

Cursive Handwriting in an Internet Age

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Abstract : Recent concerns about the value of teaching cursive handwriting in the classroom are based on the belief that cursive handwriting or penmanship is an outdated and unnecessary skill in today's online world. The discussion of this issue begins with a description of current initiatives to eliminate handwriting instruction in schools. This is followed by a brief history of cursive writing through the ages. Next considered is a description of its benefits as a preliminary process for younger children as compared with immediate instruction in keyboarding, particularly in the areas of vision, cognition, motor skills and automatic fluency. Also considered, is cursive's companion, paper itself, and the impact of a paperless, "screen and keyboard" environment. The discussion concludes with a consideration of the unique contributions of cursive and keyboarding as written forms of communication, along with their respective surfaces, paper and screen. Finally, an assessment of the practical utility of each skill is followed by an informal assessment of what is lost and what remains as we move from a predominantly paper and pen world of handwriting to texting and keyboarding in an environment of screens.

Keywords : asemantic writing, cursive, handwriting, keyboarding, paper

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