

# Comparison of Name-Writing Rubrics: Is There a Gold Standard?

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to compare name writing using six different rubrics with the aim of ascertaining whether any were better for evaluating preschoolers' name-writing skills. In addition, we investigated the relation between name writing assessed using these six rubrics and children's emergent and conventional literacy skills. Name-writing data were obtained from 346 preschoolers across four data sets and scored using six rubrics: five detailed rubrics and a simple rubric. Results indicated that the scores from these rubrics were highly correlated. Furthermore, the magnitude of the correlations between name-writing scores and children's literacy skills were similar. Findings suggest that these rubrics provide an equivalent index of children's name-writing skills at a single assessment point.

## Keywords

assessment, emergent literacy, preschool, name writing, scoring rubrics, writing

Across a sizable body of research, substantial evidence exists to indicate that name writing plays an important role in early literacy development. Previous studies have indicated a significant relation between name writing and phonological awareness (PA; Blair & Savage, 2006; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982), letter sounds (Blair & Savage, 2006), print knowledge (Cabell, Justice, Zucker, & McGinty, 2009; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Puranik, Lonigan, & Kim, 2011; Welsch, Sullivan, & Justice, 2003), letter names (Diamond, Gerde, & Powell, 2008; Welsch et al., 2003), letter writing (Bloodgood, 1999; Puranik et al., 2011), and spelling (Badian, 1982; Levin & Aram, 2004; Lonigan, Schatschneider, & Westberg, 2008; Strickland & Shanahan, 2004; Sulzby, Barnhart, & Hieshima, 1989).

A child's first name typically is the first word she or he learns to write (Clay, 1975; Martens, 1999), helping them to connect between oral and written language (Villaume & Wilson, 1989) and serving as a model for future writing (Bloodgood, 1999; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Martens, 1999). Because young children are more likely to be able to write their names before they are able to write other words, name writing is often used as the first indicator of a child's writing competence. For example, in a local school district where data for this study was collected, name writing is the only writing activity included to examine writing proficiency in the end of the kindergarten year academic assessment.

The assessment of name writing is very straightforward, easy, and quick; all one is required to do is give a child a pencil and a piece of paper and ask him or her to write his

or her first name. The evaluation of name writing, similar to the evaluation of any writing, however, is not as simple or straightforward. The main reason for this complexity is that children do not write their names conventionally from the start; instead, development of this skill gradually progresses during the preschool years, as they attempt to refine their writing and become more symbolic. Children may start out by first scribbling or drawing when asked to write their names. This scribbling becomes more controlled containing straight or zigzag lines. Controlled lines are then substituted with letter-like symbols, followed by random letters, to writing only the first letter in their names before they are able to write their entire first names accurately. So, any rubric used to examine name writing or beginning writing must account for the development of these features that manifest themselves over time in children's writing.

Greater detail regarding the proposed rubrics for the assessment of name writing is described below; however, first, a brief discussion regarding the need for a distinct name-writing rubric is in order. In general, assessments are uniform across participants. For example, when assessing spelling skills, all participants are required to write the same words. The same is true for other writing tasks used with

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beginning writers such as letter writing, sentence copying, or sentence formulation. When scoring spelling using a developmental scoring system, children are given credit for their attempts to represent phonemes in various word positions (initial, medial, final). However, children's names are personal and differ for each child. In addition, they could vary in length (Dan vs. Alexandria) and complexity (Alex vs. Ka'Mauridae) and may often not have straightforward grapheme-phoneme correspondence (e.g., Rayvyn, Deontea, Neveah). For these reasons, scales used to measure spelling or early writing are not appropriate to assess name-writing skills. Thus, researchers have proposed various scales to assess name writing in young children to address these idiosyncrasies in children's names and to account for the features noted in children's writing as their writing progresses toward conventional writing.

Perhaps the first rubric proposed to examine name writing in young children was suggested by Hildreth (1936). She collected name-writing samples from 170, 3- to 6-year-old children and arranged them according to several criteria that included letter legibility, spacing between letters, and alignment. Lieberman (1985) subsequently proposed another rubric in her attempt to examine the transitions that children go through as they refine their name-writing skills. Name-writing samples were collected from 47 preschoolers several times during the school year (average 9.5 samples per child). Based on her observation of the transitions of name writing, she proposed a 14-point scale, according to which children start out by scribbling haphazardly such that it is difficult to differentiate between their drawing and writing, to more controlled scribbling that includes continuous lines, to writing letter-like symbols, and finally transitioning to conventional writing of their names.

More recently, when interest in children's writing has seen an increase, other researchers interested in the development of early writing have used a variety of measures to assess name writing in preschool children (Bloodgood, 1999; Diamond et al., 2008; Haney, Bissonnette, & Behnken, 2003; Levin & Bus, 2003; Molfese et al., 2011; Puranik & Lonigan, 2011; Sulzby et al., 1989; Welsch et al., 2003). These researchers have adapted some features/aspects of the early scales and included additional features to increase the precision of their rubrics in capturing young children's developing sophistication as they refine their writing skills. These refinements have included features such as orientation (left-to-right), correct letter sequencing, and letter size (e.g., Haney et al., 2003; Molfese et al., 2011; Puranik & Lonigan, 2011).

One question that arises from examining a host of features is if and whether some features best capture children's name-writing skills. Molfese et al. (2011) attempted to answer this question using data from 286 children recruited from state-funded and Head Start preschool classrooms by comparing two rubrics, one rubric based on examining

multiple components such as letter formation, orientation, and correct letter sequencing and another rubric based on letter formation alone (without respect to orientation or sequence). Their results indicated that little additional information was provided by the multiple-component scoring rubric compared with the single-component scoring rubric. However, an important question still remains: Is there a rubric that best captures children's name-writing skills? Because of the availability of several rubrics, we do not have a universal or widely accepted standard when it comes to evaluating name writing. In addition, whereas we currently have several scoring rubrics to evaluate children's name writing, we know little about how these proposed rubrics compare with each other and, most importantly, whether one or more of these rubrics show a better relation or association with other emergent literacy skills. Hence, the goal of this study was to compare various name-writing rubrics and to investigate the relation between name writing assessed using different scoring rubrics and children's emergent and conventional literacy skills. To address this issue, we examined the literature on children's name writing and short listed five studies in the past 10 years, which reported using a scale/rubric to measure name writing in emergent writers (see Table 1). We then compared children's name writing using each of these rubrics and examined their correlation to literacy skills. Based on previous research, these included letter names, letter writing, letter sounds, phonological awareness, print knowledge, and spelling.

This is an important question from a research and practical standpoint. From a research perspective, the use of different rubrics makes it difficult to compare across studies and generalize findings. From a practical standpoint, it would be useful for practitioners to have a universal and efficient scale that can be used when assessing children's name-writing skills. Furthermore, although the proposed name-writing rubrics are very detailed and provide researchers with information about children's early writing skills, these scales might be less than optimal for teachers to use in classroom settings primarily because teachers do not always have the luxury of time. In addition, detailed scoring systems such as the ones proposed in the literature require some training, which teachers are not provided. Detailed scoring systems also introduce the issue of scoring reliability, data on which are impractical for teachers to collect. Thus, although researchers have developed multidimensional scoring rubrics and assess interrater reliability of these rubrics, they may not be feasible for a teacher to use on a regular basis in the classroom setting. This is not unlike the challenges faced by researchers when scoring writing samples in older children. Although several multidimensional scoring systems have been proposed, the most widely used method of scoring writing samples for school assessment continues to be holistic scoring in which writing

**Table 1.** Brief Description of Name-Writing Rubrics.

Rubric	Description
Diamond	Scale is divided into three broad categories, and scores range from 1 to 9 as follows: Little letter awareness (1: refusal, 2: scribble, 3: drawing as writing); strategies resembling conventional writing (4: scribble writing, 5: letter-like shapes, 6: writing with one letter and letter-like shapes); and use of letters only when writing name (7: two or more letters, 8: all letters in incorrect order, 9: correct spelling; Diamond, Gerde, & Powell, 2008).
Haney	Scores range from 1 to 10 as follows: 1: recognizable letters, 2: all letters present, 3: name spelled correctly, 4: capitalization, 5: letter formation, 6: size of letters, 7: spacing, 8: fine motor control (evenness and alignment), 9: lack of reversals, 10: name written on line (Haney, Bissonnette, & Behnken, 2003). <sup>a</sup>
Levin	Scale is broken into three general schemes: The graphic scheme (scores 0–2) 0: scribble, 1: single good form, 2: small good form scribbles to good forms. The writing-like scheme (scores 3–8) 3: linearity, 4: segmentation into units, 5: complexity of form, 6: minimal number and above, 7: variety, 8: intended variety. The symbolic scheme (scores 9–13) 9: conventional symbol, 10: phonetic representation, 11: more than 1 phonetic letter, 12: invented spelling, 13: conventional spelling (Levin & Bus, 2003).
Molfese	Scores range from 0 to 7 as follows: 0: no attempt or refusal, 1: wrote something, including drawing, scribbles or random letters, 2: wrote one or two letters of the name in a recognizable manner regardless of form, 3: wrote one or two letters of the name with good form, 4: wrote several letters of the name in a recognizable manner regardless of form, 5: wrote several letters of the name with good form, 6: wrote all letters of the name in a recognizable manner regardless of form, 7: wrote all letters of the name with good form (Molfese et al., 2011).
Puranik	Each feature was scored as present (1) or absent (0), and the final score was the summed score across the following nine features: 1: linearity, 2: segmentation, 3: simple characters, 4: left-to-right orientation, 5: complex characters, 6: first letter of name, 7: random letters, 8: many letters, 9: correctly spell first name (Puranik & Lonigan, 2011).
Simple	The scores range from 0 to 4 as follows: 0: scribble, 1: writing contains simple or simple or complex forms (squares, circles, etc.), 2: writing contains first letter of name or a recognizable letter, 3: writing contains many letters of name, 4: writes name using conventional spelling.

Note. For the sake of brevity, references to the rubrics are made using the name of the first author in the paper. Complete citations are indicated with an \* in the references.

<sup>a</sup>A score of 0 was given when a child was unable to write his or her name.

samples are given an overall rating (Huot & Neal, 2006) perhaps because of the practicality and ease of use. Thus, practically speaking, it might be useful to have a simple rubric that teachers can use easily when evaluating children's name-writing skills. In addition to the five published rubrics, we also developed a simple 4-point rubric because one of our goals was to determine how the more detailed metrics compared with a simple scoring system that preschool teachers could use easily in their classrooms (see Table 1).

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

Data for this study were pooled across four studies conducted as part of a large scale research project examining writing in preschool children. Children in all four studies were 3 to 5 years of age, attending 39 different public and private childcare centers or preschools in a moderate sized city and its surrounding areas in Northwestern Pennsylvania. Procedures for site selection were similar across the four studies. Specific sites were selected to represent children from a wide range of socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds. Approximately 17.6% of these centers were categorized as low SES (75%+ students receive subsidies),

26.9% as low-to-mid SES (49%–75% of students receive subsidies), 2.3% as mid SES (25%–49% students receive subsidies), and 53.2% as mid-to-high SES (less than 25% of students receive subsidies). Participants were 45.7% male and 54.3% female. Based on parent report, ethnicities of these children were as follows: White (49.8%), Black/African American (31.5%), Asian (4.6%), and other (4.6%). Ethnicity information was unavailable for approximately 9.5% of the participants.

Informed consent forms were distributed to parents of all children through their classroom teachers. Only children whose parents returned signed consent forms participated in the studies. As part of the larger project, children were tested individually at their childcare centers or preschools by trained research assistants. The assessments were conducted in a quiet room and completed in two to three sessions. No exclusionary criteria were used to select children except to ascertain from teacher reports that the child did not have a disability that would preclude him or her from completing the assessment and that English was the child's first language so that she or he could participate in the assessments. To answer our first question, regarding comparison of various name-writing rubrics, data were pooled from Study 1 through 4 ( $N = 346$ ). To answer our second question, regarding how the name-writing scores obtained from various rubrics related to literacy measures, data were

taken from Study 4 only ( $n = 172$ ). For this latter study, data from the assessment of various emergent literacy measures are also reported because these data were only collected for Study 4.

## Measures

**Name writing.** The examiner gave the child a blank piece of paper and pencil and asked the child to write his or her first name. The procedures used were identical across the four studies. Two independent research assistants scored each written name using the six different rubrics described in Table 1.

**Letter naming.** Children were shown cards with an uppercase letter printed on it and were asked to name the letter. All 26 letters were presented to the children in a random nonalphabetic order. The maximum score was 26. Internal consistency reliability for the letter-naming task was .97.

**Letter writing.** To assess letter-writing skills, children were asked to write each of 26 uppercase letters named by the examiner. Similar to the letter-naming task, letters were presented to the children in a random order. The children's responses were scored as 0, 1, or 2 depending on whether, and how well or poorly, the letters were formed. Children obtained a score of 0 if they did not respond or wrote an unrecognizable letter. A score of 1 was given if the letter was reversed, was poorly formed, and recognized only in context, or written in lower case. A score of 2 was given if the letter was written accurately in upper case and could be recognized out of context. The maximum score was 52. Internal consistency estimates obtained for the letter-writing task was high ( $\alpha = .98$ ).

**Letter sounds.** On this task, children were shown individual uppercase letters printed on a page and asked to say its sound. The examiner provided feedback if the child provided the letter name instead of the letter sound for the first two stimuli only. The maximum score was 26. Internal consistency reliability for the letter-sound task was .93.

**PA.** The PA subtest from the *Test of Preschool Early Literacy* (TOPEL; Lonigan, Wagner, Torgesen, & Rashotte, 2007), designed for use with 3- to 5-year-old preschool children, was used to measure children's PA skills. The PA subtest ( $\alpha = .86-.88$ ) includes 27 items that assess analyses (elision) and synthesis (blending) across the developmental continuum of PA.

**Print knowledge.** Children's print knowledge was assessed using the Print Knowledge subtest from the TOPEL, which assesses children's ability to identify aspects of print, letters, and written words, letter-name knowledge, and letter-sound knowledge ( $\alpha = .93-.96$ ).

**Spelling.** The *Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement: Third Edition* (WJ-III; Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001) is designed to assess students' intellectual and academic functioning starting with children as young as 2 years. The Spelling subtest was used to assess students' ability to draw marks and letters and spell dictated words. Test reliabilities reported range from .89 to .91.

## Interrater Reliability

To reduce errors, the letter-naming and letter-sound tasks, subtests of the TOPEL, and WJ-III were scored by two research assistants and entered into the database twice. The two writing tasks, namely letter writing and name writing, were also scored by two research assistants, but this was followed by a check for interrater reliability. Interrater agreement was calculated for each of the 26 letters in the letter-writing task; percent correct agreement across the 26 letters ranged from 87% to 95% (mean 91%) and Cohen's Kappa was .98. Percent correct agreement was calculated for each name-writing rubric and was as follows: 86% (Diamond), 92% (Haney), 85% (Levin), 90% (Molfese), 97% (Puranik), and 92% (Simple). Scoring differences were discussed until a consensus was reached and the final score entered was the one agreed on by the two scorers.

## Results

Descriptive data for name writing for each of the six rubrics are presented in Table 2 for the entire sample and by age groups. As expected, means for name writing increased with increasing age. The means for the oldest group, the 5-year-olds, showed significant skew and kurtosis reflecting that by 5 years, children are fairly sophisticated in their ability to write their names. There was no evidence to indicate that any one rubric best captured children's name-writing ability at different ages. To answer our first question, correlations between name-writing scores on various rubrics were estimated using Pearson's correlation coefficients. Table 3 shows the partial correlations, controlling for age, among the six name-writing rubrics. As can be seen, correlations between each of these name-writing rubrics were high and of similar magnitude, suggesting that the various scoring metrics were capturing relatively similar skills ( $r_s = .62-.94$ ). The means for name-writing scores across all three age groups, on the *Haney* scale tended to be on the low end. The Haney scale also had the lowest correlations with the other scales ( $r = .62-.77$ ) and showed a skewed distribution again perhaps because it was designed for kindergarten children and may be developmentally advanced for preschool-aged children.

Partial correlations controlling for age between the various name-writing rubrics and emergent and conventional literacy measures are shown in Table 4. Correlations

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics for Name Writing Using Various Rubrics for the Full Sample and by Age Group.

Name-writing rubric	M	SD	Range	Maximum possible	Skewness	Kurtosis
Full sample <sup>a</sup>						
Diamond	6.68	2.41	1–9	9	–0.61	–0.91
Haney	1.75	1.47	0–10	10	1.15	4.19
Levin	9.08	4.68	0–13	13	–0.85	–0.79
Molfese	3.76	2.31	0–7	7	–0.09	–1.75
Puranik	5.97	3.30	0–9	9	–0.64	–1.11
Simple	2.54	1.43	0–4	4	–0.38	–1.33
3-year-olds <sup>b</sup>						
Diamond	4.70	2.06	1–9	9	0.48	–0.47
Haney	0.70	0.90	0–4	10	1.54	2.20
Levin	5.30	4.35	0–13	13	0.35	–1.14
Molfese	1.86	1.61	0–7	7	1.88	2.29
Puranik	3.27	2.85	0–9	9	0.61	–0.72
Simple	1.38	1.12	0–4	4	0.91	0.30
4-year-olds <sup>c</sup>						
Diamond	7.28	2.01	1–9	9	–1.14	0.75
Haney	1.93	1.19	0–5	10	0.11	–1.14
Levin	10.33	3.88	0–13	13	–1.59	1.45
Molfese	4.26	2.11	0–7	7	–0.51	–1.38
Puranik	6.77	2.82	0–9	9	–1.23	0.33
Simple	2.86	1.26	0–4	4	–0.79	–0.51
5-year-olds <sup>d</sup>						
Diamond	8.47	1.22	2–9	9	–2.91	9.97
Haney	2.90	1.48	0–10	10	2.19	10.73
Levin	12.38	1.88	0–13	13	–4.62	24.64
Molfese	5.62	1.34	1–7	7	–2.10	4.22
Puranik	8.44	1.42	0–9	9	–3.83	17.67
Simple	3.66	0.78	0–4	4	–2.65	7.29

<sup>a</sup>N = 376. <sup>b</sup>n = 123. <sup>c</sup>n = 132. <sup>d</sup>n = 91.

**Table 3.** Partial Correlations Controlling for Age Among Name-writing Scores Using Different Rubrics (N = 346).

	Name-writing rubrics					
	Diamond	Haney	Levin	Molfese	Puranik	Simple
Diamond	—					
Haney	0.75	—				
Levin	0.91	0.62	—			
Molfese	0.87	0.77	0.79	—		
Puranik	0.89	0.65	0.89	0.81	—	
Simple	0.94	0.74	0.91	0.91	0.88	—

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .001$ .

between the various name-writing rubrics and specific emergent and conventional literacy measures, namely alphabet knowledge, PA, print knowledge, and spelling were in the low to moderate range. To examine whether the magnitude of these correlations from Table 4 were statistically significant and determine whether any of the scoring

rubrics was a better indicator of a child's emergent literacy skills, we compared correlations between each of the rubrics and specific literacy measures (shown in Table 5). Comparison of the correlations indicated that the majority were nonsignificant, that is, the magnitude of correlations between various name-writing rubrics and literacy skills were similar. Only 4 of the 90 comparisons were statistically significant, and no clear pattern emerged to suggest that any one rubric performed better than another.

## Discussion

Several rubrics have been proposed by various researchers to evaluate young children's name-writing skills. The purpose of this study was to compare six name-writing rubrics: five detailed scoring rubrics proposed most recently in the literature and one simple scoring rubric. We used name-writing data from four distinct data sets to examine how these rubrics compared with each other and to investigate whether they were differentially related to children's emergent and conventional literacy.

**Table 4.** Partial Correlations Controlling for Age Between Name-writing Scores Using Different Rubrics and Literacy Measures for Study 4 ( $n = 172$ ).

Literacy measure	Name-writing rubrics					
	Diamond	Levin	Haney	Molfese	Puranik	Simple
Letter naming	0.47	0.40	0.48	0.56	0.44	0.52
Letter writing	0.55	0.54	0.55	0.60	0.53	0.58
Letter sounds	0.43	0.39	0.44	0.49	0.39	0.46
TOPEL phonological awareness	0.36	0.31	0.30	0.38	0.32	0.39
TOPEL Print Knowledge	0.57	0.55	0.53	0.61	0.54	0.61
WJ-III Spelling	0.54	0.51	0.46	0.53	0.51	0.54

Note. All correlations significant at  $p < .001$ . TOPEL = *Test of Preschool Early Literacy*; WJ-III = *Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement: Third Edition*.

**Table 5.** Comparison of the Magnitude of Correlations ( $p$  Values) Between Various Rubrics and Literacy Measures.

Literacy measure	Comparison across rubrics							
	Diamond– Haney	Diamond– Levin	Diamond– Molfese	Diamond– Puranik	Diamond– Simple	Haney– Levin	Haney– Molfese	Haney– Puranik
Letter naming	0.43	0.9	0.01*	0.79	0.03	0.89	0.06	0.74
Letter writing	—	0.62	0.09	0.72	0.13	0.57	0.15	0.63
Letter sounds	0.43	0.88	0.07	0.86	0.14	0.78	0.17	0.78
Phonological awareness	0.86	0.93	0.31	0.85	0.14	0.44	0.07	0.38
Print knowledge	0.78	0.73	0.14	0.8	0.06	0.37	0.05	0.43
Spelling	0.91	0.82	0.6	0.8	—	0.22	0.09	0.21

  

Literacy measure	Comparison across rubrics						
	Haney– Simple	Levin–Molfese	Levin–Puranik	Levin–Simple	Molfese–Puranik	Molfese–Simple	Puranik–Simple
Letter naming	0.23	0.001*	0.14	0.001*	0.99	0.89	0.02
Letter writing	0.28	0.1	0.61	0.11	0.94	0.74	0.09
Letter sounds	0.36	0.02	—	0.02	0.98	0.82	0.04
Phonological awareness	0.06	0.09	0.4	0.01*	0.88	0.39	0.21
Print knowledge	0.06	0.1	0.39	0.03	0.94	—	0.03
Spelling	0.07	0.34	—	0.18	0.67	0.38	0.21

\*Comparisons significant at  $p < .01$ .

Moderate to strong correlations were noted among the name-writing scores from the different rubrics, with correlations ranging from .62 to .94. With the exception of the Haney scale, correlations among all the other five rubrics were in the high range, with the majority of the correlations at or above .80. These results indicate that the scoring rubrics investigated provide an equivalent index of preschool children's name-writing proficiency. The Haney scale had the lowest correlations with the other scales perhaps because the scale is developmentally advanced for preschool-aged children. This scale was designed for kindergarten children and evaluates more advanced writing skills such as fine motor control, presence/absence of letter reversals, and size of letters that may be difficult and perhaps not appropriate to evaluate in preschool children.

Next, we examined correlations between the six scoring rubrics and a comprehensive battery of children's literacy skills, which included standardized and unstandardized measures of alphabet knowledge, PA, print knowledge, and spelling. The correlations between the various name-writing

rubrics and literacy measures were generally consistent with those reported by past researchers. Correlations between name writing using various rubrics and letter writing ranged from .52 to .60, which is generally consistent with correlations reported by previous researchers (Bloodgood, 1999; Puranik et al., 2011). Likewise, correlations among the various name-writing rubrics and PA ranged from .30 to .39, which is consistent with correlations reported by Welsch et al. (2003;  $r = .29-.36$ ), and correlations between name writing and letter sounds ranged from .38 to .49, similar to the correlation reported by Blair and Savage (2006;  $r = .43$ ). Most important, the magnitude of correlations between the six scoring rubrics and a comprehensive battery of children's literacy skills were generally similar (Table 5). Although a few comparisons were statistically significant (4 out of 90), they were of little pragmatic significance as no clear pattern was evident to suggest that one rubric performed better than others. These results suggest that researchers and practitioners can feel comfortable using any name-writing rubric.

The simple rubric in which children's name writing was scored on a 4-point scale akin to a holistic scoring rubric showed strong correlations ( $r_s = .74-.94$ ) with the other more detailed name-writing rubrics. More important, correlations between the simple rubric and measures of emergent and conventional literacy were of similar magnitude compared with the other more detailed rubrics. This finding is somewhat surprising, because more precise rubrics provide greater detail regarding children's name-writing skills. However, the results are consistent with Molfese et al.'s (2011) findings that no new information was added by a three-component rubric compared with a single-component rubric. The findings of this study indicate that a simple, holistic scale does an equally good job and might be useful for teachers and educators to use when evaluating name writing in preschool children.

Although the results indicate that the simple rubric compared well with the more detailed rubrics in providing an equivalent index of children's name-writing skills, one argument that can be made against a simple, holistic scale is that it does not provide detailed information regarding children's writing. This may be seen as an advantage of the more precise scoring rubrics. Although further research is needed to answer this question, perhaps the more precise scoring rubrics might be more sensitive to the growth of name-writing skills over time compared with the simple rubric or might allow for complex coding of error analysis to guide intervention or to group children for instruction. Yet, the results of this study indicate that the simple rubric may be sufficient when teachers have little time or want to use it for quick screening purposes.

As with any findings, the results of this study should be considered in light of methodological limitations. Although we pooled data over four distinct data sets, the children in this study were taken from one geographical region. In addition, although we had recruited children from diverse preschool centers, the parental income data for Study 4 indicate that a significant proportion of the participants came from high income families. Findings may have been different if preschoolers were chosen from other geographical areas across a diverse group including children from low income families and from other types of programs such as Head Start. Last, name-writing data were only available at one time point, and hence, we do not know whether any of these rubrics might better capture growth in name-writing skills than others. This remains a question for future research.

In conclusion, the results indicate that all the six scoring rubrics examined in this study provide an equivalent index of preschool children's name-writing proficiency and showed similar relations with children's emergent and conventional literacy skills. Thus, researchers and educators should feel comfortable using any one of the proposed scoring rubrics to assess name writing in preschool children.

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