



## **A Study of Students' Assessment in Writing Skills of the English Language**

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This paper addresses to evaluate and assess the students' competency in writing skills at Secondary school level in the English Language focusing five major content areas: word completion, sentence making/syntax, comprehension, tenses/grammar and handwriting. The target population was the male and female students of grade 10 of urban and rural Secondary schools from public and private sector. Forty (40) Secondary schools of District Bahawalnagar, Pakistan were taken using stratified sampling. A sample consisting of 440 students (11 students from each school) was randomly selected using a table of random numbers. An achievement test consisting of different items was developed to assess the students' competency and capability in sub-skills of writing such as word completion, sentence making/syntax, comprehension, tenses/grammar and handwriting. Mean score and standard deviation were used to analyze the students' proficiency in each sub-skill. The t-test was applied to make the comparison on the bases of gender, density and public and private sector. The overall performance of all the students was better in comprehension as compared to other sub-skills namely word completion, sentence making/syntax, tenses/grammar and handwriting. The analysis, based on t-value, revealed no significant difference between the performance of male and female students and the students of public and private schools, whereas there was a significant difference between the performance of urban and rural students.

**Key Words:** Language Learning, Writing Skills, Effective Communicative Skills, Students' Exposure, Assessment

## INTRODUCTION

Language is an effective way of communication of our feelings. Therefore, It is may be confined only to human beings for communication intention. Carney (1990) defined language as a set of a few specified vocal symbols that help the human beings to communicate with others. According to Hadely (2001), language is a set of sounds by means of which feelings, thoughts and sentiments are conveyed to other human beings. A newly born baby is unable to speak. The child learns the language with the passage of time as he/she interacts with others. In the beginning he makes various meaningless isolated sounds. It takes time to learn a language. Finally he acquires language and grammatical construction of the language of his group by imitation. Human language is transferred from one generation to another generation through a sound learning process.

Language acquisition is contrasted with language learning which is used with reference to a second language which a person learns deliberately; particularly in formal settings like school etc. The researchers like Littlefair (1991), Dockrell and Messer (1988), and Widdowson, (1978) distinguished language acquisition from language learning and used the expression of first language acquisition in contrast with second language learning but many researchers and theorists don't distinguish between the two. Farzan (2000) for instance, treated language acquisition as a purely stylistic alternate to language learning.

The four main skills of the English language are reading, listening, speaking, and writing. A person needs a mastery of various elements to use the language to convey thoughts, wishes, intentions, feeling and information in a written form (Pamela, 1991).

The four basic English language skills are divided into two categories such as receptive skills and productive skills. Reading and listening are considered receptive skills whereas speaking and writing are known as productive skills. Writing is one of the four basic skills. The students start learning to communicate through written form as they begin to interact with others at school level. The writing skill is more complicated than that of other language skills. Even sometimes a native speaker of the English language may experience complication in a tricky situation. Basically the writing skill requires a well-structured way of the presentation of thoughts in an organized and planned way (Braine & Yorozu, 1998). Advanced writing skill is one of the basic requirements for better academic performance as well as other activities related to writing presentation (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2002).

Writing is the one of the basic skills of the English language. It is generally considered one of the most difficult that other skills for foreign language students. Even native speakers feel difficulty in showing a good command of writing. (Johnstone, Ashbaugh, & Warfield, 2002). The ESL teachers include writing skills in the syllabus because this is an essential element for students' academic success. (Kellogg, 2008) because writing helps to i) reinforce the grammatical structure, ii) enhance the students' vocabulary, iii) and assist other language skills such as reading, listening and speaking.

Writing success is used multifarious purposes at school level. Providing assistance to the students inside and outside the classroom, awarding a grade, selection of students

for appropriate courses, evaluation of programs are considered important aspects of assessment in writing skill. The process of assessment of written literacy should be well organized and well managed to make it transparent and meaningful ((Elander, Harrington, Norton, Robinson, & Reddy, 2006)

### **Review of the Related Literature**

The ability to write something in a productive way is an indicator of success during the learning process (Geiser & Studly, 2001). Academic achievement is considered as a token of a good indicator in language learning process (Benjamin & Chun, 2003).

The productive writing skill is considered a cognitive challenge, because it helps to assess language competency, recalling capability and thinking ability. It demands to recall information from long-term memory (Kellogg, Olive, & Pilot, 2001). Moreover, the ability of productive writing requires sound ability of thinking on comprehensible matters (Nickerson, Perkins, & Smith, 1985).

Carney (1990) found that 95% high school English teachers opine writing as an important but only 19% assign it as an unimportant task because the process of assessment is time consuming especially for lengthy assignments. At college and university level, marking of students writing is both laborious and too little rewarded and appreciated by the administration. According to Bok (2006), the writing skill of the students has been declining even in American students.

The cognitive domain has focused more on reading skill and numeracy than that of writing skill (Levy, & Ransdell, 1995; Hayes & Flower, 1986; Rijlaarsdam et al., 2005). However Garcia (2008) designed Waking Minds Writing (WMW) as web-based supplemental writing program that can assist the English Language Learners in developing their exposure and ability in writing. WMW helps to devise a plan to teach the students well in all genres of writing. This program provides instruction to improve grammatical structure and syntax. It also provides the guidelines for solid assessment and evaluation.

The process of mature writing requires a well organized planning (Hayes & Flower, 1980; Levy & Ransdell, 1995), the writer is involved in content problem and rhetorical problem. Furthermore, an adequate memory helps to accelerate this process (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1987; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1991).

The command over handwriting and spelling is also an essential element for writing. It assists the students to make their writing skill more meaningful and communicative (McCutchen, 1996; Graham, Berninger, Abbot, Abbot, & Whitaker, 1997; Graham & Harris, 2000).

### **Micro-Skills of Writing**

Henry (2000) mentioned the micro-skills involved in writing skills. Mastery of these micro-skills helps the writer to have good command over writing free of mistakes and errors. In the process of micro-skills the writer needs to:

1. use the script, spellings and punctuations correctly.
2. apply the accurate words to state the right tense, case and gender.

3. make use of major components such as subject, verb and object etc. appropriately which can convey the thought of writer clearly to the reader.
4. make the text coherent to make the reader understand easily.
5. place all parts of speech properly.
6. apply the vocabulary and terminologies appropriately.
7. use the style of writing suitably to the requirements of the audience.
8. clarify the central ideas from the sustaining information.
9. avoid from jargon, slang, taboos and keep in mind the standard of language according to the mental level of the reader.
10. judge about the prior knowledge of the audience about the subject.

Pylkkänen and McElree (2006) added that the students have to construct sentences bearing in mind grammatical coordination, appropriate lexis and correct spellings. It can be said that this is the best way of improving writing skills.

#### **Writing at the secondary stage**

Writing in this context, especially with reference to a language classroom in a secondary school, means learning and practicing the grammar of a language through written exercises. The students learn to write the sentences grammatically correct in orthography. Wren and Marten (2006) also narrated that the student has to construct sentences keeping in mind grammatical synchronization and variation, not to mention using appropriate terminology and correct spellings. At this stage the learner is likely to view words as entities of grammar, and to concentrate on the morphological changes necessary to sentence construction, rather than to see them as vehicles of meaning, through which he can communicate.

The ultimate meaning of writing skill is to construct grammatically correct sentences and to communicate a meaning to the reader. Real life communicative writing tasks, on the other hand, are letter-writing, form filling, report writing and so on. These communicative writing tasks are rarely practiced in our language classrooms. Communicative writing should be logical and coherent. Cohesion; the grammatical or structural unity and coherence; the unity of sense or meanings are also essential for high-quality writing (Shahid, 1999). Moreover the communicative writing must have a purpose and logic.

Writing can be divided into sub-skills like descriptive, narrative and expository writing skills (Wilcox, 2002). The style of what is written will automatically be affected by the status of the addressee, age, profession and relationship with the writer.

Hywel (2003) bifurcated the sub-skills of writing such as descriptive skill (description of people, places and things), narrative skill (narrating stories, incidents, events with proper sequence in chronological order) and expository skill (writing with the purpose to justify, explain, define, classify, compare and contrast).

English is taught as a compulsory subject from class one up to graduation level in Pakistan. English is not the mother tongue of Pakistani students. It is a second language for them. That's why they feel it difficult to learn. The majority of the students think are

handicapped and feel an inferiority complex due to the lack of competency in the subject of English. Acquiring facility in English gaining popularity in Pakistan in all walks of life day by day and has become a status symbol and key to success. Therefore, this study is an attempt to evaluate the Pakistani students' exposure in writing sub-skills.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The major objectives of the study were bifurcated into following categories:

- i) To find out students' competency in different types of sub-skills of writing.
- ii) To compare the students' proficiency in sub-skills of writing on the basis of gender, location, and public and private sector.

### **METHOD**

The target population consists of the students of grade 10 from Secondary schools. Three major strata: male and female students, rural and urban students and the students of public and private schools were determined in this study. Twenty Boys Secondary schools (ten from rural [5 public and 5 private] and ten from urban areas [5 public and 5 private]) and similarly, twenty Girls Secondary schools (ten from rural [5 public and 5 private] and ten from urban areas [5 public and 5 private]) were selected using stratified sampling technique. The total population was 1375 students studying in grade 10 in the District Bahawalnagar, Pakistan. A sample consisting of 440 students (11 students from each school) was randomly selected using a table of random numbers from 40 Secondary Schools of the District Bahawalnagar which is 32 % of the existing population.

### **Research Instrument**

An achievement test was designed to assess the students' competency in writing sub-skills. Different items related to writing skills namely word completion, sentence making/syntax, comprehension, tenses/grammar and handwriting were included in the test. Nanda and Khatoi (2005) specified such type of items for such type of research. The material for achievement test was taken from the textbook for grade 10 students recommended by the Punjab Text Book Board. The students were directed to complete the achievement test. Writing test consisting of 05 sections was for thirty (30) marks. Allowed time was twenty-five (25) minutes for the achievement test.

The validity of the instrument was tested by language experts' opinions, followed by a pilot study on a small scale. The items of the instrument were improved in the light of language experts' opinions. The reliability of the instrument was found at 0.917 Cronbach's Alpha which was acceptable to launch the study at large scale (Gay, 2000).

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The written permission from all the heads of the institutions was taken before conducting the test. The data was collected personally. Class teacher of each respective school helped out the researcher in administering the test. The separate room in calm

and quiet environment was chosen in each school. To seek high response rate, the convenient time for each school administration was chosen.

The data was analyzed on scoring basis namely one mark against one item. The correct response got Mark 1 and incorrect received mark zero. The analysis was made in two stages.

In the first stage, focusing on the descriptive statistics, the data were analyzed in the following three steps.

Step 1: The average score and frequency of each item were calculated. The whole data was fed in the form of master table to tabulate into different variables.

Step 2: The standard deviation was calculated that determined the variation in the scores. It assisted to identify the dispersion of scores around the mean value.

Step 3: The tables were drawn to show the frequencies, mean scores and standard deviations.

In the second stage, an analysis through the use of t-test for independent samples to investigate significant difference at  $p < 0.05$  in male and female students, the students of rural and urban areas and the students of public and private schools was made as statistical inference.

## RESULTS

Each item was analyzed separately. The performance of different variables namely gender, location and public and private sectors was analyzed separately. However it was not possible to present all those results here which expanded to 40 tables. Hence, a result of the study is given here in eight tables only. The competency in writing sub-skill was evaluated on the basis of Grading Formula prescribed by The Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education in Pakistan, e.g. (i) 80% and above = Exceptional (ii) 70-79% = Excellent (iii) 60-69% = Very good (iv) 50-59% = good (v) 40-49% = Fair (vi) 33-39% = Satisfactory (vii) 0-32% = Fail/very poor.

Table 1: Performance of the students in the completion of words: (n=440)

Statement	Sr. No.	Words	Frequency	Mean	SD
	1	Disc_pline	294	0.67	0.16
Fill in the missing letters	2	Opp_rtunity	166	0.38	0.17
	3	Poll_tion	339	0.77	0.13
Annexure A	4	R_v_lation	122	0.28	0.14
Question No.1 (a)	5	Oc_as_on	281	0.64	0.16
	6	Average	240	0.55	0.15

Table 1 indicates that the students' scores in question No 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, are 67%, 38%, 77%, 28% and 64% respectively. In this way their performance in the question No 3<sup>rd</sup> is 'excellent' and remained 'very good' in question. 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> whereas they showed 'satisfactory' performance in question No 2 and 'very poor' in question No.4. The mean score (55) showed their overall performance as 'good' in this section.

Table 2: Performance of the students in sentence making/syntax: (n=440)

Statement	Sr. No.	Words	Frequency	Mean	SD
Use these words in your own sentences Annexure A Question No.1 (b)	1	Enjoy	270	0.61	0.17
	2	With	249	0.57	0.17
	3	Nation	280	0.64	0.16
	4	Quickly	211	0.48	0.18
	5	Ups and downs	162	0.37	0.16
	6	Average	234	0.53	0.17

Table 2 indicates that the students' scores in question No 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are 61%, 57%, 64%, 48% and 37% respectively. In this way their performance in the question No. 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> is 'very good' and remained 'good' in Question No.2<sup>nd</sup> and 'fair' in Question No. 4, whereas they showed 'satisfactory' performance in question No 5. The mean score (53) showed their overall performance as 'good' in this section. Moreover the arithmetic mean scores indicate that the students' performance is comparatively better in making sentences of 'Verb' (enjoy; Q.1) and 'Noun' (nation; Q.3) and lowest scores in making sentence of 'preposition' (with; Q. 2), 'adverb' (quickly; Q.4), and idiom (Ups and downs; Q.5).

Table 3: Performance of the students in comprehension: (n=440)

Statement	Sr. No.	Q. No	Frequency	Mean	SD
Read the passage and answer the following questions. Annexure A Question No.1 (c)	1	1	401	0.91	0.06
	2	2	339	0.77	0.13
	3	3	278	0.63	0.16
	4	4	173	0.39	0.17
	5	5	252	0.57	0.17
6	Average	289	0.66	0.14	

According to Table 3, the students' scores in question No 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, are 91%, 77%, 63%, 39% and 57% respectively. In this way the students' performance was 'exceptional', 'excellent', 'very good', 'satisfactory', and 'good' in Question No. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively. The mean score (53) falls in the category of 'good' in this section.

Table 4: Performance of the students in Tenses/grammar: (n=440)

Statement	Sr. No.	Tenses	Frequency	Mean	SD
Put the proper form of the verb in the blank spaces. Annexure A Question No.1 (d)	1	Past Indefinite Tense	259	0.59	0.17
	2	Past Perfect Continuous tense	282	0.64	0.16
	3	Present Perfect Tense	236	0.54	0.18
	4	Future Indefinite Tense	239	0.54	0.18
	5	Past Indefinite Tense (Passive Voice)	245	0.56	0.17
6	Average	252	0.57	0.17	

According to the Table 4, the students' performance was 'very good' in 'past perfect continuous tense' (Q. No. 2) whereas their performance remained 'good' in past indefinite tense (Q. No. 1), Present Perfect Tense (Q. No. 3), Future Indefinite Tense

(Q. No. 4) and Past Indefinite Tense; Passive Voice (Q. No. 5). The mean score (57) also falls in the category of 'good' in this section.

Table 5: Performance of the students in handwriting: (n=440)

Statement	Sr. No.	Words	Frequency	Mean	SD
Rewrite these words in good handwriting keeping in mind the four lines. Annexure A Question No.1 (e)	1	Sadder	273	0.62	0.17
	2	Consonant	252	0.57	0.17
	3	Quintessence	273	0.62	0.17
	4	Beginning	214	0.49	0.18
	5	Stopped	207	0.47	0.18
	6	Jurisprudence	257	0.58	0.17
	7	Hopefully	216	0.49	0.18
	8	Zoology	222	0.50	0.18
	9	Psychology	282	0.41	0.17
	10	Philosophy	288	0.43	0.17
	11	Average	248	0.52	0.17

Table 5 indicates that the students' scores in question No 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, are 62%, 57%, 62%, 49%, 47%, 58%, 49%, 50%, 41%, and 43% respectively. In this way their performance in the question No. 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> is 'very good' and remained 'good' (*Appendix B*) in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> whereas they showed 'fair/poor' performance (*Appendix C*) in question No 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10. The mean score (52) showed their performance as 'good' in this section. The results also indicate that students can write easily those words which lie on upper three lines (e.g. Sadder and Consonant, etc) but they feel difficulty in writing those words which lie on four lines (e.g. Zoology, Psychology and Philosophy etc.).

Table 6: Comparison of male and female students' performance in writing sub-skills: n (Male) =220, n (Female) =220

SN	Skills	Male Students			Female Students			t-value
		Frequency	Mean	SD	Frequency	Mean	SD	
1	Word completion	125	0.57	0.22	116	0.53	0.24	-1.470607
2	Sentences making/ syntax	120	0.55	0.16	114	0.52	0.17	
3	Comprehension	140	0.64	0.23	148	0.67	0.25	
4	Tenses/ grammar	131	0.60	0.14	121	0.55	0.14	
5	Hand writing	119	0.54	0.14	109	0.50	0.15	
6	Average	129	0.59	0.18	123	0.56	0.19	

These two types of hypotheses were made to compare the performance on a gender basis:

- 1- H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between the performance of male and female students in writing skills.
- 2- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference between the performance of male and female students in writing skills.

A comparison between the performance of male and female students has been made in Table 6 on the basis of above mentioned hypotheses. The results revealed no statistical

significant difference between the performance of male and female students in the proficiency of writing skills. The t-value (-1.470607) for writing skills was not significant at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance, because this calculated t-value lies in between accepted region, therefore the null hypothesis ( $1-H_0$ ) was accepted and it can be said that the performance of male and female students was similar. The average mean scores for the male and female students were 0.59 and 0.56 respectively.

Table 7: Comparison of rural and urban students' performance in writing sub-skills: n (Rural) =220, n (Urban) =220

S. N	Skills	Rural Students			Urban Students			t-value
		Frequency	Mean	SD	Frequency	Mean	SD	
1	Word completion	110	0.50	0.21	131	0.59	0.25	3.570124
2	Sentences making/ syntax	101	0.46	0.16	133	0.61	0.17	
3	Comprehension	130	0.59	0.27	159	0.72	0.21	
4	Tenses/grammar	112	0.51	0.14	140	0.64	0.13	
5	Handwriting	231	0.53	0.15	113	0.51	0.15	
6	Average	149	0.53	0.19	137	0.62	0.18	

These two types of hypotheses were made to compare the performance of urban and rural students.

2-  $H_0$ : There is no significant difference between the performance of urban and rural students in writing skills.

2-  $H_1$ : There is a significant difference between the performance of urban and rural students in writing skills.

In the light of these hypotheses a comparison between the performance of urban and rural students was made in the Table 7. The results revealed a significant difference between the performance of urban and rural students in the writing sub-skills. The t-value (3.570124) was significant at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance (which is close to zero), because this calculated t-value does not lie in between the accepted region, therefore the null hypothesis ( $2-H_0$ ) was rejected and it can be concluded that the performance of urban and rural students was not same in writing sub-skills. The average mean scores for the rural and urban students were 0.53 and 0.62 respectively.

Table 8: Comparison of the students of public and private schools in writing sub-skills: n (Male) =220, n (Female) =220

S. N	Skills	Public School Students			Private School Students			t-value
		Frequency	Mean	SD	Frequency	Mean	SD	
1	Word completion	116	0.53	0.24	125	0.57	0.22	-0.527514
2	Sentences making/ syntax	108	0.49	0.18	125	0.57	0.15	
3	Comprehension	143	0.65	0.25	145	0.66	0.23	
4	Tenses	125	0.57	0.14	127	0.58	0.14	
5	Handwriting	116	0.53	0.15	112	0.51	0.14	
6	Average	125	0.57	0.19	128	0.58	0.18	

These two types of hypotheses were made to compare the performance of the students of public and private schools in writing skill:

3- $H_0$ : There is no significant difference between the performance of the students of public and private schools in writing skills.

3- $H_1$ : There is a significant difference between the performance of the students of public and private schools in writing skills.

A comparison between the performance of the students of public and private schools in writing skills was made in the Table 8. The results revealed no significant statistical difference between the performance of the students of public and private schools in writing sub-skills. The t-value (-0.527514) for writing sub-skills was not significant at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance, because this calculated t-value lies in between accepted region, therefore the null hypothesis (3- $H_0$ ) was accepted and it can be concluded that the performance of the students of public and private schools was the same. The average mean scores of the students of public schools and students of private schools were 0.57 and 0.58 respectively.

#### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Writing skill plays a pivotal role to improve students' exposure and competency for the purpose of communication and interaction. According to the nature of the examination system in Pakistan, the students are required to show their worth in writing in the classroom and examination hall as well. According to the results of this study, it can be concluded that the students can fill the missing letter where a single letter is required to fill in a word rather than filling the missing letters where more than one letter is required in a word (Table 1). The results of this study reflect that students can use common parts of speech like verbs and nouns in sentences but they feel difficulty in making sentences of adverbs and idioms. (Table 2).

The results of this study revealed that the students' mean scores in 'word completion', 'sentence making/syntax', 'comprehension', 'tenses/grammar' and 'handwriting' were 55% (Table 1), 53% (Table 2), 66% (Table 3), 57% (Table 4) and 52% (Table 5) respectively. These results show that the students got the lowest marks (52%) in handwriting as compared to other sub-skills. With regards to the handwriting, the research carried out by Connelly, Dockrell, and Barnett, (2005) also showed that the students feel difficulty to produce legible handwriting. On the other hand, these results indicate that the students showed better performance in comprehension (Table 3) as compared to other writing sub-skills.

To investigate the difference in students' performance in the writing sub-skills on gender bases was one of the key objectives of this study. The null hypothesis (1- $H_0$ ) to be tested was, 'there is no significant difference between the performance of male and female students in writing skills'. For this Independent Sampling, t-test was applied to investigate the difference between the performance of male and female students (Table 6). These results are similar to the findings of the research done by Berninger et al (1997). Contrary to this, the findings regarding the gender differences are different than

that of the research carried out by Pajares, Miller, and Johnson (1999). Pajares, Miller, and Johnson (1999) found that girls performed better than boys. The results of the present research revealed that there is no significance difference between the performance of male and female students in the competency of writing sub-skills. The results also indicate that the students' performance in 'past perfect continuous tense' was comparatively better than that of other tenses mentioned in Table 3. As regards handwriting, the students showed better performance in writing those words that lie on upper three lines but they feel difficulty in writing those words which lie on four lines (Table 5).

Another objective of this study was to find out the difference between the performance of the urban and rural students in writing sub-skills. The difference between mean scores of urban and rural students in writing skill was 0.09 which shows a difference in the performance of the urban and rural students in writing skill. The t-value (3.570124) is significant at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected as can be seen in Table 7. Therefore, the students of the urban areas showed better performance as compared to the students of rural areas. These results are similar to the findings of the research carried out by Mahyuddin et al (2006). According to Mahyuddin et al (2006), there is a gap between the achievements of rural and urban learners.

With regards to the performance of the students of public and private schools, there is no significant difference in the performance of the public and private school students in writing sub-skills. The t-value (-0.527514) for writing sub-skills was not significant at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance, because this calculated t-value lies in between the accepted region, therefore the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ); 'there is no significant difference between the performance of the students of public and private schools in writing skills' was accepted and it can be concluded that the performance of the students of public and private schools was the same. Whereas Witte (1992) found in his research that there was a difference between the performance of the students of public and private institutions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are put forward for the students, teachers and administration of educational institutions:

- All students, particularly the students of rural areas, should lay stress to improve their writing skills which can boost them up to enhance their studies.
- Well-planned practice should be made to instruct the students so that they may acquire maximum training for the enhancement of writing skills.
- Students should be provided training rather than mere instructions. Correct use of grammatical rules, spellings and syntax are essential elements for effective writing.
- Students should have practice of writing from the very beginning to make their handwriting fluent, smooth, beautiful and legible.

- The concerned teachers and heads of institutions should think ways to improve the ability of students in writing skills which will help to enhance their exposure for expression. Consequently the students may show their worth in the examination hall easily and can get good marks.
- Similar research is also needed to be conducted in this area and other skills namely; listening, reading and speaking to assess the students' proficiency in these skills in the English Language.

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**Appendix 'A'****Achievement Test for Students****Question 1 a) Fill in the missing letter(s)**

- 1) Disc\_\_pline                      2) Opp\_\_rtunity                      3) Poll\_\_tion  
 4) R\_\_v\_\_lation                      5) Oc\_\_as\_\_on

**b) Make sentences of the following words:**

- 1).Enjoy\_\_\_\_\_
- 2)With\_\_\_\_\_
- 3)Nation \_\_\_\_\_
- 4)Quickly\_\_\_\_\_
- 5)Ups and downs\_\_\_\_\_

**c) Read this passage and write the answers of the following questions:**

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) was established in October 2002. It launched a very aggressive program to solve three main problems in the higher education sector—access, quality and relevance of higher education. At the time of establishment of HEC, a little over five years ago, only 2.7 per cent of our youth aged between 17 to 23 years had access to higher education. In India it is presently nine percent of the same age group. The current enrollment is 3.7 per cent of this age group, and HEC plans to take it to 10 percent over the next 10 years. (*Dawn Lahore, Pakistan Feb 6, 2008, p- 21*)

- 1) When was HEC established? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What were those three main problems of higher education? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What was the %age of youth who had access to higher education 5 years ago? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) What will be the enrollment after ten years? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) What is the %age of youth in India who had access to higher education? \_\_\_\_\_

**d) Encircle the proper form of the verb given in the bracket.**

- 1) In the past the people mostly (walk, walked, walking) to other places.
- 2) He (lives, is living, has been living) in Pakistan since 1950.
- 3) I have not (see, saw, seen) him for a long time.

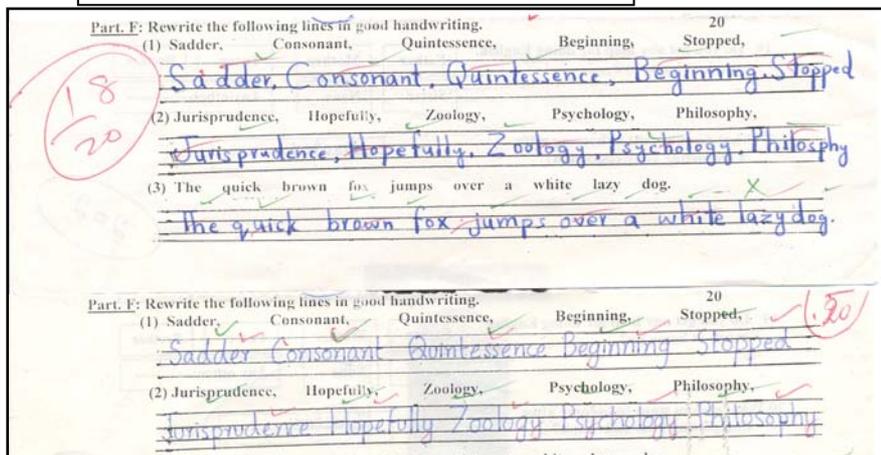
- 4) The sun will (rise, rose, risen) at 7 o'clock tomorrow.
- 5) The toy was (break, broken, breaking) by the child.

e) Rewrite the following words on four lines in good handwriting.

Sadder      Consonant      Quintessence      Beginning      Stopped

Jurisprudence      Hopefully      Zoology      Psychology      Philosophy

**Sample of very good/good handwriting**



**Sample of fair/poor handwriting**

**Appendix 'C'**

