

Burke Reading Interview

Name _____ Age _____ Date _____
Occupation _____ Educational Level _____
Sex _____ Interview Setting _____

1. When you are reading and come to something you don't know, what do you do?

Do you ever do anything else?

2. Who is a good reader you know?

3. What makes _____ a good reader?

4. Do you think _____ ever comes to something she/he doesn't know?

5. "Yes" – When _____ comes to something he/she doesn't know, what do you think he/she does?

“No” – Suppose _____ comes to something he/she doesn’t know. What do you think he/she would do?

6. If you know someone is having trouble reading, how would you help that person?

7. What would a/your teacher do to help that person?

8. How did you learn to read?

9. What would you like to do better as a reader?

10. Do you think you are a good reader? Why or Why not?

Understanding the Burke Reading Interview (BRI)

From Goodman, Y., Watson, D., Burke, C., 2005, *Reading Miscue Inventory: From Evaluation to Instruction*, RC Owen, New York

To plan students' reading instruction, we need to be aware of their beliefs about reading, and consider how their reading proficiency is influenced by past and current reading instruction. What students believe about reading and reading instruction affect the decisions they make about their reading strategies. The BRI provides information about the reader's metalinguistic knowledge, that is, the language people use to think and talk about reading as an object of study. Readers' responses (Burke 1980; Harste and Burke 1977; Squires 2001) often correspond to the models of reading instruction just described. Similar research has been used in the examination of teachers' views about reading and reading instruction (DeFord 1981; Squires 2001).

Although readers' combined responses usually correspond to a particular model of reading instruction, no single interview question provides a definitive profile of a student's view of reading. In fact, what some readers believe and say about the reading process does not always reflect how they read. Some proficient readers suggest, through their responses, a skills view of the reading process, while some non proficient readers, despite their reading, report that reading is making sense of text. Additionally responses sometimes reflect what the reader believes the interviewer wants to hear. Nevertheless, because the BRI asks several questions that focus on the same information, it is not difficult to spot rote responses. It is also interesting that some readers respond differently to the questions in diverse settings or with dissimilar materials (Coles 1981). However, because (we hope) students spend a good deal of time reading in school, it makes sense to examine how they respond in school settings. Given the nature of the reader and the purpose of conducting the interview, it is often helpful to conduct more than one interview in different sociocultural contexts and over time.

Teachers/researchers find it informative and sometimes surprising to consider their own responses to the BRI and then to compare their responses with students' responses, as well as to compare and discuss the responses with other adult readers. Teachers can help parents understand the reading process and miscue analysis by asking parents to respond to the interview and then compare their responses with their children's.

Following are the BRI questions with discussion of their significance. The responses of three readers, whom we introduced in Chapter 8, are then presented. The blank forms, including the BRI found in Appendix C, may be copied for teacher/researcher use.

Question 1. When you are reading and come to something you don't know, what do you do?

One issue addressed by this question is what the students believe the word *something* refers to, that is, with which linguistic unit (letter, word, phrase, sentence, or section of text) the reader is primarily concerned. The word *something* is purposefully used to avoid unintentionally focusing the reader on the *word* or the *sentence*. The response to this question also concerns strategies they don't know. Their answers indicate whether they believe it is best to sound out, skip, substitute, or keep reading, as well as who or what the reader depends on for help while reading.

The follow up question: *Do you ever do anything else?*

This question is asked to gain additional information about the characteristics of what something refers to. Additionally, answers to this question provide insight into whether readers have a single strategy in mind or believe they need to change strategies depending, for example, on purpose or setting.

Question 2. Who is a good reader you know?

The answer to this question helps us understand what readers believe are the characteristics of good readers. This information is useful for comparison with answers to subsequent questions. When students indicate they do not know any good readers or nominate themselves as good readers, the following questions (especially question 3) often reveal a student's understanding of what makes a good reader.

Question 3. What makes _____ a good reader?

(The blank is filled in with the name or pronoun of the person mentioned in the answer to question 2.) The answer to this question adds to the reader's list of characteristics of a good reader.

Question 4. Do you think _____ ever comes to something she/he doesn't know?

This question relates to question 1. If students, in response to question 4, say that good readers never come to something they don't know, this suggests that they equate good reading with errorless performances by readers who know everything. Such students may believe they are not smart enough to know everything. Such students may believe they are not smart enough to learn to read or to read well. Different questions are asked next depending on whether the response to this question is yes or no.

Question 5. If the answer to question 4 is yes— When _____ comes to something he/she doesn't know, what do you think he/she does?

If the answer to question 4 is no – Suppose _____ comes to something he/she doesn't know. What do you think he/she would do?

This question encourages the reader to take a stand on which aspects of language is most important in reading and which strategy is most productive.

Question 6. If you know someone is having trouble reading, how would you help that person?

In addition to indicating possible strategies the reader might use, the response to this question reveals whether the reader believes troubled readers are different or should be treated differently from other readers.

Question 7. What would a/your teacher do to help that person?

This question is similar to question 5 and 6, in that the readers are asked again to focus on what is important in teaching, especially for teaching the less able reader. Questions 6 and 7 together suggest how instruction might influence readers' beliefs.

Question 8. How did you learn to read?

People who have pleasant memories about reading often think they learned to read before they started to school, or they don't remember learning to read. Such readers may credit family members – parents, grandparents, or siblings – with teaching them to read, or they remember being told they were self-taught readers who read before school. Readers who believe they are problem readers often remember negative experiences while learning to read in a school.

Question 9. What would you like to do better as a reader?

Answers to this question provide additional information concerning readers' beliefs about the reading process. Even good readers think they would like to be able to read faster or to remember everything they read. This question presents an opening to discuss reading in terms of the reading process and the need for prior knowledge. (For very young children, this question may need to be rephrased: *Would you like to read better? How would you do that?*)

Question 10. Do you think you are a good reader? Why or Why not?

By the time this question is asked, teachers/researchers can often predict the reader's answer. The response frequently reflects what readers believe other people think of them as readers and as students. When using the BRI with bilingual or multilingual people, it is interesting to ask the readers to reflect on how they would answer the questions if they were thinking about reading in their second or third language.

An adaptation of the BRI for older readers, the Burke Interview Modified for Older Readers (BIMOR) is available in Appendix C (Watson and Chippendale 1979, Y Goodman and Marek 1996). When ESL readers respond to the BRI, teachers usually ask about their reading in English. It is useful to ask these students if they would respond differently if they were reading in their native tongue.

BRI Interviews of Three Readers

From Goodman, Y., Watson, D., Burke, C., 2005, *Reading Miscue Inventory: From Evaluation to Instruction*, RC Owen, New York

The following responses to the interview questions are from the three readers we introduced in Chapter 8 who represent different reading proficiencies and different views of reading. Sara’s and Jamal’s interviews were conducted by their teachers (T), and Brian’s interview was conducted by a researcher (R).

Name	Age	Educational level	Sex
Sara (s)	9	3	F
Brian (B)	8	3	M
Jamal (J)	13	7	M

Sara	Brian	Jamal
Question 1. When you are reading and come to something you don’t know, what do you do?		
I ask you.	Figure it out – like break it into two parts.	<p>J: Do you mean when I don’t understand something?</p> <p>T: Yes, anytime you come to something.....</p> <p>J: I usually can work it out. I keep reading.</p>
<i>Do you ever do anything else?</i>		
<p>S: I look close at the word. I sound it out and I try to figure it out.</p> <p>T: What do you mean? How do you figure it out?</p> <p>S: I sound it out. Sometimes I try to see if I know the beginning and the end.</p>	My mom helps me. She gives me a sentence with a word left out to see if I can fill in the blank. Like the word is <i>not</i> and she will say: “You were <i>blank</i> there.” And that will help me.	Well, if I’m really interested, when I’m finished I might look back at it and work it out.
Question 2. Who is a good reader you know?		
You’re a really good reader. [talking to teacher]	My mom.	My dad is a good reader.
Question 3. What makes [me, your mom, your dad] a good reader?		
You know all the words. When you read to us, it’s really good.	She just reads a lot.	He reads a lot and he knows a lot.
Question 4. Do you think [me, your mom, your dad] ever come to something I/she/he don’t/doesn’t know when reading?		
No!	Yes	Well, maybe.
Question 5. If yes: When [your mom, your dad] comes to something she/he doesn’t know, what do you think she/he does?		
	<p>B: She says a wrong word, and then she’ll try to say it again.</p> <p>R: How does she figure it out?</p> <p>B: There’s a hard word or</p>	He thinks about it. I guess. Sometimes he talks about what he is reading to us...to Mom and me.

	<p>something..a wrong word. She'll say it a couple more times and it comes out right.</p> <p>R: What is she doing when she says it a couple more times so that it comes out right.</p> <p>B: Thinking about it.</p>	
<p>Question 6. If no: Suppose [I] came to something [I] didn't know. What do you think [I'd] do?</p>		
<p>S: You always know it.</p> <p>T: Just suppose-pretend.</p> <p>S: You would ask your husband.</p> <p>T: Who else is a good reader?</p> <p>S: Janis [a classmate]</p> <p>T: Why?</p> <p>S: Because she can pronounce all the words.</p> <p>T: What does Janis do when she doesn't know?</p> <p>S: Asks the teacher.</p> <p>T: Anything else.</p> <p>S: She sounds it out.</p>		
<p>Question 6. If you know someone is having trouble reading, how would you help that person?</p>		
<p>S: Tell them to ask the teacher.</p> <p>T: Anything else?</p> <p>S: Give them a worksheet.</p>	<p>B: I don't know...do shared reading.</p> <p>R: What's shared reading?</p> <p>B: I read a page and then the other one does. Or you read three and they read three.</p> <p>R: How does that help?</p> <p>B: I don't know. You just get to read and like if they make a mistake it doesn't matter. Or something like that.</p>	<p>J: I'd take them to the library.</p> <p>T: What would you do there?</p> <p>J: They'd {librarians} help him find a book he likes real well. I could help them do that too.</p>
<p>Question 7. What would a/your teacher do to help that person?</p>		
<p>Tell them to sit down and work on the word 'til they get it.</p>	<p>B: Have them read and then stop them.</p> <p>R: What would they do after they stopped?</p> <p>B: I don't know.</p> <p>R: That's okay. I'll give you a couple of minutes to think.</p> <p>B: Read with them and written conversation and read stories like picture books and stuff.</p>	<p>She'd give them some good stories to read and try to get them to understand it.</p>
<p>Question 8. How did you learn to read?</p>		
<p>I don't know. I learned at school. My teacher helped me. I learned from her. I needed help.</p>	<p>B: By mom helping me and teachers helping me.</p> <p>R: What kinds of help did your mom and teachers give?</p> <p>B: Encouraged me and stuff.</p> <p>R: Anything else?</p>	<p>My dad. He taught me to read and then I read and then my teacher taught me, too. But I'm still not a good reader.</p>

	<p>B: Don't give up, keep trying.</p> <p>R: Can you remember when you were in first grade?</p> <p>B: Yeah I was in the low reading group.</p> <p>R: What did you do there?</p> <p>B: We read easy books. Some of the higher kids made fun of us because we weren't that good of readers....My mom said ignore it. In second grade my teacher tutored me.</p> <p>R: What did you do?</p> <p>B: Read books. I read books to her and that helped me.</p> <p>R: When you came to something you didn't know what did your teacher do?</p> <p>B: She told me to sound it out.</p> <p>R: Anything else.</p> <p>B: No</p>	
Question 9. What would you like to do better as a reader?		
<p>S: I'd like to know all the words.</p> <p>T: What does it mean to know all the words?</p> <p>S: I'd know how to pronounce them.</p>	<p>B: Just a quick reader.</p> <p>R: How can you read quicker?</p> <p>B: Practice a lot.</p> <p>R: Practice what?</p> <p>B: Books, just reading books and stuff. and words, just like saying them.</p> <p>R: What do you think will help you say the words better?</p> <p>B: Saying them over and over.</p>	Understand everything in the book.
Question 10. Do you think you are a good reader?		
No. Maybe, sometimes...a little bit.	So-so	I could do better

Discussion of Students' Interviews

From Goodman, Y., Watson, D., Burke, C., 2005, *Reading Miscue Inventory: From Evaluation to Instruction*, RC Owen, New York

Sara's responses indicate a focus on atomistic language units. She "looks close at the word," sounds out words, checks the beginnings and ends of words, and believes that good readers know everything and never have problems with reading. Sara, representing a non proficient reader, believes that, when readers have problems, they usually rely on other people for help, especially a teacher, and that she herself is "maybe, sometimes..a little bit" of a good reader. She admires her teacher's oral reading. Her teachers "know all the words." Sara's answers reflect a subskills view of reading. For supportive instructional experiences, see the Teacher's Notes in Chapter 8 and the curriculum suggestions for a non proficient reader in Chapter 11.

Brian, a moderately proficient reader, is more eclectic in his views. He thinks reading is focusing on words, "like break into two parts" or "saying them [words] over and over". But he also thinks that "reading books and stuff" is part of reading practice. Brian views himself as a "so-so" reader. Brian's answers reflect a skills view of reading. For supportive instructional experiences, see the Teachers Notes in Chapter 8 and the curriculum suggestions for a moderately proficient reader in Chapter 11.

Jamal, a proficient reader, takes on the responsibility of understanding the text as he focuses on reading for meaning: "I usually can work it out, I keep reading, If I'm interested...I might look back at it and work on it." Jamal's answers reflect the importance he places on understanding what he is reading, on his interests, and on the need for stories and books. Jamal thinks that others, such as his dad, his teacher and the librarians are helpful to readers. Jamal's realistic grasp on reading is evident when he says it may be possible that his dad, a good reader, would come to something while reading that he doesn't know. He believes there is a connection between his Dad's reading well and knowledge. Despite his proficiency, Jamal thinks he could be a better reader. His answers reflect a holistic view of reading. For supportive instructional experiences see the Teachers Notes in Chapter 8 and the curriculum suggestions for a proficient reader in Chapter 11.

When collected over time, the knowledge we gather from the BRI reflects ongoing changes in students' attitudes about reading, and helps teachers adjust their reading programs to make the most of readers' strengths and to address their needs. A summary of the information gained from the BRI is often placed in the Comments Section on the Classroom Procedures or the In-Depth Procedure Reader Profile Forms.

Once we have gathered the wealth of information about the reader from various appropriate sources that we discussed in Chapter 8 and the BRI, we are ready to build a profile of a student in relation to the reading or a particular text. In the next chapter we demonstrate how to integrate the data we have gathered about Betsy in order to construct a profile based on her reading of *The Man Who Kept House*.

Burke Writing Interview

Name _____ Age _____ Date _____
Occupation _____ Educational Level _____
Sex _____ Interview Setting _____

1. When you are writing do you encounter difficulty, what do you do?

Do you ever do anything else?

2. When your writing is interrupted, what do you do?

3. Who is a good writer you know?

What makes _____ a good writer?

4. Do you think _____ ever encounters difficulty when writing?

If Yes: When _____ encounters difficulty when writing, what do you think he/she does about it?

If No: Suppose _____ encounter difficulty when writing, what do you think he/she would do about it?

5. If you know someone is having difficulty writing, how would you help that person?

6. What would a teacher do to help that person?

7. How did you learn to write?

8. What would you like to do better as a writer?

9. Do you think you are a good writer? Why or Why not?