

Preface

When the *Reading Miscue Inventory* (RMI) was first developed in the 1970s, it gave teachers and researchers unprecedented views of reading as a process of making sense of print—what Ken Goodman called “a window on the reading process.” Some fifteen years later, when *Retrospective Miscue Analysis* (RMA) was first being used, its potential for helping readers was recognized almost immediately. The initial revelation that learners could actively engage in deep conversations about the reading process and arrive at the same insights as language researchers and teachers led to a second revelation—that RMA could change students’ reading in positive ways.

Beginning as an almost casual observation by a middle-school teacher to Yetta Goodman that seventh graders could indeed *do* miscue analysis themselves, Yetta’s skepticism was quickly transformed into an energetic research agenda in which RMA evolved along two paths: as a research protocol and as a set of strategy lessons designed to support the development of readers. Those efforts resulted in the publication of *Retrospective Miscue Analysis: Revaluing Readers and Reading* by Yetta Goodman and Ann Marek (1996), a collection of articles by teachers and researchers about readers who learned to revalue themselves through collaborative RMA conversations.

Since the publication of that work, RMA has continued to be used by teachers, students, and researchers for a variety of purposes. And we continue to learn new things about readers and reading as we refine how we conduct RMA strategy lessons, conversations, and engagements with a wide range of age groups. This new, slim volume, *The Essential RMA: A Window into Readers’ Thinking*, incorporates those refinements by focusing on the RMA’s procedures and its role in supporting the development of proficient reading among children and adults.

Retrospective Miscue Analysis uses miscue analysis as a starting point. But knowing how to do miscue isn’t a prerequisite. Although we encourage teachers eventually to learn miscue analysis, it isn’t necessary to do a complete miscue analysis to get started. One only needs to record an oral reading, have the desire to hone one’s kidwatching skills, and share those observations with a learner.

This book is for teachers who may have little knowledge about miscue analysis,

as well as for those who are skilled at doing RMA. It will appeal to those with a range of experiences with RMA, because one of the key strengths of RMA is its *flexibility*. RMA can be done in a face-to-face reading conference or tutoring session, in concurrent small group meetings in a classroom, or with the entire class as part of a language study curriculum. And RMA can be conducted as a student- or teacher-led collaborative discussion.

The Essential RMA: A Window into Readers' Thinking is organized into three parts. Part I introduces the reader to the concepts of miscue analysis and retrospective miscue. Part II is the heart of the book and is comprised of two sections. Section One focuses on miscue analysis procedures such as collecting and analyzing oral reading data, and it provides detailed instructions on how to prepare an RMA session. Section Two provides specific guidelines on how to do RMA, from selecting miscues to organizing conversations in a variety of formats. Part III of *The Essential RMA* explores the use of RMA with different age readers and with groups.

We encourage you to visit *The Essential RMA* website (www.retrospectivemiscue.com), a resource that provides more in-depth knowledge about miscue analysis and RMA, when you are ready to dig deeper. There are links to forms that make RMA easier, lists of questions and comments that deepen conversations, and references to books and articles that are addressed specifically for different age groups and groupings of readers. There are links to recordings of readers, showing how miscues are marked, the kinds of materials we suggest for readings, and how to select materials for readings. Within the pages of this book you will *see* an occasional icon (→✱) that identifies some of the content that is included at the website.

In a time when the constraints placed on teachers seem unbearable, and the pressures to implement uniform curricula and reading instruction that quash the craft and creativity of teaching suffocates teachers and students alike, the use of RMA is indispensable. The authentic language study of RMA—exploration that is done with and by learners in collaboration with their teachers and tutors—has the power to bring back joy in teaching and engagement in learning. Enough to revive good teaching; enough to nourish a learner.

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www.retrospectivemiscue.com