's instructional level. NOTE: Teaching or giving assistance to the reader must not take place during the taking of a running record.

How do I analyse and use the completed running record?

- You need to look at every error the child makes and ask yourself "Now what led the child to do (or say) that?"
- Work out whether the text is hard (< 89%), instructional (90-94%) or easy (95-100%). The formula for this is:

  $$\frac{\text{Number of words in text}}{\text{Errors}} \times 100$$

  If the text is too easy or hard, another running record will be necessary to determine at what level the child is reading, and so determine the reading level of instruction for grouping.
- Is the child using mainly meaning, structure and/or visual/graphophonic information? This is determined by analysis of errors and self-corrections. Are substitutions meaningful? Is the child maintaining the structure of the text? Is the child using visual/graphophonic information predominantly?
- Determine the level of self-correction, appeals for help or waiting to be told the word - this tells you that the child is monitoring his reading
- The number of rereads, or repeats - this tells you that the child is using the meaning to help to work out difficult text
- Using only the initial letter/s - this tells you that the child needs to search for further visual information eg find part of the word they know, look further than the first part of the word, think of a similar looking word
- Is the child attending to punctuation?
- Is the child's reading phrased and fluent?

What do I now do with all this information?

- Look at your groupings for reading instruction - consider different groupings for instructional level and teaching skills
- Look your teaching and planning for each group - What skills and strategies do they need to be taught? How can I best incorporate this into my planning? Can they read and problem solve independently?
- Consider grouping students by teaching strategies (based on reading behaviours) instead of by reading level. They don't need to read the same story together in order for you to teach the skill!

How can I incorporate this information into my teaching?

Reading Behaviours	Teaching Strategies
Child is not reading for meaning	Teacher Instruction - Prompt: "What would make sense?" - Get child to reread from the start of the sentence - Group cloze activity using big book & post-its to cover words - Book introduction & discussion prior to reading Follow-up Activities - Cloze reading passages - Use picture books without text to compose own stories

Child is not using structure (eg tense, generic structure, grammar etc)	**Teacher Instruction** • Prompt: "Does that sound right?" • Use a variety of reading genre - study the generic structure of different types of text • Use texts written in different tense - study those written in first, second or third person **Follow-up Activities** • Parts of speech/word endings • Sentence correction to keep tense consistent • Using text written in first, second or third • Use different genre activities
Child is not looking for visual/graphophonic information beyond initial letter/s of word, or not using this source of information at all	**Teacher Instruction** • Prompt: "Is there part of that word that you know?" • Prompt: "Do you know a word like that?" • Prompt: "Look right through the word" **Follow-up Activities** • Parts of speech/word endings • Compound words • Word Families • Synonyms, antonyms & homonyms • Singular & plural • Prefixes & suffixes • Contractions • Syllabification
Child is not looking for or using all three sources of information (meaning, structure, visual/graphophonic information)	**Teacher Instruction** • Prompt: "Does that make sense, sound right & look right?" • Prompt: "That page/paragraph was nearly right, but can you find the word that didn't look right/make sense/sound right?"
Child is not attending to the accuracy of what they're reading (monitoring)	**Teacher Instruction** • Prompt: "That makes sense & sounds right; but does it look right?" • Prompt: "Did that make sense?"
Child is not attending to punctuation	**Teacher Instruction** • Prompt: "Does that sound right? • Instruction on the use of various types of punctuation when reading **Follow-up Activities** • Punctuation activities • Proofreading
Child's reading is not phrased and fluent	**Teacher Instruction** • Prompt: "Make it sound like talking" or "make it sound interesting"

** The teaching of these strategies could also form a basis of your writing program for these children - thus lessons learned in reading can be applied in writing