

The Blumenfeld Education Letter

"My People Are Destroyed For Lack Of Knowledge" HOSEA 4:6

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The purpose of this newsletter is to provide knowledge for parents and educators who want to save the children of America from the destructive forces that endanger them. Our children in the public schools are at grave risk in 4 ways: academically, spiritually, morally, and physically — and only a well-informed public will be able to reduce these risks.
"Without vision, the people perish."

How Should We Teach Our Children to Write? Cursive First, Print Later!

For the last six years or so, I have been lecturing parents at homeschool conferences on how to teach the three R's: reading, writing, and arithmetic. I explain in great detail how to teach children to read phonetically through intensive, systematic phonics. But when it comes to writing, I have to explain to a very skeptical audience why cursive writing should be taught first and print later.

I usually start my lecture by asking the parents if they think that their children ought to be taught to write. I explain that many educators now believe that handwriting is really an obsolete art that has been replaced by the typewriter and word processor, and that it is no longer necessary to teach children to write. They imply that if a child wants to learn to write, he or she can do so without the help of any school instruction.

However, I've yet to meet any parents who have been sold on such daring, but questionable, futurist thinking. They all believe that their children should be taught to write. And, of course, I agree with them. After all, no one knows what needs their children will have for good handwriting twenty years hence. Also, you can't carry a two-thousand-dollar laptop or a typewriter

everywhere you go. The question then becomes: How shall we teach children to write? And my answer is quite clear: Do not teach your child to print by ball-and-stick, or italic, or Denelian. Teach your child to write a standard cursive script. And the reason why I can say this with confidence is because that's the way I was taught to write in the first grade in a New York City public school back in 1931 when teachers knew what they were doing.

In those days children were not taught to print. We were all taught cursive right off the bat, and the result is that people of my generation generally have better handwriting than those of recent generations. Apparently, cursive first went out of style in the 1940s when the schools adopted ball-and-stick manuscript to go with the new Dick and Jane look-say reading programs. Ball-and-stick was part of the new progressive reforms of primary education.

But ball-and-stick has produced a handwriting disaster. Why? Because by the time children are introduced to cursive in the third grade, their writing habits are so fixed that they resent having to learn an entirely new way of writing, the teachers do not have

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