

Enhancing Writing Skill among B.Ed Students: A case study of MANUU, CTE Darbhanga

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Abstract

Even today our higher examination system mainly depends on writing skills of the learners, since about 70% weightage is given to final term examinations which are evaluated exclusively on whatever the student has written in his/her answer sheet. Ability to express by the means of pen and paper therefore is prerequisite for better performance in our present day examination systems. The investigators based on their past experiences at MANUU, college of teacher Education, Darbhanga found that a significant number of the B.Ed students were very poor performer in communicative English paper which is a compulsory paper. A minute observation revealed that the writing skill was very pathetic, that might have a direct impact on their overall performance. For any successful remedy it was necessary to look into the background of the learner whose performance were disappointing and further look into the specific problems related to writing that were faced by the students. A total of 60 students from B.Ed first semester 2017-19 batch were given two assignments for writing. An in-depth analysis of their performance was done in relation to five different dimension and demographic background. It was found that a vast majority, more than half of the total students' performance was either unsatisfactory or extremely disappointing in terms of overall writing abilities. Majority of the students exhibited poor performance in legibility, syntax, sentence structure, sequence etc. Further it was found that student of lower and poor income group, illiterate and less educated parents, rural background were low performer in terms of writing skills. The paper also suggest certain solution to writing related problems, such as students belonging to poor background, rural areas and illiterate parents needs extra attention. Special care should be given to the students in the early classes particularly on their writing skills so that such problems may be removed at very early stage. More and more practice and special sessions needs to be given to improve the legibility, syntax, sentence structure and content delivery aspects of writing skills.

About Good Writing

“I saw that bad handwriting should be regarded as a sign of an imperfect education, I tried to improve mine, but it was too late. I could never repair the neglect of my youth. Let every young man and woman be warned by my example, and understand that good handwriting is a necessary part of education.”

Mahatma Gandhi

According to Francis Bacon, “Reading makes a full man and writing an exact man.” We need to write to communicate our ideas in social, educational, cultural and professional areas. Writing also takes precedence over other skills, as it serves as the medium through which we communicate our ideas, thoughts or feelings to people who are at a distance. In daily life we may have to apply for leaves, draft a report, plan a programme, report an event or release a press note. All these activities are associated with writing. Further, writing makes the record permanent. So, because of all these things one should have to know how to write clearly and quickly. (Rambhadracharyulu G. & Sarojini B. B. 2011)

Mechanics of Writing

- a) Knowing how to write letters with right shape and size.
- b) Knowing how to give proper spacing between letters, words and lines.
- c) Knowing where to use the capital letters and punctuation mark correctly.
- d) Knowing how to coordinate the muscles of the wrist with those of fingers in writing.

Once the pupils are aware of the mechanics of writing, they will be able to write correctly and legibly at reasonable speed. (Rambhadracharyulu G. & Sarojini B. B. 2011)

Sub-Skills in writing

Writing aims at clear and effective communications. In order to achieve this aim, a number of sub-skills in writing are to be developed among the students.

The following are some of the sub-skills in writing.

- a) Writing/Legibility/Proper paragraph
- b) Grammar/Syntax
- c) Spelling/Vocabulary/Idioms/Phrases
- d) Integrated/Sequenced/proper arranged /Well knitted
- e) Content and Relevancy

The above sub-skills are to be developed among the pupils right from the beginnings in order to lay a firm foundation in developing the writing skill. (Rambhadracharyulu G. & Sarojini B. B. 2011)

The Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the relationship between the performance of the students in writing to their demographic background.
2. To look into the extent of the overall problems in writing skills among the students.

3. To study dimension wise (Writing/ Legibility/ Proper paragraph, Grammar/Syntax, Spelling/ Vocabulary/ Idioms/ Phrases, Integrated/ Sequenced/ Properly arranged/ Well knitted, Content and Relevancy) problems of learners in writing skills.

Description of the Tools Used in the Study

A brief profile to know the Socio-Economic and Educational background of the learner was developed. Further for in depth study of the writing skill, an open ended questionnaire was developed. In this questionnaire two types of open ended questions were asked. First was essay writing on some current topics and second was letter writing. The analysis of their responses was done under five dimensions, as follows;

- 1) Writing/Legibility/Proper paragraph: - With the help of this dimension the characteristics of hand writing were checked. Under this dimension uniformity, Legibility, Punctuation marks, neatness and cleanness of writings were checked.
- 2) Grammar/Syntax: - With this dimension the grammatical skill of students were checked. Like use of part of speech, singular and plural, structure of sentence were checked.
- 3) Spelling/Vocabulary/Idioms/Phrases: - With this dimensions the proper use of words and spellings were checked. It also checked the uses of idioms and phrases.
- 4) Integrated/Sequenced/ proper arranged/Well knitted: - This dimension checked that if the sentence is well arranged or not. Uses of words and sentence structure are in sequence or not. Whether the paragraph is balanced and is in proper order or not.
- 5) Content and Relevancy: - Content is related to topic or not. How far the content is related to the topic or not. Whether it is related to the context or not.

The Context and Sample of the Study

In total 60 students of B. Ed 1st semester studying in MANUU, college of teacher Education, Darbhanga were subject to administration of the questions in a peaceful environment after taking proper permission from the principal of the college. MANUU, College of Teacher Education, Darbhanga (Bihar) is a constituent college of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad and presently situated at Ilyasashraf Nagar, Chandan Patti Village. This is one of the premier colleges of teacher education in and around the state of Bihar. This college started with modest beginning in the year 2007 to meet the ever increasing demand of Urdu medium teachers at secondary and higher secondary levels in Bihar in particular and the nation as a whole. Presently it is offering B.Ed (two units), M. Ed. and Ph.D. programmes. Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) is a Central University established at National Level in 1998 by an act of Parliament to promote and develop the Urdu language and to impart vocational and technical Education in Urdu medium through conventional and distance modes. The Headquarters of the University is at an outstanding central location, Gachibowli, Hyderabad, sprawled over 200 acres. The students and staff of the University are drawn

from throughout India. They are attracted by its commitment to excellence in quality Urdu education in all disciplines of knowledge.

Analysis of Data and Major Findings

Table 1.1 Performance in Writing Skill in Relation to Certain Demographic Variables

WRITING SKILL DIMENSIONS/ DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROIND		EXTREMELY WELL	WELL	SATISFACTORY	UNSATISFACTORY	EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTING	TOTAL
GENDER	M	2	5	10	16	13	46
	F	4	1	3	2	4	14
LOCATION	R	3	5	9	13	11	41
	U	3	1	4	5	6	19
INCOME LEVEL	L	1	5	2	5	7	20
	LM	0	1	4	3	2	10
	AM	3	0	5	6	4	18
	HG	2	0	2	4	4	12
FATHER EDUCATION	FCI	0	2	0	3	4	9
	FPL	1	1	5	9	9	25
	FG	4	3	4	2	2	15
	FPG	1	0	4	4	2	11
MOTHER EDUCATION	MCI		2	3	7	12	24
	MPL	4	4	8	11	4	31
	MG	1	0	1	0	1	3
	MPG	1	0	1	0	0	2
10TH BOARD	BB	4	5	10	15	15	49
	CBSE	1	1	2	0	0	4
	MB	1	0	1	3	2	7
TOTAL		6	6	13	18	17	60

As shown in table 1.1 out of 46 male students under sample, majority (29 out of 46) of the male students performed relatively poor since their overall writing was either unsatisfactory or extremely disappointing. In contrast to this the performance of the more than half of the girls (8 out of the 14 girls under sample) exhibited extremely well or satisfactory level in writing. A correlation was also found between the income level of parents or writing skill of the students. Out of the 30 students belonging to lower and lower middle income group only 7 students performed well or extremely well in writing skill. A relationship may be established from the table that a vast majority of the students whose fathers were either completely illiterate or partially literate (25 out of 30) performed unsatisfactory or extremely disappointing. When it comes to mother education only 2 students under sample were such whose mother were either graduate or post

graduate. Astonishingly both the students were extremely well performers in writing skills. When it comes to students 10th board of examination it was found that none of the CBSE board student showed unsatisfactory or disappointing performer in writing skill. While majority of Madarsa board students (5 out of 7) performed very poor in writing skills.

Table1.2 Overall and Dimension Wise Performance of Students in Writing

DIMENSIONS RATING	CATEGORY RANGE	WRITING / LEGIBILITY/ PROPER PARAGRAPH	GRAMMAR/SYN TAX	SPELLING/ VOCABULARY/ IDIOMS/ PHRASES	INTEGRATED/ SEQUENCED/ PROPER ARRANGED	CONTENT AND RELEVANCY	OVER ALL WRITING SKILL
Extremely Well	80% and Above	7 (11.66%)	5 (8.33%)	6 (10%)	9 (15%)	12(20%)	6 (10%)
Well	60% and Above	6 (10%)	7 (11.66%)	6 (10%)	7 (11.66%)	2 (3.33%)	6 (10%)
Satisfactory	40% and Above	15 (25%)	12 (20%)	14 (23.33%)	6 (10%)	16 (26.66%)	13 (21.66%)
Unsatisfactory	20% and Above	19 (31.66%)	21 (35%)	22 (36.66%)	20 (33.66%)	22 (36.66%)	18 (30%)
Extremely Disappointing	Below 20%	13 (21.66%)	15 (25%)	12 (20%)	18 (30%)	8 (13.33%)	17 (28%)

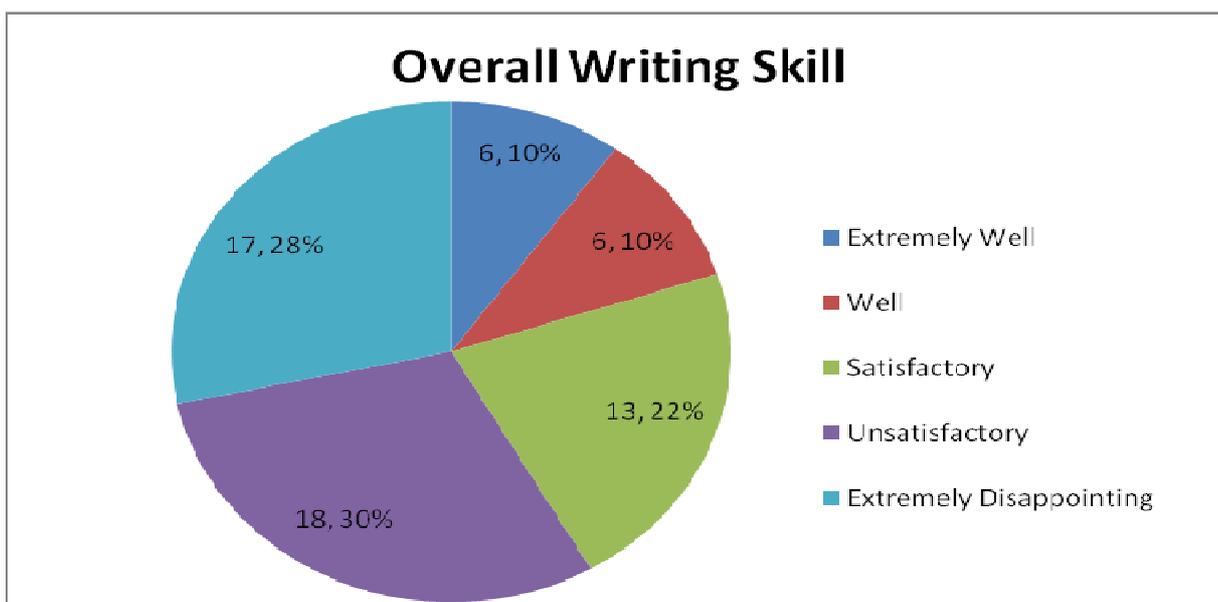


Fig. 1.1 Overall Performance of Students in Writing Skills

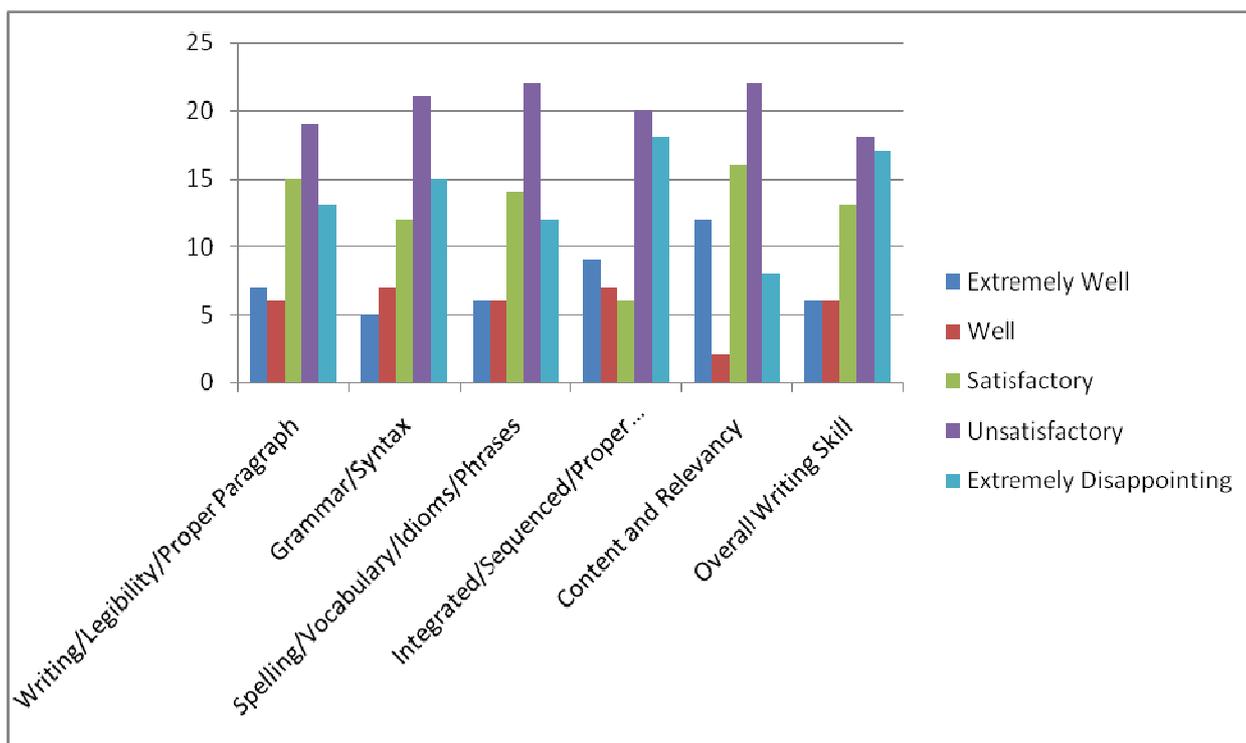


Fig. 1.2 Dimension wise Performance of students in Writing Skill

So far the overall performance of the students in writing skill is concerned, as shown in table 1.2 and figure 1.1 about one third students (18 out of 60) performance was unsatisfactory. Also a significant number of students (29% i.e. 17 out of 60) performance was extremely disappointing. Whereas 21% (13 out of 60) students showed satisfactory performance in their writing abilities. It is remarkable to not here that only 12 students (20%) performed well (10%) or extremely well (10%) when it came to evaluation of writing abilities is concerned. Further from the above data it is very much clear that 60% students have lack of proper writing skill.

As it is clear from the table 1.2 and figure 1.2 that in hand writing legibility and proper paragraph the performance of 21.66% (13 out of 60) students was extremely disappointing .While one third students (19 out of 60) were unsatisfactory in their performance. Their writing legibility was poor. They even don't know the appropriate use of capital and small letters. Similarly 25% students (15 out of 60) performance in writing was satisfactory, where as 10% of the total students (6 out of 60) performed well. Their writing was legible. A total 7 students out of 60 performed extremely well in legibility aspect. They have beautiful legible writing.

Again in Grammar/Syntax evaluation 25% (15 out of 60) students written material was extremely disappointing. While 35% (21 out of 60) students performance was unsatisfactory. Similarly 20% (12 out of 60) performed satisfactory and 11.66 % (7 out of 60) were well in grammar and syntax. Only 8.33% (5 out of 60) students were extremely good grammatically in their writings.

So far use of Spellings/Vocabulary/Idioms/Phrases is concerned most of the students did not use idioms and phrases while expressing their views during writing. If we see the data 20% (12 out of 60) students performed extremely disappointing in this regard. 33.66% (22 out of 60) were unsatisfactory in using vocabulary and spelling. 22.33% (14 out of 60) were satisfactory in their performance, whereas a very few (6 out of 60) performed well and same number (6 out of 60) performed extremely well.

While analyzing sentence arrangement and sequencing of sentences about one third (18 out of 60) were extremely poor, While 33.66% (20 out of 60) performed unsatisfactorily. Similarly 10% performed satisfactorily. 11.66% (7 out of 60) were well and 15% (9 out of 60) were extremely well in making sentences well integrated .They had arranged the paragraph in well sequenced manner.

In case of content and relevancy aspect of writing skill, a few number of students (8 out of 60) performed extremely disappointing. 33.66% (22 out of 60) performed unsatisfactorily. Their content delivery was poor while 26.66% (16 out of 60) were satisfactory in their performance. A very few students 3.33% were well but 20% (12 out of 60) were extremely well in their performance.

Educational Implication & Conclusion

After doing this study we come to the conclusion that focus should be given to poor income group students and Madarsa board students at early stages of their learning. Since it was found in the study that highly educated mothers' children are good in writing. So mothers' literacy should be enhanced through non formal education. Parent's literacy as a whole is also a factor behind poor performance in writing skill. So effort should be made to promote adult literacy programme at village level, rural areas, slums, taking the deprived, poor, marginalized sections into account.

The legibility of more than half of students under study was either unsatisfactory or extremely disappointing which clearly stresses the need for immediate steps to be taken to bring improvement in writing skill. For this students should be practiced on lined papers with proper margin, selection of proper pen as well as proper holding habits while writing should be taken care by the teachers.

Vocabulary and spelling mistakes came out to be an important factor behind poor performance of students in writing. In this regard habit of more and more reading, writing, drilling and conversation should be promoted. Efforts should be made to motivate students to write one to two words daily on practice board, making more and more practice.

Grammar syntax error was rampant in the students under study. All efforts should be made to ensure good quality language teachers particularly at elementary level so that grammatically correct communication can be ensured. Different rules of grammar should be taught from the very beginning.

Information communication gadgets (mobiles, internet, laptops, computers etc) can be used as a strong tool to improve handwriting skills. Students can access/view best handwriting practices across the world. They can listen to videos on different aspects of writing skills and can learn techniques to improve writing skills.

Special programmes exclusively for enhancing writing skills can be organized for week/fortnight or even for a month in school/colleges. During that period diverse activities can be organized ranging from legibility aspect to grammar, syntax, idioms, phrases, sentence making and essay writing on various issues ranging from social to political economic environmental health and hygiene etc. During this period all teachers and students should focus on writing skills alone. Such activities give students ample of opportunity to learn different aspects of good writing skills. Further they get an opportunity to understand the importance of good writing abilities.

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