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as my article on handwriting, go to...
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Handwriting In the 21st Century

Why It Matters & What to Do About It

2020 Literacy Academy • February 20, 2020

William Van Cleave

I. What We Know

- The Importance of Handwriting to Student Readers & Writers
- What Teachers Know
- Useful Terminology
- Kinesthetic-Tactile Motor Memory

II. The Body, The Hand, & The Eye

- Hand/Eye Dominance
- Posture, Paper Position, Pencil Grip (The 3 P's)
- Tools: Pencil Grips, Tactile Surfaces

III. Technique

- T.C.C.C. - Trace, Copy, Cover, Closed
- The Three P's - Posture, Paper Position, Pencil Grip
- Tools - Pencil Grips & Tactile Surfaces

IV. Manuscript

- Warm-Up Strokes
- Letters by Stroke
 - tall letters (b, h, k, l, t)
 - short letters (i, j, m, n, p, r, u, y)
 - 2 o'clock letters (a, c, d, g, f, q, s)
 - slanty letters (v, w, x)
 - midnight letter (o)
 - crazy z (z)
 - 9 o'clock letter (e)

V. Cursive

- Warm-Up Strokes
- Swing-Ups
 - easier: i, t, u, p
 - loops: e, l
 - others: j, y, f, s, h, k
 - flat r: r
 - bridge letters: b, v, w
- Overstrokes
 - humps: m, n
 - easier: c, a, g, d, q
 - bridge letters: o
 - tough: z, x

Cognitive Demands of Writing

Transcription Skills

- **Motor Component:** Whether students handwrite or type, part of the mind is engaged in letter formation.
 - **Spelling:** Even if students are not penalized for spelling, they must still sound out and spell their words so that the reader can understand the text.
 - **Mechanics:** Students must adhere to the conventions of writing, not just capitals and end punctuation, but also the structures necessary to cluster groups of words effectively for meaning.
- **Oral Language:** Students use oral language before and more often than they do written language. They must learn the differences between spoken and written communication and how to put their thoughts on paper.
 - **Syntax:** Students must write coherent and varied sentences that convey their intended message and adhere to conventions.
 - **Vocabulary:** Students must convey their intended message through their words, varying word choice appropriately to reflect idea development. They must be able to use appropriate Tier Two (sophisticated cross-disciplinary words) and Tier Three (domain-specific) words.
 - **Purpose & Audience:** Students must understand the assignment and determine its purpose and intended audience. They must be able to apply text structure elements (e.g., knowledge of introductory, supporting, and concluding sentences and paragraphs). Further, they must be able to use domain-specific structure and vocabulary in the intended genre (e.g., narrative, informative, opinion/argument). The audience includes the style of the writing (e.g., blog, story, essay), the discipline (e.g., English, science), and the person(s) who will evaluate the writing.
 - **Recursive Processes:** Students must proofread and edit their work, taking into account conventions of spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, and idea development.

Stages of Knowledge	Idea Generation	Parts of Speech	Sentence Parts	Paragraph/ Essay Parts
Definition		learn definition	learn definition	ability to discuss
Identification		recognize in text	recognize in text	recognize in text
Create in Isolation	generate/ categorize list	provide examples in isolated sentences	provide examples in isolated sentences	create using known topic
Create in Application	generate/ categorize list for content-based assignment	use in paragraphs	use in paragraphs	create using content-based topic

Hand/Eye Dominance

Posture, Pencil Grip, Paper Position

Offered Order of Operations for Manuscript

Warm-Up Strokes:

Cluster by Stroke:

tall letters (b, h, k, l, t)

short letters (i, j, m, n, p, r, u, y)

2 o'clock letters (a, c, d, g, f, q, s)

slanty letters (v, w, x)

midnight letter (o)

crazy z (z)

9 o'clock letter (e)

Offered Order of Operations for Cursive

Warm-Up Strokes:

Swing-Ups

easier (i, t, u, p)

loops (e, l)

others (j, y, f, s, h, k)

flat r (r)

bridge letters (b, v, w)

Overstrokes

humps (m, n)

easier (c, a, g, d, q)

bridge letter (o)

tough (z, x)

What We Know About Cursive & Struggling Writers

As Diana Hanbury King writes, “To begin with, in cursive writing there is no question as to where each letter begins -- it begins on the line. The confusion with forms is not merely a left and right reversal as with b/d and p/q; it is also an up and down reversal as with m/w and u/n, hence the uncertainty as to whether a letter begins at the top or the bottom. Second, spelling is fixed more firmly in the mind if the word is formed in a continuous movement rather than a series of separate strokes with the pencil lifted off the paper between each one” (King, *Writing Skills for the Adolescent*).

In short:

- cuts down on reversals (cursive b/d, m/w, etc.)
- in a proper lowercase cursive alphabet, all letters begin on the baseline
- spelling is better reinforced in the mind if the continuous movement of cursive is used
- forces appropriate clustering of letters to create words and spacing between words

Handwriting Tips:

William Van Cleave

I. Body:

- A. feet flat
- B. back straight
- C. both arms on table (including elbows)

II. Paper Position:

- A. paper tilted at 45 degrees
- B. corner folded if necessary

III. Hands & Grip:

- A. fingers should be in triangular position - thumb and first finger squeeze pencil while middle finger acts as bridge for pencil
- B. index finger's pad should be pressed against the pencil
- C. pencil should rest on the arch between thumb and first finger, and eraser should point over shoulder
- D. wrist should be flat on table
- E. other hand should be on top of paper to pull paper up (so writing hand doesn't have to move down)
- F. arm should arc across page as student writes (instead of wrist flipping back and forth)

IV. Script:

- A. every lower case letter begins on the line
- B. letters should be taught in groups by formation

T.C.C.C. - Cursive Right-Handed



Go up around the clock to 2 o'clock;
backtrack and swing forward.



Eyes Closed:



Gillingham-Based Alphabets

(Diana Hanbury King's fonts)

right-handed alphabets:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z
A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

left-handed alphabets:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z
A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

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