

You could be reading the full-text of this article now...

- if you [become a subscriber](#) (I am a subscriber )
- if you [purchase this article](#)

If you have access to this article through your institution, you can [view this article in OvidSP](#).

Topics in Language Disorders:

October/December 2012 - Volume 32 - Issue 4 - p 297–318

doi: 10.1097/TLD.0b013e318272159e

TLD Special Issue: Access to Writing for Students with Diverse Disabilities

The Developmental Writing Scale: A New Progress Monitoring Tool for Beginning Writers

Sturm, Janet M.; Cali, Kathleen; Nelson, Nickola W.; Staskowski, Maureen



Abstract

Developing writers make qualitative changes in their written products as they progress from scribbling and drawing to conventional, paragraph level writing. As yet, a comprehensive measurement tool does not exist that captures the linguistic and communicative changes (not just emergent spelling) in the early stages of this progression. The Developmental Writing Scale (DWS) for beginning writers was developed as a tool that can capture evidence of refined changes in growth over time. This measure is a 14-point ordinal scale that defines qualitative advances in levels of a learning progression for beginning writing from scribbling to cohesive (linguistically connected) and coherent (on an identifiable topic) paragraph-level writing. The measure can be used with young typically developing children and children with disabilities at all ages who are functioning at beginning levels of writing. Limitations of current writing measures, in contrast to the DWS, are described. The development of the DWS and techniques for using the measure are described with regard to construct and content validity. Preliminary research on reliability of DWS scoring and validity for 5 purposes support usefulness of the DWS for educational and research purposes, including monitoring the progress of beginning writers with significant disabilities.