

Free Writing Proficiency of Grade Nine Students of Sarlahi District

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education
in Partial Fulfillment for the Masters of Education in English**

**Submitted by
Rush Stalin Chaulagain**

**Faculty of Education
Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal
2023**

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, respected lecturers, relatives and students whose great inspiration, encouragement and support helped me to be what I am today.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge this thesis is original; no part of it was earlier submitted for the candidature of degree to any university.

Date: 06-09-2023

Rush Stalin Chaulagain

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Rush Stalin Chaulagain

ABSTRACT

This study entitled "**Free Writing Proficiency of Grade Nine Students of Sarlahi District**" has aimed at finding out the proficiency of students on free writing and identify the errors in their writing. This research sought to explore free writing proficiency of grade nine students from institutional and community schools of Sarlahi district. This study examined students' free writing ability in terms of the mechanics, grammar, cohesion and coherence, clarity and economy and completeness in holistic way. This present study was the survey research. To address the objectives of the study, 40 students were selected from institutional and community schools as a sample by using purposive non-random sampling procedure. This research was carried out by using both primary and secondary sources of data and a set of test items was used as tool for data collection. The study shows that free writing proficiency of the students was satisfactory. The study also reveals that students of institutional school were more proficient in free writing in comparison to the students of community school.

This research study consists of five chapters. The first chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definition of the key terms. The second chapter consists of the review of related theoretical literature, review of empirical literature, implications of the study and conceptual framework. In the same way, the third chapter includes design of the study, population, sample and sampling strategy, research tools, sources of data, data collection procedure, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter deals with analysis of data and interpretation of results. The final chapter deals with findings, conclusion and recommendations. The references and appendices have been included in the last part of the thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
DECLARATION	i
RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTENCE	i
RECOMMENDATION FOR EVALUATION	ii
EVALUATION AND APPROVAL.....	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT.....	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xi
ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS.....	xii
CHAPTER I.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study.....	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Objectives of the study	3
Research Questions	3
Significance of the Study	3
Delimitations of the Study.....	4
Operational Definition of the Key Terms	4
CHAPTER-II	5
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK....	5
Review of Related Theoretical Literature	5
The English Language	5
Review of Related Empirical Literature.....	15
Implications of the Review for the Study.....	17
Conceptual Framework	18

CHAPTER-III.....	19
METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY	19
Design and Method of the Study.....	19
Population, Sample and Sampling Strategy	20
Research Tools	20
Sources of Data	21
Primary Sources of Data.....	21
Secondary Sources of Data.....	21
Data Collection Procedures	21
Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures	22
Holistic Proficiency of Community and Institutional Schools Students in Free Writing	23
Comparison between institutional and community school’s students in dialogue writing.....	24
Comparison between Institutional and Community Schools Students in Paragraph Writing.....	25
Comparison between Institutional and Community School’s Students in Letter Writing.....	28
Comparison between Institutional and Community School’s Students in Story Writing.....	29
Chapter-V.....	31
Findings, Conclusion and Implications.....	31
Findings.....	31
Conclusion.....	32
Implications	33
References.....	
APPENDICES	

LIST OF TABLES

	Page No.
Table 1: Question wise Marking Scheme	20
Table 2: Criteria Allocated by Heaton	21
Table 3: Marks Obtained by the Students of Community and Institutional School in Free Writing	23
Table 4: Performance of Students in Dialogue Writing.....	24
Table 5: Performance of Students in Paragraph Writing	25
Table 6: Performance of Students in Essay Writing	27
Table 7: Performance of Students in Letter Writing.....	28
Table 8: Performance of Students in Story Writing.....	29

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

%	:	Percentage
Av.	:	Average
Dr.	:	Doctor
e.g.	:	For example
ELT	:	English Language Teaching
etc.	:	etcetra
i.e.	:	That is
M.Ed	:	Master of Education
Mr.	:	Mister
Mrs.	:	Mistress
No.	:	Number
Prof.	:	Professor
Q.N.	:	Question number
Regd.	:	Registration
S.N.	:	Serial Number

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is entitled Free Writing Proficiency of Grade Nine Students of Sarlahi district. This chapter consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definitions of the key terms.

Background of the Study

Language is fundamentally a means of human communication. It is extremely complex and highly versatile. It is especially human possession. Language is a great accomplishment of human civilization. We cannot think any, artistic social and activities without language. Writing is one of the productive skills. It is an important academic and crucial language skill through which we can share our ideas in a formal, systematic and organized way.

In the context of Nepal, English language is taught as a compulsory subject primary level to Secondary level. The main objective of teaching English is to enable the students in global communication, business, and to have access to the world body of knowledge. Pedagogically, teaching English is targeted at developing all the four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing. According to Crystal (1978, p. 282) defines language as “the systematic conventional use of signs, sound or written symbols in a society for self-expression and communication”. This definition includes different terms of language like written language, sign language, and speech. However, language is used to share knowledge and experiences and transmit message, from one generation to another generation and from one individual to another. We can express our feelings, thoughts and ideas through language. The main function of language is to communicate.

According to Bloch and Trager (1942, p. 5) language is “a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates.” In every language vocal sounds are organized systematically and languages have their own system of arrangements. It is customary to take speech as the only skill of language used for communication. In fact, writing skill is equally important for communication purpose.

According to Richards (1990, p .54), “Written language is primarily transactional or message oriented. The goal of written language is to convey information accurately, effectively and appropriately”. The main purpose of writing is to enable the learners for free composition and creative writing. The students’ language competence is better if they can write well. Writing is the most difficult work to acquire. It is the record of one's thoughts an ideas a from of expression and a reliable means of communication. Writing refers to the expression of ideas in a consecutive way, according to the graphic convention of the language; the ultimate aim of the writer at this stage is to be able to express him in a literary text which requires the utilization of a special vocabulary and certain refinements structures.

In conclusion, writing is a very complex process that requires many composite skills. It is a skill that improves with constant practice.

Statement of the Problem

Writing skill is one of the important skills of learning English language. This is also one of the challenging, complicated and advance skills to teach in foreign language context. Writing needs deep knowledge, clear idea about something and do several activities. So, it is difficult to mastery over the writing. In present days, students do not practice more, they collect readymade materials. A student can read more difficult passages and long sentences whereas he/she feels difficult to express himself /herself through writing. It is because we hear more than we write. Writing is a skill that improves with practice. It is necessary to give guidance, proper practices and proper feedback. Otherwise, problems can frequently occur in the field of writing skill. All the students may not have the same ability of writing skill. We generally hear that writing ability of students is better in institutional schools than governmental schools. Furthermore; student's learning style, teacher's teaching strategies and student's practice rate can have some effect on free writing ability. So, I am interested to compare the free writing ability of institutional and community schools’ students of Sarlahi district.

Writing skill is difficult skill and should be taught only after the students have received other skills and aspects of English language teaching. In the context of Nepal, since the English language has been taught as a foreign language, students face

problems to develop skills of language. Here, my concern is to find out free writing proficiency of grade nine students.

Developing writing skill in a learner is not an easy task. This will be more problematic for the beginners. The learners should be conscious about various elements related to writing. Thus, for developing writing skill; students may face various problems which cause difficulties in writing.

Objectives of the study

The study had the following objectives:

- i. To find out the proficiency level of grade nine students in free writing.
- ii. To compare the free writing proficiency of institutional and community school of Sarlahi district.
- iii. To suggest some pedagogical implications.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in the study:

- i. What is the proficiency level of grade nine student in free writing ?
- ii. What is the difference in free writing proficiency between the students of institutional and community school?

Significance of the Study

English has been taught and learnt as a foreign language in most of the countries in the world. Though, all four language skills are inseparable from the teaching learning activities, writing skill has play major role for better acquisition and learning of a language. Our Nepal is a multilingual country, where English language is being taught as a foreign language as well as second language from primary to higher level as a compulsory subject because of international situation of English. Our curriculum and education program give more priority for writing skill rather than speaking and listening skills. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize on writing skill in Nepalese context. So, this study will focus on the writing ability of nine graders in free writing.

This study were significant for those people who are indirectly or directly involved in the field of teaching and learning English language. It helps the teachers to develop remedial classes or materials to improve writing skill. A part from this, the outcomes and findings of this study are expected to be significant for teachers, students

and researchers. This will have remarkable contribution in the areas of teaching and learning of writing skills.

Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations of the study were as follows:

- i. This study was limited to two schools (community and institutional) of Sarlahi District.
- ii. Study was only limited to the students of class nine.
- iii. It was limited to 20 students from community school and 20 students from institutional school.
- iv. Similarly, the study was comparative study.
- v. Likewise; the sample population was selected through purposive non-random procedure.
- vi. The data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

Operational Definition of the Key Terms

This research study has some key terms which are defined as follows:

Coherence. Good writing deals with one topic at a time. Coherence is semantic relationship which is understood in terms of background or experiential knowledge.

Cohesion. Cohesion refers to the grammatical and lexical relationship between sentences in a text. It maintains the smooth flow of the text, and ties the different entities of a particular text together.

Free writing. In this study, free writing means grade nine students' individual selection of vocabularies and structures for the expression of personal ideas.

Proficiency. Proficiency means the capacity of doing something appropriately and accurately. Here, proficiency means the capacity of grade nine students in free writing.

Writing proficiency. In this study, writing proficiency means the level of competency in which an individual is able to use language for both basic communicative task and academic purpose in writing.

CHAPTER-II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter of research study consists of review of related theoretical and empirical literature, implication of reviewed literature, and conceptual framework of the study.

Review of Related Theoretical Literature

This chapter consists of theoretical and conceptual framework of the study similarly, the details of three reviewed literature and their implications for the study have been included in this chapter as well.

The English Language

Among the different languages existing in different societies, English is the mostly used language in the world. It is the lingua franca of the world because it is the only language that is widely adopted for communication between two speakers speaking different languages. Moreover, the English language is used to achieve worldwide knowledge related to different fields like culture, religion, literature, education, science and technological discoveries. According to Phillipson (2007):

English is now entrenched universal as a result of British colonialism, international interdependence, 'revolutions' in transport, technology, communications, commerce and because English is the language of the USA, a major economic, political, and military force in the contemporary world. It is not only Britain which has gravitated towards linguistic homogeneity but a significant portion of the entire world (pp. 23-24)

The demand of English language is increasing day by day. English language has become a gateway to economic prosperity. It is inevitably necessary for individual and social empowerment. It has become the language of adjustment in the globe. It is a passport to cross the border. English language is a window to look out the world. It gives the access in the explanation of knowledge. It has made knowledge being scattered in the globe. Due to the above given versatile and dynamic use of English language, Nepalese people are highly motivated to learn English language

Language Skills. The skills that are involved in manipulating a language are called language skills. They refer to the way or manners of using language. We can use language in terms of four skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The four language skills do not work properly work in isolation rather they interconnected. The language skills are mainly divided into receptive skills and productive skills. According to Hammer (2007, p.265), ‘receptive skills’ is a term used for listening skill and reading skills where meaning is extracted from the discourse. A ‘productive skill’ is term used for speaking and writing skill. It is the skill where students actually have to produce language themselves.

In conclusion, language is means of communication which the world becomes narrow. Every person can used language for different purposes and most activities are done through language.

Writing Skill. Writing skill is most important skills in learning a new language. It is often regarded as the visual representation of speech which is also known as the productive skill of language. Under the four skill of language writing skill is a productive skill. Writing skill mainly related to manipulation of the mechanics of writing, structuring them into sensible words, sentences and paragraphs in order to make the reader understand the meaning of such complex effort. Moreover, writing is the act of placing the graphic symbols that present language in order to convey the meaning that the reader can grasp the information. It is the last language skill and it is also the most difficult skill of language. It is difficult not only in organizing and generating ideas but also in translating these ideas into readable text. The skills involved in writing are more complex. We are able to discover and articulate ideas in the way that only writing makes possible. Rivers (1968) states:

Writing mainly refers to the expression of ideas in a consecutive way, according to the graphic connection of the language; the ultimate aim of a writer at this stage is to be able to express himself in a polished literary form which requires the utilization of a special vocabulary and certain refinement structures.(p.243)

From this definition, we can say writing is one of the way of expressing our ideas in a continuous process through the graphic symbols of the any language.

Writing needs different mechanisms and it also requires special skill from one type of writing to another type of writing.

Bell and Burnaby (1984, as cited in Nunan, 1998) point out that writing is extremely cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of variables simultaneously at the sentence level, these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling and letter formation.

Similarly, White and Arndt (1993) say writing is far from a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in its own right. It demands conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over a considerable period of time. Writing is one of the form of problem solving which involves such processes as generating the ideas, discovering a 'voice' with which to write, planning, goal setting, monitoring and analyzing what is going to be written like as what had been written and searching for language with which to express exact meaning. Moreover, writers rarely know the outset exactly, what is they are going to write because many ideas are only revealed during the act of writing and act of complete the writing.

From these definitions, we can say that writing is a very complex process and requires mechanics of writing, coherence and cohesion to integrate information properly. Writing is an act of transmitting thoughts, feelings, emotion and ideas from past to present and from present to future. It is like a transparent mirror which can vividly present our knowledge, skill as well as experiences.

Similarly, Harmer (1991, p. 78) says, "Writing is an activity which human beings are easily communicate with one person to another and transmit their feelings, ideas, thoughts and accommodate their culture from one generation to another generation. It equally provides with possibilities to discover and articulate the ideas in many ways".

From this definition, we can say that writing is an activity through which human beings share their culture, religion, values, ideas and assumptions from one generation to another.

In conclusion, writing is an act of rendering thoughts, feelings and ideas from past to present and from present to future in graphic way. It is a transparent mirror which can present experiences and knowledge as well.

Importance of Writing. Writing is one of the most important and superior skill for learning a language because of its quality of being permanent. It is a productive skill. Writing helps to transmit thoughts, feelings and ideas from one to another in different time phases through graphic forms. Therefore, it is regarded as transparent of mirror, which can present our knowledge as well as experiences. Writing is the output of listening, speaking and reading skills.

Writing skill is the secondary and productive skill. In our examination system of all levels, the writing ability plays a prime role in securing good marks. If students are not trained in writing skill, they cannot give answers in a limited time of examination. The students cannot be perfect in any language without the better knowledge of writing skill.

Harmer (2007, p. 86) writes, “Writing as a co-operative activity, co-operative writing works well with both genre and process based approaches”. In the same way, he argues that the reasons for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language include refinement, language development, learning style and most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right. So, we can say that the students who learn the English language cannot be perfect without the knowledge of writing skill. Writing helps students to learn second language, reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms and vocabulary that they have learnt in the classes.

According to Richards (1990, p. 101). “Written language is primarily language transactional or message oriented. The goal of written language is to convey information accurately, effectively and appropriately”. Writing skill provides variety in the classroom activities. Written documents can be preserved for long time. Writing has widely used to transmit experiences and knowledge related to science, literature, religion, technology, philosophy, politics, sociology and culture. Furthermore, the following points make the writing so important.

Writing is portable and permanent, it makes our thinking visible and clarity. Writing promotes our abilities to pose worthwhile questions. It fosters our ability to

explain a complex position to readers and to ourselves. Writing helps us to give feedback. It is a means to judge our work, our learning and our intellect in college, in the workplace and in the community. It is an essential job skill.

Thus, we can say that the students who learn the English language cannot be perfect without the knowledge of writing skill because language learning is the integration of four language skills viz. listening, speaking and writing. So, the students' competence is better if they can write well. So, writing is a very powerful and permanent means of communication through which human beings express their ideas, thoughts and feelings in orthographic forms.

Writing Proficiency. Writing proficiency is the ability of an individual to write or perform in an acquired language. The writing proficiency plays a vital role in securing good marks in the examination and it can spread our knowledge and experience to others. It is concerned with specific skills and abilities rather than generally abilities. It helps to select people from different institutions and countries in affair manner.

Writing proficiency is one of the most important components of language proficiency. People have realized the critical importance of the search for excellence in developing writing assessment. Instrument provides the best possible information about student writing proficiency which is quite difficult to realize.

Proficiency test is defined as the one's ability of using language, mathematics and science without considering the course he or she was taught and learnt in particular situation. Harmer (2007, p. 334) says "proficiency test gives a general picture of a student's knowledge and ability. They are frequently used as stages people have to reach if they want to admit to a foreign university, get a job or obtain some kind of certificate. Most of community examinations are proficiency tests type. Here, proficiency tests of writing generally incorporate multiple choice items, fill in the blanks, grammatical items, vocabulary, reading comprehension and free writing as well.

According to Hughes (1995, p.75), "the best way to test people's writing ability is to get them to write. This is not an unreasonable assumption. Even

professional testing institution is unable to construct indirect tests which measures writing ability accurately.”

Similarly, Weir (1993) explains that two different approaches for assessing writing ability can be adopted. Firstly, writing can be divided into discrete levels, e.g. grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation and these elements can be tested separately by the use of objective tests. Secondly, more direct extended writing tasks of various types should be constructed. These would have greater construct content, face and wash back validity but would require a more subjective assessment.

Thus, testing writing is a very complex task because testing of it includes infinite number of things such as spelling, cohesion, coherence. beside this, the complexity of texting writing increases due to the fact that writing now is not restricted to articles, books, letters, etc. on paper alone. Today computer offers a wide range of opportunities to write documents, e-mails, faxes or which have made writing a more complex process because the writer has to be familiar with dazzling array of tools with which to prepare, organize and present his/her write ups. In my study, the whole writing is judged classifying in five different topics viz. grammar, mechanics, coherence and cohesion, clarity and economy and completeness.

Components of Writing. Writing is often long and painful process in which the final text emerges through successive drafts. Thus, writing is not only merely an activity of encoding verbal thoughts in printed symbols but it is the combination of various components. In this context, Heaton (1991, p. 142) states that writing is not a single skill but it is the combination of following components: mechanics, coherence and cohesion, orthographic and Para-orthographic text.

Mechanics. In composition, writing mechanics are the conventions governing the technical aspects of writing, including punctuation, spelling, capitalization and abbreviations. A writing mechanics definition could be the rules concerning technical aspects of writing composition. The use of semi-colon, comma, hyphen, full stop is important in any written text. If punctuations are wrongly used, they bring change in meaning.

Cohesion. Cohesion refers to the grammatical and lexical relationship between sentences in a text. It maintains the smooth flow of the text, and ties the different

entities of a particular text together. The use of pronouns, adverbs, adjectives, etc. can be done to create a coherent text.

When we write a text we have a number of linguistic at our disposal to make sure that our prose 'sticks together'. We can, for example, use lexical repetition and or chains of words within same lexical set through a text to have this effect.

Coherence. Swami (1987, p.13) views that in good piece of writing, all the sentences are closely related to the central idea (as cited in Chapagain, 2008, p. 17). It means good writing always deals with a topic and gives the clear cut vision to the readers. Good writing deals with one topic at a time.

Orthographic and Para-orthographic Text. Orthographic is very similar to alphabetic writing. According to G. Kouroupetroglou et al (1999) "Orthography represents integrated, rule based symbolic systems, where in a fixed set of elements can be recombined to produce an almost unlimited range of novel meanings, words and sentences in normal text are written in an orthography whose grapheme units members of the alphabet of natural languages". On the other hand, para- orthographic text is related to change of orthography in the form of diagram, pie-chart, maps, tables etc. which requires special skill (Heaton, 1991).

Sub-skills of Writing. Writing skill consists of various sub skills. The sub-skill of writing according to John Munby as cited in Venkateswaran (1995) are as follow:

- Manipulating the script of a language
- Forming the shapes of letters
- Using the spelling system
- Using punctuation
- Expressing information explicitly
- Expressing information implicitly through inference and figurative language
- Explanation of point already made
- Anticipating and objection
- Reducing the text through avoiding irrelevant information

Among the above mentioned sub-skills of writing, I focused on using the spelling system, punctuation, coherence and cohesion, clarity and economy and completeness.

Characteristics of Good Writing. Writing is one of the essential and most important skills of language. Writing is an art of using language. But, it is a very complex task to write clearly and explicitly. In this context, learning to write either in first or a second language is one of the most difficult tasks for all language learners. Good writing skills are essential to academic success and requirement for many occupations and professions. Making a simple and clear writing is difficult from the syntactic and semantic point of view. It requires the good imagination and logical sequence of thought. Richards (1985, p.7) rightly points out the essential characteristics of good writing, which are:

Economy. A good writer can express his/her ideas or thoughts briefly and effectively. He/she does this through economy of words or minimization of words to express meanings clearly and quickly. A short but effective writing can be popular to every reader because it saves time, energy and materials.

Simplicity. Minimizing the complexities, embellishment and expressing ideas or thought in a natural way is the important characteristics of good writing. It avoids flourishes, extra- linguistic words, genres, and ambiguous words and so on. Simplicity makes writing understandable and readable which never disturbs the readers to understand the gist of writing.

Clarity. Writing must be free from ambiguity and should be crystal clear. It should avoid exaggeration as well as contradictory statement.

Continuity. Continuity of thought and natural link of ideas are important features of writing. It means writing should have consistency; it should consist of coherence and cohesion.

Free from Error. As writing is the permanent expressions of one's thought and ideas, it must be accurate. Every written piece has to be free from orthographic, semantic, grammatical, idiomatic, punctuation and other errors.

Furthermore, a good writing requires example and illustrations to explain abstract and difficult ideas. There should be appropriate facts, depth of knowledge, specific and objectivity in every piece of effective writing. The above mentioned characteristics of a good writing can play a vital role in the free writing ability of the grade nine students. They should have the ability to write clear, economic and simple, continuous and error free sentences.

Complete. Good writing must be complete. It completes the topic as what it deals with. Good writing avoids exaggeration and self-contradictory statements.

Types of Writing. There are mainly three types of writing. They are: Controlled writing, Guided writing and Free writing. The focus here is on free writing.

Free Writing. Free writing is an extended composition. It is not guided or controlled. In free writing students are given a topic or issue and they are free to write as please. According to Elbow (1998, p.5), free writing is defined as “informal and personal the writers begins writing and keeps writing in order to capture through and generate ideas”. There is no restriction on them for the use of vocabularies and sentence structures. Free writing exercises promote students feelings, emotions and desires. Organizational skill is very important and this can be well developed through report writing and letter writing. Except these two, free writing involves paragraph writing, dialogue writing, essay writing, writing precious and summary and writing different notices.

Free writing activities. Free writing is a complex activity, which requires a variety of skills. Learners should know how to select the appropriate vocabulary and structure to express their ideas in a meaningful way. According to Elbow (1998) the activities or exercises generally practiced to strengthen free writing are paragraph writing, descriptive writing, essay writing, narrative writing, dialogue writing, essay writing, report writing and story writing.

Among the above mentioned types of free writing activities, in my study I used paragraph writing, dialogue writing, letter writing, essay writing and story writing. These activities are briefly described in this section.

Paragraph writing. A paragraph can be defined as a piece of writing in which one's thought as the central idea or controlling ideas is developed by means of supporting details. The supporting details can be reasons, examples, comparative statements and other related facts. Every better paragraph should have a controlling idea, to which its sentences are related. There are different types of paragraphs such as descriptive, narrative, expository and reflexive.

Dialogue writing. Simply the literal meaning of dialogue is the conversation or talk between two person; but there can be more than two participants of characters in a conversation. Dialogue takes place in real life situations. There must be a subject or topic for a dialogue. We never converse without any purpose. So a dialogue is a conversation or a talk on a topic for a particular purpose between two or among more characters.

Letter writing. Letter writing is an one type of art. It is the complete communication between friends, parents, relatives and organizations. The information imparted by the letters should be natural and clear. The language and style differ from one to another letter. Simply the types of letter are personal letter, business letter, official letter, informal letter, letter of application etc.

Report writing. Report is a factual account of something seen, heard, done, studied, subject, experimented, etc. which is published or broadcasted in written or spoken form, and is intended to the target receiver. A report writer can include his recommendation and opinion on the basis of the fact observed or resulted. The main types of report are events, reporting excursion and newspaper report.

Essay writing. 'An essay' means a piece of composition on a topic. Its definition literally varies from person to person, but all economists with different definitions look, to some extent, similar. Essay is non-fictional creation. It is the most flexible and adaptable form of composition, dealing with authentic real and factual events and people, (Awasthi, Bhattarai & Khaniya , 2011).

Review of Related Empirical Literature

A number of research studies have been conducted in the department of English education related to warming up activities, language motivation and its techniques. Some of the related studies have been reviewed here in this section:

Paudyal (2015) carried out a study on “Proficiency of Grade Eleven Students in Free Writing.” The main objective of this study was to find the free writing proficiency of grade eleven students. He used survey research design and selected 60 students from three different government schools in Pyuthan by using non-random sampling procedure. A set of test items was used as a tool for data collection. The finding of this study presented that the writing skill of the students was not satisfactory and up to their level and it also showed that the boys were better than girls in free writing proficiency.

Kafle (2016) carried out a study on “A study on the proficiency in guided writing”. The main objective of this study was to find out and compare the students’ proficiency in guided writing and to find out their weaknesses and strengths in writing skills. He used non-random sampling procedure to select 60 students from ten different schools in Kathmandu. He used a set of test items as the tool for the data collection. The finding of his study showed that the proficiency of the girl students was better than that of the boy students and institutional school students’ proficiency was better than that of community school students in writing skills.

Pant (2017) carried out a study on “Proficiency in free writing”. The main objective of this study was to find out the free writing proficiency of higher secondary level students. Two higher secondary schools of Sarlahi district were selected conveniently and sampling population was selected using simple random sampling procedure. A written test was used as a tool for the data collection. The finding of this study presented that the total free writing proficiency of the students was not satisfactory.

Khatriwada (2020) carried out research on "Writing Proficiency of Higher Secondary Level Students". His objective was finding proficiency of students in free writing. His research tool was free situational composition writing. He used two testing items. He selected 60 students from four Higher Secondary school. He found

that errors in sentence linkage /to organize idea, use of some unnecessary structure of vocabulary items which are not suitable in sentence, use of incomplete sentences.

Alharthi (2021) carried out research on “Instructed Writing to Free-Writing: A study of EFL learners”. The objective of her study was to find out the free-writing journals can improve students’ writing performance based on the number of words, subject-verb agreement, capitalization, spelling, and punctuation. The study findings reveal the significance of free-writing journals for Saudi EFL learners. The Saudi Ministry of Education should restructure the education system to include free-writing journals in EFL writing instruction. Free-writing provides an orderly writing practice that enables EFL learners to make connections to their ideas through writing on topics of their choice. Repeated practice of free-writing can help learners to identify their mistakes and improve their writing performance.

Khanal (2021) carried out research on "Free Writing Proficiency of Grade ten Students". His objectives were finding errors committed by the students to use verb, spelling, subject verb agreement. His research tool was describing their birth place. He selected 35 students in his research. He found that students committed errors in spelling, sentence construction and subject verb agreement and the use of specific punctuation.

Afacan (2022) had done a research entitled “Journal Writing and Diary Journal Writing: Effects on Students, the Writing Proficiency and Student and Teacher Attitudes. ” they find out writing is recursive, and the text is only the final product of the complex composing process. This is one major reason for the rise of process writing.

Collins (2022) carried out a research entitled “The Power of Expressive Writing in Reading Comprehension”. He find out the Expressive, free, or spontaneous writing, long regarded as a frill in some academic circles, now boasts a growing body of research into its efficacy for learners at all levels. The most vehement detractors no longer may argue its nonacademic nature, nor contend that non-graded writing has little value, nor counter with the argument of paper overload. Once-legitimate complaints now are overridden by reports of student successes-increased fluency, enhanced attitudes, improved writing-all attributable to some form of expressive writing. Moreover, with increasing frequency, expressive writing is being credited

with improvement in another cognitive activity once thought unrelated, reading comprehension.

Singh (2022) carried out a research entitled “Basic Level Students' Proficiency in Free Writing”. The objectives of his study were to determine current proficiency of grade eight students in free writing. Thus, top five students of public schools are more capable than other students. The results showed that the free writing of community school students is also not less than that of institutional schools.

After reviewing previous research studies, I conceptualized my research study very clearly. My research study explored free writing ability of Institutional and community schools' students in Sarlahi district.

Implications of the Review for the Study

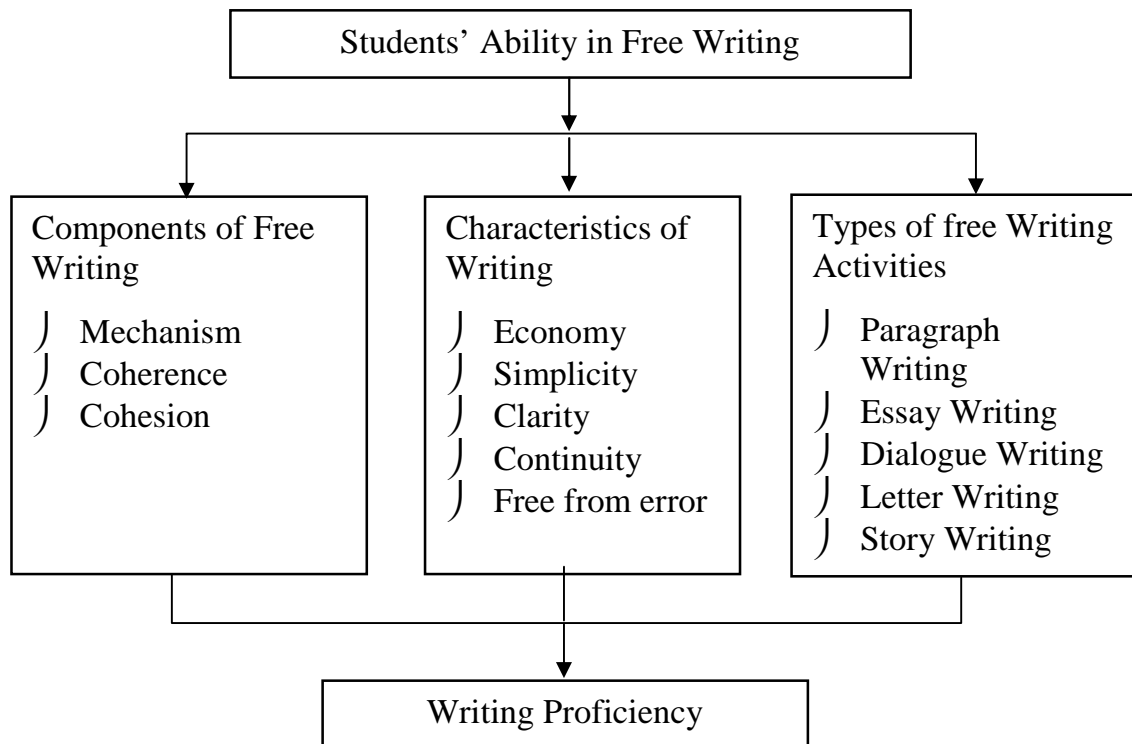
Literature review made me able to show the significance of my research to exiting body of knowledge in language teaching. These research studies were conducted having different research objectives with different research tools. From these research have found various ideas to process my research. Various ideas are generated from the researches. How to conduct research, analyze data, present data are found so these research made me comfort and easy to my research. The review of literature also helped me to bring clarity and focus on the research methodology. The review also helped me to develop the theory to my study, develop the idea, determine the research design, objective and research problem, improve techniques and procedure.

Similarly, from the study of Kafle (2016), on comparative studies in writing, it was found that the efficiency of girl students was better than that of boys and the efficiency of institutional school students was better than that of public schools. In Paudyal research work, it was found that he used different test items as research tools.

After reviewing the above research studies, the researcher was updated with research process and methodological tools, data analysis process, presentation of the findings and so on.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is the pictorial representation of the research study. It helps to direct the researchers towards his/ her study. It is the conceptualization of different required variables of the research study. The conceptual framework of my research study is given in Figure 1:



CHAPTER-III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

This chapter of study consists of the design and method of the study, population, sample and sampling strategy, sources of data, data collection tools and procedures, data analysis and interpretation, and ethical considerations of the study.

Design and Method of the Study

The research study entitled **Free Writing Proficiency of Grade Nine Students of Sarlahi District : A Comparative Study** is the mixed method survey design. This study analyzes data both qualitatively and quantitatively. The survey is extensively used in educational sector, and conducted to get the opinions of a diversified group of people on certain issues. Survey research design is most commonly used in educational research. It is equally important to social inquiry, politics and development studies and most significantly for education and linguistics aspects. It has an equal importance to large scale investigation like census to a small scale study. Survey is generally to obtain snapshot of conditions, attitudes and or event at a single point of time. In this sense, survey research is different from other type of research as experimental and quasi-experimental research in terms of population of the study and nature of collecting data. This is single time data collection in a survey research, and conducted in a natural setting.

The basic purpose of survey research is to find out the existing situation of a particular case. Survey research in educational sector seeks to eliminate the problems related to the education and generalize its finding on the basis of representative sample of specified target population. In a survey, data are gathered from a relatively large number of populations. It's more realistic in nature. Similarly, it deals with the clearly defined problems and objectives. Therefore, survey was appropriate to fulfill the objectives of this study.

Population, Sample and Sampling Strategy

Large number of people for the research to obtain the needed data. The sample of study were 20 students from the institutional and 20 students from community schools of grade nine in Sarlahi district. The participants were selected on the basis of purposive non random sampling procedure with mixed method.

Research Tools

The major tool of this study was test item to collect the data and information from the students. The items were paragraph writing, letter writing, essay writing, dialogue writing, and story writing. Each item carried different marks. The total mark of the items contain 50 and students were given 2 hour time to answer those items. To make marking more objective and systematic, I developed marking criteria for each aspect as shown in Table.

Table 1: Question wise Marking Scheme

S.N.	Criteria	Marks allocated
1	Proper use of mechanics	2
2	Grammar	2
3	Clarity of writing	2
4	Coherence and cohesion	2
5	Economy and completeness	2
	Total	10

According to Heaton (1991, p. 145), the ability of the students will be determined on the following basis.

Table 2: Criteria Allocated by Heaton

Excellent 18-20 (90-100)	Natural English, minimal errors, complete realization of the task set.
Very good 16-17 (80-85)	Good vocabulary and structure, above the simple sentence level, Errors non-basic.
Good 12-15 (60-75)	Simple but accurate realization of task, sufficient naturalness, not many errors.
Pass 8-11 (40-55)	Reasonably correct if awkward or Natural treatment of subject with some serious errors.
Weak 5-7 (25-35)	Vocabulary and grammar inadequate for the task set.
Very poor 0-4 (0-20)	Incoherent, Errors showing lack of basic knowledge of English

Sources of Data

I collected the data from both primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources of Data

The primary sources of data for this study was the 40 students studying in grade nine students of Sarlahi district. Which were 20 students from government school and 20 students from institutional school.

Secondary Sources of Data

The secondary sources of data for this research study were various research works carried out by different scholars in the field of English language teaching (ELT). I consulted the books, magazines, articles and many other types of researches.

Data Collection Procedures

First of all, I visited the selected schools and talked to the concerned authority for permission to give the test to students. Then, I consulted with the students to make them familiar about my study. After that, the test items and answer sheets were

distributed to the selected participants. It took them two hours to complete the test. At last, answer sheets were collect from the participants after completion of the answers. I thanked all the participants and school authority for their participation and kind co-operation.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

In this study, I analyzed the data on the basis of research objectives. It has the characteristic of both qualitative and quantitative analysis in the study, the collected data has analyzed and interpreted descriptively and statistically procedures.

Chapter-IV

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the respondents. The analysis was done under two headings: Overall proficiency of students in free writing and comparison of their proficiency.

Holistic Proficiency of Community and Institutional Schools Students in Free Writing

The overall proficiency of the students of selected school in free writing has been analyzed and interpreted in details using mean and percentile calculation. To find out the free writing proficiency, students were asked to write about a dialogue, a paragraph, an essay, a letter and a story. The marks they obtained are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Marks Obtained by the Students of Community and Institutional School in Free Writing

Tools	Marks obtained in Free writing		
	Institutional School	Community School	Difference
Mean (Average)	22.53	21.06	0.47%
Percentage (%)	51.68%	48.31%	3.37%

Table 3 shows that the average marks obtained by both institutional and community school students. The students of institutional school obtained 22.53 average marks (i. e. 51.68 %) out of 50 whereas the average marks obtained by the students of community school is 21.66 (i. e. 48.31%) out of 50. So, the difference between total marks secured by both institutional and community students is 3.37% and the mean difference is 0.47%. The marks obtained by both students of institutional and community school is satisfactory.

Comparison between institutional and community school's students in dialogue writing. In order to find out the proficiency in dialogue writing, students were asked to write about holiday plan in 5 exchanges. The question carried 5 marks under the five criteria (i.e. mechanics, grammar, coherence and cohesion, clarity and economy and completeness). Each aspect carried 1 marks. The performance of students in dialogue writing is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Performance of Students in Dialogue Writing

S.N.	Criteria	Full Marks	Marks obtained (Out of 10)				Remarks
			Community		Institutional		
			Av.	%	Av.	%	
1	Mechanics	1	0.46	23.33	0.46	23.33	
2	Grammar	1	0.41	20.83	0.4	20	
3	Cohesion and Coherence	1	0.50	25	0.4	20.33	
4	Clarity	1	0.41	20	0.38	19.16	
5	Economy and Completeness	1	0.43	21.65	0.33	19.66	
Total		5	2.21	21.65	1.97	19.86	

Table 4 demonstrates that students from both institutional and community schools have scored 0.46 as average marks (i.e. 23.33%) in mechanics out of two marks.

Similarly, community school students secured 0.41 average marks (i.e. 20.83%) whereas institutional school's students scored 0.4 (i.e. 20%) in grammar out of 1. The students committed errors in subject verb agreement, tense, preposition and numbers.

Likewise, community school's students obtained 0.50 average marks (i.e. 25%) whereas institutional school students obtained 0.4 average marks (i.e. 20%) in coherence and cohesion out of 1. The students committed errors in using connectors, link between ideas, and use of pronoun.

In the same way, community school students secured 0.4 average marks (i.e. 20%) and institutional school students scored 0.38 average marks (i.e. 19.16%) in clarity out of 1.

Likewise, community school students scored 0.43 average marks (i.e. 2.21%) and institutional school's students scored 0.33 average marks (i.e. 16.66%) in economy and completeness out of 1.

In total, community school's students scored 2.21 (i.e. 21.65%) and institutional school students got 2 (i.e. 20%). Table 2 shows that community school students were found more proficient in comparison to institutional school students in dialogue writing.

Comparison between Institutional and Community Schools

Students in Paragraph Writing. To find out the proficiency in paragraph writing, students were asked to write about Dashain and Tihar festival in 100 words. The question carried 10 marks under the five criteria (i.e. mechanics, grammar, coherence and cohesion, clarity and economy and completeness). Each aspect carries 2 marks. The performance of students in paragraph writing is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Performance of Students in Paragraph Writing

S.N.	Criteria	Full Marks	Marks obtained (Out of 10)				Remarks
			Community		Institutional		
			Av.	%	Av.	%	
1	Mechanics	2	0.8	40	1	50	
2	Grammar	2	0.63	31.66	0.93	46.66	
3	Cohesion and Coherence	2	0.66	33.33	0.96	48.33	
4	Clarity	2	0.5	25	0.9	45	
5	Economy and Completeness	2	0.43	21.66	0.76	38.33	
Total		10	3.03	30.33	4.56	45.66	

Table 5 presents that community school students scored 0.8 average marks (i.e. 40%) whereas institutional school students scored 1 average marks (i.e. 50%) in mechanics out of 2.

In the same way, community school students secured 0.63 average marks (i.e. 31.66%) in grammar out of 2 whereas institutional school students obtained 0.93 average marks (i.e. 46.66%).

Likewise, community school students obtained 0.66 average marks (i.e. 33.33%) and institutional school students obtained 0.96 average marks (i.e. 48.33%) in coherence and cohesion out of 2.

Similarly, community school students secured 0.5 average marks (i.e. 25%) whereas institutional school students secured 0.9 average marks (i.e. 45%) in clarity out of 2.

In the same way, community school students obtained 0.43 average marks (i.e. 21.66%) in economy and completeness out of 2 whereas institutional school students obtained 0.76 average marks (i.e. 38.33%).

In total, community school students got 3.03 average marks (i.e. 30.33%) whereas institutional school students got 4.56 (i.e. 45.66%). The above result reveals that community school's students were more proficient than institutional school's students in paragraph writing.

Comparison between Institutional and Community School's Student in Essay Writing. In order to find out the proficiency in essay writing, students were asked to write an essay about village in 100 words. The question carried 10 marks under the five criteria (i.e. mechanics, grammar, coherence and cohesion, clarity and economy and completeness). Each aspect carried 2 marks. The performance of students in essay writing is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Performance of Students in Essay Writing

S.N.	Criteria	Full Marks	Marks obtained (Out of 10)				Remarks
			Community		Institutional		
			Av.	%	Av.	%	
1	Mechanics	2	1.1	55	1.16	58.33	
2	Grammar	2	0.96	48.33	1.03	51.66	
3	Cohesion and Coherence	2	1.16	58.33	1.16	58.33	
4	Clarity	2	1	50	1.03	51.66	
5	Economy and Completeness	2	0.9	45	0.93	46.66	
Total		10	5.13	51.33	5.33	53.33	

Table 6 shows that community school students scored 1.1 average marks (i.e. 55%) in mechanics out of 2 whereas institutional school students scored 1.16 average marks (i.e. 58.33%).

Likewise, community school students scored 0.96 average marks (i.e.48.33%) and institutional school students scored 1.03 average marks (i.e. 51.66%).

In the same way, students from both community and institutional schools scored 1.16 average marks (i.e. 58.33%) in coherence out of 2.

Similarly, community school students obtained 1 average marks (i.e. 50%) whereas institutional school students obtained 1.03 average marks (i.e. 51.66%) in clarity out of 2. \

Likewise, community school students secured 0.9 average marks (i.e. 45%) and institutional school students secured 0.93 average marks (i.e. 46.66%) in economy and completeness out of 2.

In total, community school students obtained 5.13 average marks (i.e. 51.33%) and institutional school's students have obtained 5.33 average marks (i.e. 53.33%). The above result shows that institutional school students were found more proficient in comparison to community school students in essay writing.

Comparison between Institutional and Community School's Students in Letter Writing. In order to find out the proficiency in letter writing, students were asked to write a letter. The question carried 10 marks under the five criteria (i.e. mechanics, grammar, coherence and cohesion, clarity and economy and completeness). Each aspect carried 2 marks. The performance of students in letter writing is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Performance of Students in Letter Writing

S.N.	Criteria	Full Marks	Marks obtained (Out of 10)				Remarks
			Community		Institutional		
			Av.	%	Av.	%	
1	Mechanics	2	1.06	53.33	1.06	53.33	
2	Grammar	2	0.76	38.33	0.9	45	
3	Cohesion and Coherence	2	0.9	45	0.96	48.33	
4	Clarity	2	0.7	35	0.9	45	
5	Economy and Completeness	2	0.83	41.66	0.9	45	
Total		10	4.26	42.66	4.73	47.33	

Table 7 shows that students from both community and institutional schools have scored 1.06 average marks (i.e. 53.33%) in mechanics out of 2.

In the same way, community school students obtained 0.76 average marks (i.e.38.33%) whereas institutional school students have obtained 0.9 average marks (i.e. 45%) in grammar out of 2.

Similarly, community school students scored 0.9 average marks (i.e. 45%) in coherence and cohesion out of 2. and institutional school students scored 0.96% average marks (i.e. 48.33%).

Likewise, community school students secured 0.7 average marks (i.e. 35%) whereas institutional school students secured 0.9 average marks marks (i.e. 45%) in clarity out of 2.

In the same way, community school students obtained 0.9 average marks (i.e. 45%) whereas institutional school students obtained 0.93 average marks (i.e.46.66%) in economy and completeness out of 2.

In total community school students scored 4.26 (i.e. 42.66%) whereas institutional school students scored 4.73 (i.e. 47.33%). The above result shows that community school students were less proficient than institutional school students in letter writing.

Comparison between Institutional and Community School's Students in Story Writing. In order to find out the proficiency in story writing, students were asked to write story. The question carried 15 marks under the five criteria (i.e. mechanics, grammar, coherence and cohesion, clarity and economy and completeness). Each aspect carried 2.5 marks. The performance of students in story writing is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Performance of Students in Story Writing

S.N.	Criteria	Full marks	Marks obtained (Out of 10)				Remarks
			Community		Institutional		
			Av.	%	Av.	%	
1	Mechanics	2.5	1.5	75	1.24	62.49	
2	Grammar	2.5	1.35	69.99	1.2	60	
3	Cohesion and Coherence	2.5	1.29	64.99	1.2	60	
4	Clarity	2.5	1.05	52.5	1.05	52.5	
5	Economy and Completeness	2.5	1.05	52.5	1.14	57.49	
Total		15	6.2	63	5.85	58.5	

Table 8 demonstrates that community school students obtained 1.5 average marks (i.e. 75%) in mechanics out of 2.5 whereas institutional school students obtained 1.24 average marks (i.e. 62.49%).

Likewise, community school students scored 1.35 average marks (i.e. 69.66%) whereas institutional school students have scored 1.2 average marks (i.e. 60%) in grammar out of 2.5.

Similarly, the community school students scored 1.29 average marks (i.e. 64.95%) in coherence and cohesion out of 2.5 whereas institutional school students secured 1.2 average marks (i.e. 60%).

In the same way, students from both community and institutional schools obtained 1.05 average marks (i.e. 52.5%) in clarity out of 2.5.

Likewise, community school students scored 1.05 average marks (i.e. 52.5%) whereas institutional school students scored 1.14 average marks (i.e. 57.49%) in economy and completeness out of 2.5.

In the total, community school students obtained 6.2 (i.e. 63%) whereas institutional school students obtained 5.8 average marks (i.e. 58.5%). The above result shows that community school students were more proficient than institutional schools students in story writing out of 15.

Chapter-V

Findings, Conclusion and Implications

This chapter consists of the findings, conclusions and Implications of the study. The study intended to find out the proficiency level of grade nine students in free writing. This is final and important stage of the research study. The researcher draws findings, conclusion and recommendations on the basis of analysis and interpretation of the free writing by the grade nine students.

Findings

The major concern of this study was to find out the ability of community and institutional school students in free writing. After interpreting and analyzing and the data explored through the free writing by the students, the following findings have been drawn being based on the objectives of the study:

Proficiency of Grade Nine Students in Free Writing

The average mark of institutional schools' students is 22.53 (i.e.51.68%) and community schools' students is 21.06 (i.e.48.31%) in free writing.

1. The dialogue writing community schools' students obtained 2.21 (i.e.21.65%) and institutional school students obtained 1.97 (i.e.19.86%) in dialogue writing.
2. The paragraph writing community schools' students obtained 3.03 (i.e. 30.33%) whereas institutional school students obtained 4.56 (i.e. 45.66%).
3. The essay writing community schools' students obtained 5.13 (i.e.51.33%) and institutional school students obtained 5.33 (i.e.53.33%).
4. The letter writing community schools' students scored 4.26 (i.e.42.66%) whereas institutional school students scored 4.73 (i.e.53.33%).
5. The story writing community school's students obtained 6.2 (i.e.63%) and institutional school students obtained 5.85 (i.e. 58.5%).

Comparison of Free Writing Proficiency between Institutional and Community School's Students

The marks obtained by both students of institutional and community schools are satisfactory. Community schools' students were found more proficient in comparison to institutional school students in dialogue writing. Similarly, regarding the paragraph writing institutional school students were more proficient than community school students. In the same way, institutional school students were found more proficient in comparison to community school students in essay writing. Likewise, community school students were found less proficient than institutional school students in letter writing. Similarly, regarding the story writing community school's students were found more proficient in comparison to institutional school's students.

This thesis comprises main five chapters. The first chapter shows the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definition of the key terms. In the same way, the second chapter consists of the review of related theoretical literature, review of empirical literature, implications of the study and conceptual framework. Likewise, the third chapter includes design of the study, population, sample and sampling strategy, research tools, sources of data, data collection procedure, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter deals with analysis of data and interpretation of results. The last chapter present with conclusion, findings and recommendations. References and appendices are included. In the final part of the thesis.

Conclusion

Writing is one of the most important skills in learning a new language. It is often regarded as the visual representation of speech. It is productive and expressive skill of language in the sense that we encode meaning by means of certain graphic symbols.

From the present study, it can be concluded that free writing proficiency of both institutional and community schools' students is satisfactory. Similarly, in this

study five terms such as dialogue writing, paragraph writing, essay writing, letter writing and story writing proficiency were compared of institutional and community schools' students. It can be concluded that students are more proficient in essay writing than in other types of writing. Institutional school students found least proficient in story writing and community school students found least proficient in paragraph writing in comparison to other writing. The study concludes that comparatively the students of institutional school are more proficient than the students of community school but there is no vast difference. It was found negligible difference between institutional and community schools' students.

Implications

On basis of the findings obtained from the interpretations and analysis of the collected data, some suggestions have been made. These are discussed in the following sub- headings.

Policy Related

-) This study has shown that majority of students performed poorly in paragraph writing and story writing.
-) The course designers are recommended to include more activities and content knowledge about free writing.
-) The findings of the study can help the government to adopt suitable English curriculum which fits needs and demands the students.
-) Similarly, this study could be helpful for curriculum development center to incorporate more exercises related to free writing while designing the new course.
-) Textbook writers and curriculum designers can be equally benefited by the achievement of the students and can select good texts which suits the students.
-) The result of the study can help to create supportive and favorable learning environment in the schools.

Practice Related

-) The study has demonstrated that more exercises of free writing should be included in the text book,
-) The teacher should highly focus in students' free writing practice with regular correction. This study helps the students to be familiar with different types writing.
-) English language teachers can equally benefit to develop new teaching learning strategy and enhance the students` proficiency in free writing.
-) As the students were seen poor in paragraph writing, the teachers can provide ideas of developing suitable paragraph on the various topics.
-) The findings of the study can be a corner stone to the teachers and students to develop appropriate teaching learning environment analyzing their teaching learning culture

Further Research Related Recommendations

-) The current study is about comparative study of free writing proficiency of institutional and community school among 40 students from two school of Sarlahi district and also limited to secondary level.
-) This work can serve as a reference for those who are interested in carrying out further research on this area of free writing composition in writing skill.
-) Further research can be conducted at secondary level, +2 level and university level and in other districts of Nepal.
-) The role of text book to develop students free writing.
-) Effectiveness of free writing to develop students writing proficiency.
-) The role of teachers to develop students writing proficiency.

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APPENDICES
Appendix–I
Item for the Participants
Test Item
2023

Attempt all the questions.

- Q. No. 1. Write a dialogue between the teacher and a student about the holiday plan.
(5 exchanges) 5
- Q. No. 2. Write a paragraph about Value of Sports. 5
- Q. No. 3. Write a paragraph about Dashain and Tihar festival. 10
- Q. No. 4. Write an essay about your village in 100 words. 10
- Q.No. 5. Suppose your father is living in a foreign country, write a letter to him
requesting for a mobile set describing its importance for your study. 10
- Q. NO. 6. Write a story that you have heard from others or read in any books. 10