



**Service Priorities and Programmes
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Handwriting assessment for secondary school students in Hong Kong – a cross-spectrum effort

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Introduction

Clients with special education needs always encounter handwriting difficulties. They often experience additional challenges in academic assessments especially in public examination which required higher demand in speed and quantity of handwriting. Accommodation of their handwriting in examination may be needed. Therefore, there are increased referrals to occupational therapists in hospital settings and Child Assessment Services to assess their problems associated with handwriting performance and speed for justifying their needs for special examination arrangements.

Objectives

The purpose of the present study was to investigate handwriting speed of secondary school students in Hong Kong that provide a foundation of comparison and making recommendation.

Methodology

The Copying Speed Test for Hong Kong Secondary Students (HKCST) was developed by local occupational therapists. 3453 students (ranged from form 1 to form 7 with female to male ratio 1 to 1) from 10 local mainstream secondary schools were recruited. They were asked to copy the test either the Chinese passage or English passage in 15 minute under the supervision of occupational therapists and trained research assistants.

Result

The result showed that the handwriting speed on the copying task was typically increased from one grade to the next for both Chinese and English handwriting tasks. Also, there were significant differences in age and gender ($p < 0.001$). To conclude, the handwriting speed of Chinese and English tasks were faster for the higher grade and the girls wrote faster than the boys for both Chinese and English handwriting tasks. The result can help occupational therapists to have the normative data on handwriting speed of secondary school students in Hong Kong for reference. This may help us to

make accommodation for the handwriting of students with developmental coordination problems, physical disabilities or special needs in school and public examinations.