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Cursive Writing Proficiency and the Factors Influencing Its Development Among Key Stage 2 Learners

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A B S T R A C T

The objective of this research study is to evaluate the proficiency of 30 Key Stage 2 Students attending Lucsoon Elementary School (Grades 4, 5, and 6) in their ability to write in cursive and examine the factors influencing their development of cursive handwriting skills. Evaluation of writing proficiency was conducted via the Evaluation Tool for Children's Handwriting (ETCH) through a combination of a questionnaire and the continued use of ETCH across the long-term for all students involved in this study. Proficiency level assessments categorized the majority of students tested under the Developing/Needs Improvement category and several students in Grade 5 and Grade 6 were categorized as Beginning/At Risk. The majority of students reported using cursive writing infrequently, and based on self-ratings, many students reported moderate levels of confidence while expressing their experiences learning cursive writing, although only limited amounts of fluency were demonstrated in their cursive writing ability. Many learners felt that cursive writing was valuable, and useful; however, they did not enjoy cursive writing nearly as much and preferred to print or type. One contributing factor for this was that support provided through instruction was inconsistent with available material practice opportunities. Technology factors were also found to impact learners' abilities to learn cursive writing, including increased usage of technology devices (i.e., tablets, laptops, etc.) and preference to type (as opposed to writing). At times, learners also stated having difficulty forming letters and experiencing hand fatigue in their attempts to write legibly using cursive characters. Overall, the findings highlight low cursive proficiency across grade levels and underscore the need for strengthened instructional emphasis, consistent practice opportunities, and targeted support to develop fine motor and handwriting skills among Key Stage 2 learners.

Keywords: Cursive Writing, Handwriting Proficiency, ETCH Assessment, Student Attitudes, Instructional Factors, Technology Influence, Writing Difficulties, Elementary Education

INTRODUCTION

Cursive Handwriting is a major means by which children develop literacy skills and communicate effectively, perform fine motor skills, and complete school related written assignments. Yet, Cursive Writing provides the basis for the development of the three factors above which are necessary to produce proficiently written texts; thus, writing fluency, writing speed, and letter connection (Berninger et al., 2015). Cursive writing was and continues to be viewed by educators as a critical skill necessary for successful academic performance and personal correspondence (Department for Education, 2013). Unfortunately, over the last couple decades, cursive writing has decreased in importance within the curriculum resulting in many educators having concerns regarding how this will ultimately negatively impact how competent students will be with cursive handwriting and their ability to perform fine motor skills involving writing. Factors that contributed to the decline of instruction and practice of cursive writing in different educational systems include changes in instructional priorities; changes in educational teaching certificate programs; and the prevalence of technology within the classroom (Berger, 2017; Rogne et al., 2024). The increase of student use of computers, tablets, and mobile devices in classroom environments has altered a student's pattern of writing from writing by hand to typing on a keyboard. Although using various technology tools makes it easier for students to write, research indicates that when students do not have the opportunity to learn how to write by hand—especially using cursive writing—there can be negative impacts on students' ability to retain information, recognize letters, and develop proper fine motor coordination (Mangen & Balsvik, 2016).These changes raise questions about whether students continue to acquire adequate proficiency in cursive writing amid shifting instructional environments.

Numerous interrelated components contribute to the growth of cursive writing ability, particularly: (i) The number of times students practice cursive writing, (ii) the degree of support offered through instructional methods, (iii) how students view cursive writing (as fun and useful) and (iv) whether or not students have difficulties using their hands or motor skills to create cursive letters. Studies show that consistent amount of practice leads to having complete fluency (being fast at) and creating legible letters (Graham et al., 2018). Positive thoughts on cursive writing such as being enjoyable and perceived as having value has been found to increase students' motivation and engagement (Santangelo & Graham, 2016). Additionally, not having enough time for instruction, having limited opportunities to receive appropriate training from their teachers, and relying more heavily than ever before

upon technology may serve to limit students' ability to develop cursive writing skills. Students also may experience difficulty completing cursive letters because they may have become fatigued in writing and that the process of writing each letter is new and takes time to learn (Feder & Majnemer, 2007). When examining the Philippine school system in the context of educational practices, handwriting instruction occurs as part of early literacy development in all levels of education; however, the emphasis on cursive writing varies from school to school. Resource availability of teachers and schools, teacher training, curriculum developed by the schools, and the school's priorities play a significant role in determining how cursive writing is taught and practiced in the schools. As technology continues to be integrated into classrooms, the importance of understanding how all of the foregoing factors contribute to students¿ ability to write in cursive is very important.

In order to identify gaps in instruction and learning of Key Stage 2 pupils regarding cursive writing, we must first determine the present levels of proficiency in Cursive Writing. Key Stage 2 (Grades 4-6) is a highly important stage because it is when pupils begin to transition away from basic handwriting towards more sophisticated written tasks. Unfortunately, new evidence shows that Cursive Writing proficiency is in decline among Key Stage 2 learners (Rogne et al., 2024). This indicates that pupils are probably not being given sufficient instructional exposure to cursive writing as well as being affected by outside influences such as using digital devices that may hinder them from learning how to develop their cursive handwriting skills. Research titled "Cursive Writing Proficiency and the Factors Influencing Its Development Among Key Stage 2 Learners" will measure the Cursive Writing proficiency of Grade 4, 5 and 6 pupils at Lucsoon Elementary School. As part of this research, a variety of activities will be completed including assessing writing proficiency by utilizing the Evaluation Tool for Children's Handwriting (ETCH), measuring the frequency of use and self-evaluated proficiency of learners, recording learner's attitudes towards cursive writing, and identifying technology-based and physical factors that may affect the development of their handwriting skills. The goal of this project is to provide meaningful insight into how to better improve instructional quality for students in order to promote the development of cursive handwriting skills.

Objectives:

This study aims to assess the cursive writing proficiency of Grades 4–6 students and examine the factors influencing their cursive writing performance, including frequency of use, self-rated proficiency, attitudes, instructional factors, technology-related factors, and writing challenges.in Lucsoon Elementary School.

Specific Objectives:

1. Determine the cursive writing proficiency levels of Grades 4, 5, and 6 students using the ETCH-based cursive writing assessment.
2. Identify the frequency with which students use cursive writing in their academic activities.
3. Assess students' self-rated proficiency in writing cursive.
4. Examine students' attitudes toward cursive writing including enjoyment, perceived importance, usefulness, difficulty, preference for printing, and confidence.
5. Evaluate the extent of instructional support students receive for cursive writing
6. Determine the influence of technology-related factors
7. Identify the difficulties and challenges students experience in writing cursive, specifically in terms of letter formation and hand fatigue.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive research design to evaluate the cursive writing competence of Key Stage 2 student learners at Lucsoon Elementary School and to discover what influences their development of handwriting skills. The rationale for selecting this design was based on its systematic offering of descriptions, analyses, and interpretations of present conditions without manipulation of any variables; hence, this type of design is appropriate for studies that document the current performance levels, attitude behaviours and context of people within the same study group. This study used a cohort of thirty (30) learners from grades four (4) to six(6). Multiple forms of quantitative data were collected to enhance the overall understanding of the learners' cursive writing abilities as well as the contributors to their handwriting skills development. Therefore, the Evaluation Tool of Children's Handwriting (ETCH) was the principal evaluation tool used to determine the proficiency of learners, and a structured survey questionnaire was constructed to assess students' experiences with writing in cursive, how often each student writes in cursive, how the students perceive how good they are at writing in cursive, attitudes toward writing in cursive, instructional experiences associated with writing in cursive, technology-related influences on writing in cursive, and the types of writing in cursive that presented students with writing difficulties. Through the descriptive design, the researcher is able to organise the data into numeric formats to show distribution of frequency, percentage, and mean scores to establish comparisons between learners' handwriting performance and contextual variables. Ultimately, the study design served as a basis for the researcher to conduct an evidence-based assessment of the learners' cursive writing performance and the contextual factors impacting the development of the learners' cursive writing performance. It provided a factual and comprehensive account of the current state of cursive writing proficiency among Key Stage 2 learners in the school setting.

Participants

For the purposes of this research, the sample consisted of thirty (30) Key Stage 2 pupils currently enrolled in grades 4 - 6 inclusive at Lucsoon Elementary School. Participants were identified using a purposive sampling process, as this research required participants to have already completed some form of cursive handwriting instruction based on the school curriculum . There are ten (10) pupils in each of the three grades: Grade Four, Grade Five and Grade Six. Ten pupils from each grade level means that there is equal representation from the three different grade levels to facilitate a comparative analysis of proficiency and influencing factors. The demographic of the sample included variety in gender and what participants self-reported as their degree of experience with learning how to write in cursive. All participants were also actively enrolled in school and capable of completing a handwriting assessment and questionnaire as well as having consent from either their parents or guardians regarding their participation in the research study. The participants' names and individual answers to the assessment and questionnaires will remain confidential throughout the course of this study. Key Stage 2 pupils represent an ideal group for this research project as developmental research has shown that this age range represents a critical developmental period for the refinement of a child's handwriting. Therefore, it is an appropriate age group for both the research on cursive writing proficiency and the factors that influence development of cursive handwriting.

Research Instrument

Two primary tools were employed in the current study in order to gather quantitative data on students' ability to produce cursive written forms and the factors affecting the students' ability to produce cursive writing effectively: (a) Evaluation Tool of Children's Handwriting (ETCH)-Based Cursive Writing Assessment and (b) a researcher-designed questionnaire. Both tools aimed to assess students' level of success and experience with producing cursive writing based on their perceptions and experiences.

1. ETCH-Based Cursive Writing Assessment In order to assess students' performance in producing cursive writing, the Evaluation Tool of Children's Handwriting (ETCH) has been changed so that cursive writing could be properly assessed. The ETCH is a standardised assessment that is used to evaluate the legibility, speed, and accuracy of handwriting and requires students to write a variety of words, sentences, or selected alphabet letters in cursive. For the current study, scoring included an evaluation of the letter's formation, spacing, alignment, and overall legibility of the written work. The results were grouped into four levels of proficiency based on the results of the assessment: Excellent/Mastery, Proficient/Satisfactory, Developing/Needs Improvement, and Beginning/At Risk. This assessment provides an objective measure of students' written output from grades 4, 5, and 6 based on actual written output as opposed to perceived written output.

2. Structured Questionnaire The questionnaire, which was designed by the researcher, has been used in the current study in order to collect quantitative data relating to the factors that affect students' ability to produce cursive writing. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the field so that the content of the assessment was clear, relevant, and consistent with the overall objectives of the study. Feedback given by the validators helped the author to revise the questionnaire based on their comments and suggestions. Reliability testing (Cronbach’s alpha) was conducted to verify internal consistency across the attitude, instructional, technology, and difficulty subscales.

Data Gathering Procedure

The procedure utilized to collect the data for this study was systematic and organized with the intent of providing accuracy, reliability and ethical compliance throughout the entire data collection process. In order to begin data collection, an approval from the school administration of Lucsoon Elementary School was requested, via a formal request letter submitted to the School Head, which included information on the study’s goals and objectives, outlines of what would be covered in the study, and which grades (4, 5 and 6) would be represented by participating learners. When this request was approved, coordination with the individual class advisers was initiated for scheduling the administration of the instruments for data collection. All 30 participating learners had parental or guardian consent to participate in the study. The parents and students received information regarding the goals and objectives of the study, the procedures that would be followed to carry out the study, and confidentiality provisions that were in place for all participants. The learners were also informed that their participation in the study was on a volunteer basis and they had the option to withdraw from participation at any time without incurring any penalties. The ETCH Method, an evaluation tool for children's handwriting, was first administered in order to get a true measure of the cursive writing proficiency levels of the participating learners. The learners received standardized instructions and had ample time to complete various tasks including writing words, sentences, and selected cursive letters. After the ETCH assessments were completed, they were collected and graded according to established ETCH criteria, which identified individual proficiency classifications of the participating students.

Participants completed a structured questionnaire assessing: how often participants use cursive writing; how participants perceive their proficiency with cursive writing; how participants feel about their ability to write in cursive; how participants' perceptions about cursive writing have changed since they were taught; how participants use technology to improve their cursive writing; what participants perceive as the greatest challenge(s) associated with writing in cursive. During the administration of the structured questionnaire, the researcher provided assistance to participants to ensure that all questions were understood and answered correctly. The researcher collected the completed questionnaires at the end of the designated period for the purpose of verifying their accuracy. In order to collect as much data as possible for statistical analysis, the researcher reviewed all completed questionnaires to ensure completeness prior to collecting any additional data from participants. All data from the questionnaires were entered into software for conducting statistical analyses. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe participants' levels of proficiency with cursive writing; how frequently participants used cursive writing; and how they rated themselves regarding their proficiency with cursive writing. Means of each of the participants' responses were calculated to determine the level of overall satisfaction, support received while learning how to write in cursive, use of technology in improving cursive writing, and the level of difficulty participants experienced when trying to write in cursive, and all data collected through the ETCH assessment were combined to create a proficiency table. All data collected from participants were kept confidential. The researcher stored hard copies of all data collected

in a secure location, and digital files containing data collected were protected by a password. Identifying information was not included in any reports or analyses of the collected data.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the ETCH cursive writing examination and a survey were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques for the purpose of this study. The frequency count and percentage distribution of scores achieved by participants on the ETCH cursive writing assessment were used to identify the number and percentage of learners who achieved an overall score in the following four categories of proficiency: Excellent / Mastery (scores 4), Proficient / Satisfactory (scores 3), Developing/Needs Improvement (scores 2), and Beginning / At Risk (scores 1). A comparison of proficiency categories was made across Grade levels 4, 5, and 6; this analysis helped to answer the question of whether the proficiency of joints students differed across grade levels. Frequency counts and percentage distributions of responses from the survey questions about how often students used cursive writing and what they perceived their skills to be were used to provide a general view of learner's use of cursive writing. Responses to items measuring student attitude and view toward cursive writing, student experience with writing instruction, student attitude toward the influence of technology on their writing ability, and the impact technology has on a student's ability to write, were analysed and evaluated using means based on 5 point Likert scale items. The analysis of mean values based on Likert-type items was conducted according to standard measurement ranges to understand if the responses reflect agreement, neutrality or disagreement. Thus the researcher was able to determine the major perceptions and experiences of students within these domains.

All questionnaire responses were encoded and processed using statistical software.

The following descriptive statistics were applied:

Frequency (f) – to quantify the number of participants selecting each response option

Percentage (%) – to represent the proportion of responses for clearer interpretation

Mean (M) – to summarize central tendency for Likert-scale items

Statistical analysis of learners' cursive writing proficiency provided a complete overview of what influences; the Cronbach Alpha's internal reliability of questionnaire subscales (attitude, instructional influences, technology influences, and difficulties); interpretation of reliability coefficients used standard criteria to show that questionnaire items measure constructs consistently..

Ethical Consideration

The current research study was designed with ethical considerations as a priority to protect the privacy and well-being of participants. Throughout the study, ethical standards were maintained by following a number of practices. Parental/guardian informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection began. The purpose, procedures, risks and benefits of this study were explained to parents/guardians and to the participants in an age-appropriate manner. The participation of learners in this study was completely voluntary and it was made clear to learners they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or repercussions. Participants were not pressured into completing the assessments or questionnaires. The confidentiality of the participants was protected at all times. There were no names or other identifying characteristics in the data analysis or reporting. Participants' identities were replaced with codes so that they could remain anonymous. All study-related materials, such as questionnaires and ETCH assessments, were kept in a secure location and accessible by the researcher only.

Participants in this study faced little risk due to their involvement in activities that primarily involved completing a handwriting examination and questionnaire that would typically be conducted at school. Participants were ensured that there were no negative effects such as discomfort, stress, or academic detriment as a result of their participation in the research process. Data was collected honestly and accurately without alteration or misrepresentation in accordance with established ethical standards for research. Participants received introductory material explaining the procedures for completing the tasks and encouraged them to complete the tasks as accurately as possible. The data provided by the participant was accepted and recorded as such. Since all participants were minors, the investigators took care to provide for the well-being and dignity of the participant and placed a high level of importance on making the participant comfortable while participating in the study. The data collection methodology was appropriate for each age group and was designed to avoid any situations that may cause embarrassment or put undue pressure on the participant. This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines established by the school and relevant educational authorities for educational research. All methods and procedures followed were transparent and professional.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 - Evaluation Tool of Children's Handwriting (ETCH) - Based Cursive Writing Test Results

Proficiency level	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Excellent/Mastery	0	0	0
Proficient/Satisfactory	2	0	0

Developing/Needs Improvement	8	7	7
Beginning/ At Risk	0	3	3
Total	10	10	10

As indicated by the ETCH results for cursive writing, no students in Grade 4, Grade 5, orGrade 6 were found to have reached Mastery Level in their writing with cursive script. The large majority of students across all grades scored in the category of Developing/Needs Improvement indicating that many students were developing the writing skill but do not possess an adequate level of proficiency at this time. The only students to have shown at least a satisfactory score of proficiency were those in Grade 4, while numerous students in both Grade 5 and Grade 6 scored in the Beginning/At Risk category. This pattern shows that overall, there has not been consistent improvement in developing cursive writing skills as students move up in grade level. The results suggest limited growth in the overall process of developing cursive writing skills. It is likely that there has been a decrease in the availability of opportunity for instruction and practice and increased use of technology (digital) to create written communication. The number of At Risk students in the upper grades suggests that the foundational (basic) skills necessary for the development of cursive handwriting, may not have been adequately taught in earlier grades, thereby making it increasingly difficult for students to successfully improve their cursive handwriting skills in the later grades. The results demonstrate a clear need for explicit and continuous instructional support as well as for sustained practice developing cursive handwriting skills to support the continued growth of cursive writing skills across grade levels.

Table 2 - Frequency of Using Cursive Writing Among Students

Frequency	**f**	**%**
Always	4	13.33%
Often	3	10.00%
Sometimes	19	63.33%
Rarely	4	13.33%
Never	0	0%

The analysis of this data shows that most of the students in this sample (63.33%) reported using cursive writing only occasionally. This indicates an inconsistent and sporadic use rather than a consistent habit for the majority of students. The minority of students who reported using cursive writing on a regular basis or frequently (13.33% and 10%, respectively) compared to the exact same proportion of students (13.33%) who said that they "rarely" used cursive writing. In fact, none of the students reported never having used cursive writing, indicating that all students had received at least some exposure to cursive writing throughout their academic careers. From the findings of this study, we can assume that cursive writing is a component of students' academic activities, though cursive writing is not being taught or emphasized as an expected skill. The large percentage of students who fall into the "sometimes" category and the low percentage of students who report frequently using cursive writing are likely related to changes in instructional methods, less time dedicated to cursive writing, or a greater use of electronic means of producing written communication. Therefore, given that students are not being given consistent opportunities to practice cursive writing, it is unlikely that the student will achieve a higher level of fluency and proficiency when writing in cursive, which is supported by the students' performance data on cursive writing assignments.

Table 3 - Self-Rated Cursive Proficiency

Proficiency	**f**	**%**
Very Good	1	3.33%
Good	18	60.00%
Fair	6	20.00%
Poor	5	16.67%
Very Poor	0	0%
Total	30	100%

Most Students indicated that they were "Good" (60.0%) at writing in cursive, giving them a moderate confidence level of cursive writing ability and thus there was a moderate amount of experience using cursive writing. Some Students self-identified as "Fair" (20.0%) or "Poor" (16.67%), indicating that although there are Students who do well in Cursive Writing, there are also a significant number of students that recognise areas where they may need further assistance or improvement with their cursive writing skills. One student identified as "Very Good" (3.33%), while no student rated themselves as "Very Poor" at cursive writing. Overall these findings demonstrate that overall, students perceive themselves positively regarding their cursive writing

ability but they still lack confidence in their cursive writing skills as indicated by the low level of self-rating. The overall patterns of the self-rating of students appears to support the previous findings regarding the amount of time students have to use cursive writing, therefore, most students appear to be aware that they are capable of writing in cursive, however, through lack of continual instruction and learning how to effectively practice to become fluent, quick and precise in their cursive writing skills, will likely fall short regarding other students who receive continuous instruction and are encouraged to practice regularly in achieving additional levels of fluency with their cursive writing skills.

Table 4 - Attitude Toward Cursive Writing

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
1. Enjoy writing in cursive	2	7	16	5	0	3.20
2. Important and useful	8	19	2	1	0	4.13
3. Helps writing faster/neater	3	17	10	0	0	3.77
4. Difficult to learn	2	9	15	2	2	3.17
5. Prefer printing	8	9	13	0	0	3.83
6. Confident in writing cursive	5	12	6	2	5	3.43

The data demonstrates that the majority of students recognize the merits of learning how to use cursive writing. The mean score for the perception that cursive writing is both an important and useful skill was the highest of the seven perceptions tested (M = 4.13). Most students believed that using cursive sped up the ability to write and allowed one to produce a neater representation of one's thoughts, which is indicative of the understanding of some of the functional advantages of cursive writing (M = 3.77). However, students reported only a moderate amount of enjoyment (M = 3.20) when engaging in cursive writing. Therefore, the fact that students have positive perceptions regarding the usefulness of cursive writing does not guarantee an intrinsic motivation or interest in cursive writing. Conversely, students preferred printing over writing in cursive (M = 3.83). Furthermore, with regard to confidence in writing in cursive, students exhibited moderate levels of self-assurance (M = 3.43). Students also reported moderate levels of difficulty when it comes to mastering writing in cursive (M = 3.17). In summary, while students acknowledge the importance and advantages associated with cursive writing, their motivation and comfort level appear to be limited. This may contribute to inconsistent engagement in cursive writing practice, which ultimately stunts the development of a higher level of proficiency.

Table 5 – Instructional Related Factors

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
7. Teacher teaches cursive regularly	2	11	9	4	4	3.10
8. Enough time to practice	1	10	10	4	5	2.93
9. School provides materials	6	9	13	2	0	3.63

Variability exists in the instructional support provided to students with respect to cursive writing. Although the availability of materials provided for use in schools received a high mean rating (M = 3.63), suggesting that most teachers have access to these materials, many of the other components of instruction were rated lower in terms of consistency. For example, teachers' regular instruction of cursive writing only received an average mean score of 3.10, indicating that this is not consistently taught on a routine basis in classrooms. Furthermore, responses indicated that students received a below average amount of time to practice developing cursive writing skills (M = 2.93), thereby providing students with fewer opportunities to gain fluency and accuracy in their cursive writing. The results of this study show that there are still gaps that exist in the way that cursive writing is taught and provided to students. Although materials are typically available in schools, if students do not receive consistent instruction and sufficient time to practice, this will limit their ability to effectively learn how to develop their cursive writing skills. Increasing the curricular focus on teaching cursive writing, and providing students with more structured opportunities to practice this skill, could help to improve their overall proficiency and fluency in cursive writing.

Table 6 - Technology-Related Factors

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
Use devices more than pen-and-paper	4	17	5	2	2	3.70
Prefer typing over cursive writing	3	12	13	2	0	3.53

This study found that digital technology affects student writing habits. Specifically, many respondents (3.70) reported using electronic versus traditional (pen/Paper) devices, indicating students are using technology-based resources more in both their actual day-to-day lives and in school. Respondents also indicated a preference for typing over cursive handwriting, which suggests that many students view typing as a more available or productive way of "writing" (3.53). The results of this study suggest that the increased use of electronic devices may be creating less time for students to engage in writing

in the form of a cursive script. As computers continue to gain popularity in schools and other online forms of communication, students' frequency, fluency, and willingness to write in cursive will likely continue to decrease. This has been supported by the results of this study, which found lower levels of proficiency for students who were tested using cursive assessments than those who were assessed with typed assessments.

Table 7 - Difficulty and Challenges

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
Difficulty forming cursive letters	4	10	13	3	0	3.50
Hand gets tired when writing cursive	2	16	8	3	1	3.50

The results show the students face medium levels of stress and physical fatigue with the act of writing with cursive writing. The two items under discussion are the student's ability to form letters (M = 3.50) and also hand fatigue (also M = 3.50). Because of the similar means between these two types of responses indicate both types of responses were frequent among the participants. The number of neutral responses indicates that many students who feel like they have the ability to write well in cursive writing still have not reach full competence because of the demands placed over them to write cursive writing through fine motor skill development. Since students face stress or physical demands when they write with cursive writing they are less willing to voluntarily engage with cursive writing. This can possibly explain why there was lower frequency of writing with cursive writing and only moderately proficient writing when results were discussed earlier. Providing an environment that emphasizes fine motor skill instruction along with more structured practice would potentially decrease the amount of fatigue students face when they write cursive writing and also provide higher levels of student confidence and greater fluency in writing cursive writing independently.

CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS

This research focused on the ability of students in grades 4 through 6 to write in cursive, and what influenced their abilities including how often they wrote in cursive, how well they rated themselves, their attitudes toward cursive writing, how much support they receive from teachers, how much technology they are exposed to, and the types of challenges they encounter when writing. The results show that students in Key Stage 2 at Lucsoon Elementary School demonstrate a developing level of proficiency in writing in cursive. Many of the students were unable to produce work that met the criteria for satisfactory performance. In addition, there is no evidence that any particular grade level improved over another; therefore, the lack of instructional exposure and the lack of opportunities for practice may be contributing factors in preventing students from progressing in their skills. Even though most students expressed that they think cursive writing is a valuable skill, there is a disconnect between what students feel is valuable and what they actually enjoy doing. Students also indicated that they do not have a lot of confidence in their ability to write in cursive. It is important to note that students do not enjoy using cursive writing as much as they enjoy using print. Therefore, the lack of regular use of cursive writing (due to lack of instruction and practice), the lack of instruction and practice, and the inconsistency of instruction, all contribute to a lack of motivation and ability to develop fluency in writing in cursive. In addition, students are becoming more reliant on electronic devices and are choosing to type rather than write in cursive. Therefore, students use fewer opportunities to write in cursive due to technology. Additionally, students reported that physical difficulties with writing, such as difficulty forming letters and fatigue from writing, are contributors to students' reduced motivation to write in cursive and lower proficiency in writing in cursive.

Overall, the findings underscore the need to strengthen cursive writing instruction, increase dedicated practice time, and integrate handwriting activities more consistently into the curriculum. Addressing technological influences and providing targeted support for fine motor development may enhance students' proficiency and help establish cursive writing as a sustained and functional skill.

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