

Rating technique for early writing

Rating techniques can be used on children's early attempts to write stories. For example, to rate writing *in the first year of school* take three samples of the child's stories on consecutive days or over a couple of weeks. (One sample is not sufficiently reliable for this evaluation technique.) Rate them for language level, message quality and directional principles. Summarise the progress as satisfactory or unsatisfactory using the table below.

Language level

Record the number of the highest level of linguistic organisation used by the child:

- 1 alphabetical (letters only)
- 2 or word (any recognisable word)
- 3 or word group (any two-word phrase)
- 4 or sentence (any simple sentence)
- 5 or punctuated story (of two or more sentences)
- 6 or paragraphed story (two themes).

Message quality

Record the number for the best description of the child's sample:

- 1 he has a concept of signs (uses letters, invents letters, uses punctuation)
- 2 or he has a concept that a message is conveyed
- 3 or a message is copied
- 4 or he makes repetitive use of sentence patterns such as 'Here is a ...'
- 5 or attempts to record his own ideas
- 6 or he produces successful composition.

Directional principles

Record the number of the highest rating for which there is no error in the sample of the child's writing:

- 1 no evidence of directional knowledge
- 2 or part of the directional pattern is known: start top left, or move left to right, or return down left
- 3 or reversal of the directional pattern (right to left and return down right)
- 4 or correct directional pattern
- 5 or correct directional pattern and spaces between words
- 6 or extensive text without any difficulties of arrangement and spacing of text.

	A Language Level	B Message Quality	C Directional Principles
Not yet satisfactory	1 – 4	1 – 4	1 – 4
Probably satisfactory	5 – 6	5 – 6	5 – 6