



**EFFECTIVENESS OF REMEDIAL PROGRAMME ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF COMPOSITION WRITING IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE AMONG LEARNING DISABLED CHILDREN**

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Abstract

English is gaining importance day by day and without proficiency in this language, it would be difficult to progress in the world of globalization and technology. By studying English, we have the means to get information regarding the progress being made in different fields of life. It acts for us as a window to the world, links us with the whole of the world and works as the key to vast storehouse of knowledge. Since knowledge is tested through written examinations, it follows, that a student with poor writing skills will perform badly, and may fail and even risk expulsion from school because of repeated failures. The writing problem in children is usually referred to as writing disability known as "dysgraphia". Therefore, in order to improve the writing composition skill of learning-disabled children timely remediation should be given. In the present study the investigator applied the Pre-test Post -test Experimental Control group design to check the effectiveness of remedial programme on the language development. Experimental group was taught through the remedial teaching and the control group was taught through the conventional method. To measure the significant difference 't' test was applied. Results indicated that students of experimental group scored better as compared to the control group.

Key words: writing skill, disability, composition, remedial teaching etc.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the strongest instrument for the achievement of ideals of life and civilized attempt to bring about the balanced and proper development of human personality. Confusion and annoyance is caused when a child having high potential does not perform well. There might be a number of factors responsible for this poor achievement but one of the potential reasons may be hidden disability called learning disabilities. Learning disabilities (LD) is one of the important causes of poor academic performance in school going children (Kulkarni M, Kalantre S, Upadhye S, Karande S, Ahuja S, 2001). Learning disabilities can result in lowered self-esteem and an increased chance of dropping out of school, and sometimes depression or criminal behaviour. Estimate of the prevalence of children who suffer from learning disabilities vary ranging from 1-30% of the school population (Lerner 1985), depending on the criteria used to determine the disability. Another study done by Myklebust (1969) estimated the prevalence

of learning disabilities to be 7-8%. In a survey of learning disabilities, **Tansley and Pankhurst (1981)** quoted an incidence of 5% of children with writing and spelling problems in Germany.

Different studies have shown a variation in the incidence of learning disabilities. **Samveda in Karnataka (1997)** said that 10-15% of children receiving elementary education have difficulty in one or more areas of learning, constituting the major chunk of school drop-outs. No systematic attempt has been made to estimate the prevalence of learning-disabled children in primary schools. But considering the socio-economic status of population in the rural areas, their child-rearing pattern and system of education, the percentage of learning-disabled children at the primary level would not be less than 15-20%. There are a great number of students have serious difficulties in writing. **Vlachos F, Karapetsas A. (2003)** studied Visual memory deficit in children with dysgraphia. According to **Sara Rosenblum, Patrice L. Weiss and Shula Parush (2004)** the act of writing presents difficulties for 10–30% of elementary school children.

A student with any degree of writing difficulty may be considered to have 'Dysgraphia'. The word "dysgraphia" simply means difficulty expressing thoughts in writing, in other words, it just means "writing difficulty". It is generally used to refer to extremely poor handwriting. Difficulties in writing have an adverse impact on academic achievement in school and subsequently on business and industry. Written language is the graphomotor execution of sequential symbols to convey thoughts and information. Writing represents a highly complex neurodevelopment process, which involves multiple brain mechanism. It requires the simultaneous and sequential integration of attention, multiple information sources, memory, motor skill, language, and higher cognition.

By the time, the child is of five or six he or she has developed enough to learn and to write. Initially this seems to be a visual-motor activity requiring the accurate copying the name and simple phrases. Gradually, as the child is more and more able to execute letters and word automatically, cognitive and linguistic aspects become important. The child begins to formulate his or her own sentences and phrases. As he or she matures and learns, the written composition becomes increasingly more abstract and phrasing becomes more complex. It has been pointed out by **Nakra (1996)** that most learning-disabled children would have problems in the area of written expression too, because written expression requires transforming ideas into a form of written communication, using correct sentence structure, applying rules of grammar and so on. There seems to be several factors that may be implicated as the causes of writing disability i.e., **sequencing problems, attention deficit, hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), auditory processing weakness, visual processing weakness, poor classroom instructions etc.**

The absence of pre-writing skills is a major reason why children fail to write correctly. A certain number of specific skills are believed to be essential to the development of legible handwriting (**Johnson and Myklebust, 1967; Mercer, 1979; Polloway and Smith, 1982 and Towle, 1978**). **Gleason (1982)** suggested that writing can be taught in three stages- the pre-writing or reflective period, where time is given to mentally think of a topic; the writing stage; and the editing or revising stage. Moreover, after proper

diagnosis with 'Individualized Remedial Education Plan (IEP)' most children learn to cope up with disability and may get integrated in a regular stream.

Many writing disabled children experience serious difficulty in expressing ideas coherently in words in an efficient sentence. Their visual problem-solving may be fast and precise, they may comprehend idea and have an opinion on it, and however they cannot express the same effectively in spoken or written language for others.

In addition, many writing disabled children have difficulties in writing linguistically correct structures. Nakra (1996) points that though a child for whom English is not a primary language will have only a limited ability to express himself but what sets a learning-disabled child apart from the normal learner is the frequency of grammar and syntax error which completely distort his written effort. She further draws attention to the writing of such children in which some words are used out of order; other words are omitted and no punctuation is used. The rules of grammar, parts of speech and tenses are slow in getting internalized.

A child learns mother tongue effortlessly surrounded by an environment that is primarily dominated by mother tongue. But things are very different when we have to learn and write a foreign language like English. Students feel huge difficulty in expressing, reading and writing in English. That's why writing disability in English Language is most prevalent among Indian students. So, the researcher got interest in knowing about weak areas of writing skills specially composition writing. What is the role of teacher in improvement of writing composition of the students and which techniques should be used for the improvement of writing composition? The scanning of previous related research studies revealed that very few researches have been made on identification and remediation for writing composition among learning disabled children. Therefore, there is an imperative need to provide a remedial programme for the development of writing composition skill in English among learning disabled.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were as follow:

- (i) To identify problems faced by learning disabled students in composition writing.
- (ii) To design a remedial programme for the development of composition writing in English language among learning disabled children.
- (iii) To implement remedial programme for the development of composition writing in English Language among learning disabled children.
- (iv) To evaluate the efficacy of remedial programme on the development of composition writing.

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses of the study were as follow:

- (i) There exists no significant difference between the mean pre-test scores of learning-disabled students of experimental group and control group on composition writing test in English language.
- (ii) There exists significant difference between the mean post-test scores of learning-disabled students of experimental group and control group on composition writing test in English language.
- (iii) There exists significant difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores of learning-disabled students of experimental group on composition writing test in English language.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The investigation was delimited to:

- (i) Yamunanagar District of Haryana only.
- (ii) The sample of 30 learning disabled students of VI class having composition writing problem in English only.
- (iii) Students having no evidence of sensory, mental and any apparent emotional deficits.
- (iv) Students studying in ten CBSE affiliated English medium schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology has been discussed into subsections, which are as follows:

- a) **Method Used: Experimental method was used.** The study employed Pre-Test-Post-Test Control Group Experimental design.
- b) **Tools Used:** To achieve the objectives of the study, following tools were used:
 - i. Previous Academic Record
 - ii. Raven's Coloured Progressive Matrices (1995)
 - iii. Teacher's Observation Check-List developed by SCERT (1989)
 - iv. Diagnostic Test of Learning Disability (DTLD) developed by Dr. Smriti Swaroop & Dr. Dharmistha M. Mehta (1993)
 - v. Achievement Test to check composition writing skill in English language. developed by the Investigator
- c) **Statistical Tools used:** Statistics such as Mean, SD and 't'-test are employed for analysis and interpretation of data.

d) Procedure Followed

Procedure of the experiment comprised four stages, that is, selection of the sample, conducting the experiment and to see the effectiveness of the remedial programme,

First: At the first stage, Yamunanagar district was randomly selected and thereafter ten schools of English Medium were also randomly selected but from amongst the schools which were within the radius of 10-15 kms.

Second Stage: In this stage the students having writing problem (dysgraphia) in English were identified. All the students of class VI of those ten schools were tested through Previous Academic Record, Teachers Observation Check-List developed by SCERT (1989), Raven's Coloured Progressive Matrices (1992), Diagnostic Test of Learning Disability developed by Dr. Smriti Swaroop & Dr. Dharmistha M. Mehta (1993) and Achievement Test to check writing skills in English. Out of 803 students, 61 students were identified who were having the problem of dysgraphia. Finally, a sample of 30 students belonging to three schools (with highest numbers of such students) was selected for the study. 15 students from 'Holy Mother Public School, Jagadhri' as experimental group and other 15 students were selected in control group from rest of the two schools 'Swami Vivekananda Public School-1, Jagadhri' and 'Swami Vivekananda Public School -2, Jagadhri'.

Third stage: In this stage remedial programme was implemented for treatment of writing disability. In order to improve writing skills of the learning disabled children, the researcher provided a remedial programme of forty-five days. This programme consists of a set of instructional strategies (Multi-Sensory strategies, Reinforcement strategies, Self-monitoring strategies, Cognitive strategies and Repetition Strategies). This programme includes such activities which are helpful in the development of writing skills. Worksheets, drill method, use of black board, teaching rules, story writing, diary writing, using substitution table, activity method, presentation on PowerPoint etc.). These activities are helpful to minimize and remove writing discrepancies.

Fourth Stage: Further, in order to check the effect of remedial measures 'Achievement Test to Test to check Composition Writing skill in English' developed by the investigator was again given to both groups. On the basis of these scores results were analyzed.

Results and Findings

In order to find out the effectiveness of remedial programme on the development of composition writing skill in English among learning disabled children 't' test was applied.

The data obtained from the achievement test designed by the investigators on composition writing in English among learning disabled children is presented and analyzed below:

TABLE - 1
SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN PRE-TEST SCORES OF THE
EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP

Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	SEd	t-value
Experimental	15	13.6	2.28	1.02	0.19
Control	15	13.8			

Table value of *df* 28 at 0.05 level = 2.05
and at 0.01 level = 2.76

Interpretation

If we look at Table - 1 it shows that the obtained t-value 0.19 which is less than the calculated table value both at 0.05 and 0.01 level. It means that there exists no significant difference between the mean pre-test scores of learning-disabled students of experimental group and control group on ‘Achievement Test to check Composition Writing skill in English’. Thus, our null hypothesis (Ho), which states that there exists no significant difference between the mean pre-test scores of learning-disabled students of experimental group and control group on composition writing in English language is accepted.

TABLE - 2
SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN POST-TEST SCORES OF THE
EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP

Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	SEd	t-value
Experimental	10	27.00	5.17	2.31	5.67
Control	10	13.9			

Table value of *df* 28 at 0.05 level = 2.05
and at 0.01 level = 2.76

Interpretation

If we look at Table - 2 it shows that the obtained t-value 5.67 which is more than the calculated table value both at 0.05 and 0.01 level. It means that there exists significant difference between the mean post-test scores of learning disabled students of experimental group and control group on ‘Achievement Test to check Composition Writing skill in English’. Thus, hypothesis, which states that there exists significant difference between the mean post-test scores of learning disabled students of experimental group and control group in composition writing in English language is accepted.

TABLE - 3**SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP**

Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	S.Ed	t-value
Pre-test	10	13.6	5.68	2.54	5.27
Post-test	10	27.0			

Table value of *df* 28 at 0.05 level = 2.05
and at 0.01 level = 2.76

Interpretation

If we look at Table - 3 it shows that the obtained t-value 5.27 which is more than the calculated table value both at 0.05 and 0.01 level. It means that there exists no significant difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores of learning-disabled students of experimental group and control group on 'Achievement Test to check Composition Writing skill in English'. It shows that remedial programme has a significant effect on the development of composition writing skill in English among learning disabled children.

FINDINGS

- (i) The findings of the present study indicate that the mean pre-test scores of experimental group and control group are 13.6 and 13.8 respectively (Table-I). It means the means score of both the groups before treatment are nearly equal. Therefore hypothesis-I is accepted by the findings of the study. Therefore, it is clear that before giving experimental treatment both the groups were equivalent.
- (ii) Further it is found that mean of post-test scores of experimental group and control group are 27.00 and 13.9 respectively (table-2). The 't' value of post-test scores of experimental and control groups is significant both at .05 and .01 level. So, we accept the hypothesis II. It means that there exists significant difference between the mean post-test scores of learning-disabled students of experimental group and control group in writing composition in English.
- (iii) It is also found that means scores of the pre-test and post-test scores of experimental group are 13.6 and 27.0 (table - 3) and t value is 5.27 which is significant both at .05 and .01 level. It shows that there exists significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of experimental group. It clearly indicates that remedial programme has a significant effect on the development of composition writing skill in English among learning disabled children.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main conclusion of the study is that the students taught through remedial teaching showed better results in the post test. There is sharp decline in the number of mistakes made by the students of experimental group who were taught with remedial exercises. The remedial programme in the present study

involves the use of different remedial strategies like Multi Sensory strategies, Reinforcement strategies, Self-monitoring strategies, Cognitive strategies, Repetition or Drill method etc. The effectiveness of these strategies has been supported by the different researchers, educationists and psychologists time to time. Reinforcement strategies were found to improve the quality of writing of LD students in terms of the number of words written (**Brigman, Greg and Stans, 1972**), the writing rate (**Gerdstrom and Lovitt, 1979**), fluency, flexibility, originality of both ideas and story (**Glover 1979**), creativity in story writing as well as the use of various parts of speech in expository writing (**Maloney, Jacobson and Hopkins, 1975**). The use of sentence expansion based upon the basic sentence patterns suggested by **Rubins (1980)**. Exercises incorporating rearrangement of the words in a sentence, and sentence combining was shown to be extremely effective in enhancing children's ability to write syntactically (**Burns et al., 1971; and O'Hare, 1973**).

'The language experience approach', where the teachers' knowledge of a particular child's background and interests serves as the basis of instruction is suggested by **Fernald (1943), Smith (1967), Burns et al. (1971), Hammill and Bartel (1982)**. The student is encouraged to write creatively; the emphasis of instruction is always on the quality of the ideas expressed. In course of time when the more mechanical and rule-governed aspects of writing are introduced, care is taken to ensure that the development of these skills does not interfere with the child's' desire to write creatively.

Therefore the researcher suggests that students with learning problems can be brought back to normal stream with the help of appropriate remediation strategies

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