

Talking about the text

When you talk about a text try to keep the reader engaged with the piece by referring to passages, or words that support, or justify opinion.

Give time to talk about CHARACTERS:

- The kind of person they are.
- What they might do because of the evidence in the text.
- What might happen to them and why.
- The reader's opinion of them and why.
- What they might look like.

Give time to talk about the SETTING:

- What has happened so far.
- What might happen next.
- How the piece might end.
- The kind of piece it is – myth, folk tale, adventure, fantasy...
- The reader's own preference.
- The scene, time, place.
- The author and his/her other books.
- The reader's favourite author.

In addition you may talk about ILLUSTRATIONS:

- The clues the pictures give about the text.
- Any surprises.
- What the picture adds to the text.
- The artist and his/her work.
- The reader's opinion about the suitability of the illustrations to the text.

Whatever you do, you need to make the session as enjoyable as possible.

Our thanks to the source author of these guidance documents.

Unfortunately a direct attribution could not be found.

Responding to miscues:

A miscue implies that the reader has used some of the available information, but on this occasion has given too much attention to one of the cueing systems – a set of clues, or hints about the way in which language works. The reader is using some of his or her understanding of language so that miscue is not made in ignorance, or through carelessness.

Categories of miscues:

The correct version should read – “Mother is getting the tea for the children.”

Child Reads... Type of miscue: Explanation:

Mummy is getting the tea for the children. Substitution Common in younger children. This is when the reader provides a word which is not in the text as a replacement.

Mummy is getting the tea ready for the children. Insertion In this case the reader puts in an extra word which is not in the text.

Mother is getting tea for the children. Omission Here the reader misses a word out of the text

Mum... Mother is getting the tea for the children. Self-correction This is when the reader corrects a miscue without any help. A child may need time to do this and it is worth waiting for.

Mother, mother is getting the tea for the children. Repetition The reader may repeat part of the text.

Mother is getting the tea for the.... children. Hesitation The reader may pause before reading a word.

Mother is g- g e- g e t- getting the tea for the children. Sounding out The reader tries to work out the word from knowledge of the sounds.

As a general rule if a child makes a miscue which does not affect the sense or meaning of the text then the child should be allowed to carry on reading.

Any intervention should be minimal disturbance to the reader and encourage the reader towards problem-solving strategies.

In any section of text of approximately 50 words, where the reader is making more than 7 or 8 miscues that either lose the sense or meaning of the text there may be problem with the text being too difficult to maintain understanding. These problems need recording.

What to do when the reader makes a miscue which makes no sense, or loses the meaning of the text.

If a reader pauses WAIT... for a few seconds – up to 10 – to allow for self-correction, hesitation, sounding out.

If the miscue appears to make no sense at all in the context of the piece of writing e.g. 'Mother is GOING tea for the children.' you will need to intervene by;

- Pointing at the wrong word and saying 'Have another go at that word.'
- Pointing to the word and gently saying 'no', or making some sound with a questioning tone.. 'mmm?'
- Reading the sentence again up to the wrong word to give the reader another 'run' at it.
- Suggest that the reader carries on and comes back to the incorrect word later.
- Ask a relevant question such as 'What is the Mother doing?'

- Talk about the text up to that point and ask a relevant question such as 'You know that the children said they were hungry. What do you think their Mother might do?'
- Ask the reader to make a good guess at what the word might be, remembering the text up to that point.
- Give the word to the reader to maintain the meaning – if this happens too often e.g. 3 or 4 times in any 50 word piece of text, then the book is probably too difficult for the reader.

All these strategies are word, or verbal cues. They are particularly important in helping the reader understand that there are lots of ways to deal with difficulties AND that making sense of the story helps in dealing with these difficulties.

The need for accuracy in reading depends on the age, competence and purpose for reading. So for example the degree of accuracy needed for instructional reading is likely to be higher than for reading a story.

If the reader gets the initial sound wrong, encourage them to look again at the beginning letter and sound it out. N.B. This may not always help, but is most use in recognising a word. Additional support may be to look at the end sound, and / or the middle sound.

Remember the more support and clues you provide the less problem-solving the reader has to engage in.