

Competency in pre writing and writing of Grade One students: A longitudinal study

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As a part of a longitudinal research initiated in 2002, competency of writing included in the set of communication competencies was measured using an activity given to 1021 children from 43 Grade 1 classrooms in forty-one schools selected to represent the diverse social, cultural, economic, demographic, geographical and educational backgrounds of the country. The specific objectives of the study are to identify the competency of writing basic shapes within a spacious area, writing the same basic shapes within a limited area and in a blank paper, to analyze

the competency in writing words adjoining dotted lines, to analyze the competency of writing words without 'pillam' while looking at them and listening to them, to analyze the competency of writing sentences with 'pillam' while looking at them and listening to them and to analyze the competency of writing the child's own short name. Ten Instruments were developed to collect data during the Grade one at different intervals. Each instrument was specified a certain aspect of competency and the ten instruments were representative to hierarchical nature of competencies in writing. Each activity sheet was administered to children by their respective class teachers who were trained for the purpose.

Developmental patterns of selected nine aspects of writing were identified (Table 1).

Table 1. The percentage of students achieved and not achieved competencies in pre writing and writing by competency level at the end of Grade one

Instrument Number	Competency level	% of students acquired competency	% of students not acquired competency
6.9	Writing the child's own short name	39.24	60.76
6.8	Writing sentences with 'pillam' while listening to them	27.16	72.84
6.7	Writing sentences with 'pillam' while looking at them	54.76	45.24
6.6	Writing words without 'pillam' listening to them	45.69	54.31
6.5	Writing words without 'pillam' while looking at them	70.28	29.72
6.4	Writing letters/words adjoining dotted lines	84.06	15.04
6.3	Writing the same basic shapes in a blank paper	70.04	29.06
6.2	Writing the same basic shapes within a limited area	76.71	23.29
6.1	Writing basic shapes within a spacious area	85.15	14.85

Data analysis: D Withanage and LDT Silva

Pearson chi-square test was used to identify the association between nine competency levels with school, country and child related variables and explanatory variables for the achievement of competency were identified.

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