


# Chapter 2

## Exploring Second Language Writing Instruction: Development and Validation of a Questionnaire

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Current research highlights the problem of low learning outcomes in government schools in India, where students struggle with basic literacy despite years of schooling. In addition to challenges with reading and writing in their first language (L1), writing skills in English as a second language (L2) remain particularly underdeveloped. Part of this issue is attributed to teaching methods that rely heavily on rote memorisation and passive learning. However, there is a lack of quantitative tools to measure L2 writing instruction. This chapter investigates the development and validation of a questionnaire aimed at understanding the teaching of writing skills in English to students in a government school in New Delhi. Content validity, face validity, and internal consistency of the questionnaire were established. The results demonstrate that this is a reliable tool for researchers and educators aiming to understand and improve L2 writing instruction, particularly with students of eighth grade in Delhi government schools, with further validation recommended for broader applicability.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is crucial for the academic development of students, yet it remains one of the most poorly developed skills among students in government schools in India. While there are reports documenting poor learning outcomes in these schools, specific evidence pointing to the deficiency in writing skills is less abundant. Much of the existing evidence is anecdotal, based on locally collected data on students' writing abilities or classroom observations of pedagogic practices (Gupta, 2018; Kunwar, 2015; National Council of Educational Research & Training, 2012; Rai, 2015). Although some studies and educator reports suggest that writing skills among students are lacking and instructional practices do not effectively support writing development, these findings are inconsistent and not based on systematic, scientific inquiry. For example, the National Council of Educational Research & Training (2012) study provides some insight, but it is outdated, and articles by teachers and educators based on Delhi government schools, though valuable, are based on personal experiences and observations rather than rigorous research methods. This highlights the need for a scientific, rigorous, and cost-effective tool that can systematically assess the state of writing instruction across a broader context. Such a tool would provide the necessary data to inform evidence-based interventions, ensuring that efforts to improve writing skills are grounded in a clear understanding of the current instructional landscape.

Existing questionnaires for evaluating writing instruction are predominantly designed for Western contexts, particularly in the United States, and may not align with the specific needs of the Indian educational environment. These tools often require adaptation to be relevant for Indian schools, especially for L2 writing instruction in government schools. This chapter addresses this gap by detailing the development and validation of a context-specific questionnaire tailored to assess L2 writing instruction in Indian government schools.

This questionnaire was developed as part of an intervention study aimed at improving the writing skills of students in government schools in Delhi. Initially, we discovered that there was limited knowledge regarding the state of students' writing skills and the teaching practices employed in these schools. No existing tool adequately assessed how writing skills were being taught, so we needed to develop a questionnaire to fill this gap. Understanding the context was crucial for tailoring the intervention effectively.

We initially administered a questionnaire to English teachers to gather information about their instructional practices, but this approach proved unsuccessful. Teachers may not have been entirely truthful in their responses, possibly due to concerns about job security. Existing questionnaires often assume that teachers are best equipped to discuss their practices, while students are seen as less capable of providing such

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