

INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

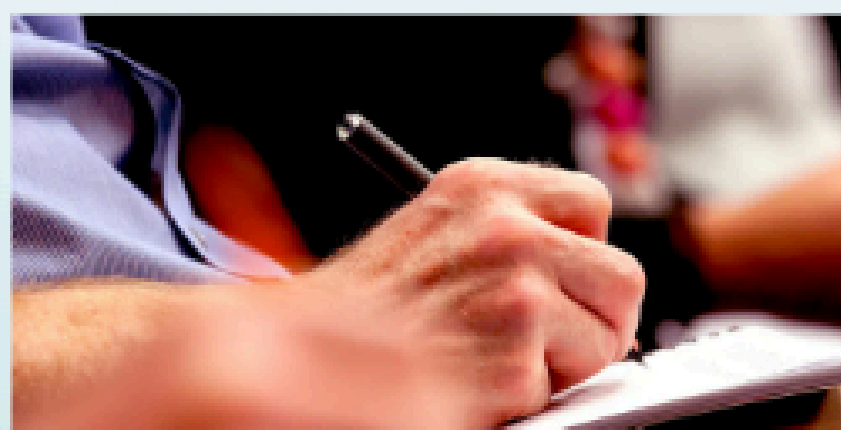
THE IMPORTANCE OF HANDWRITING

Emma Lin

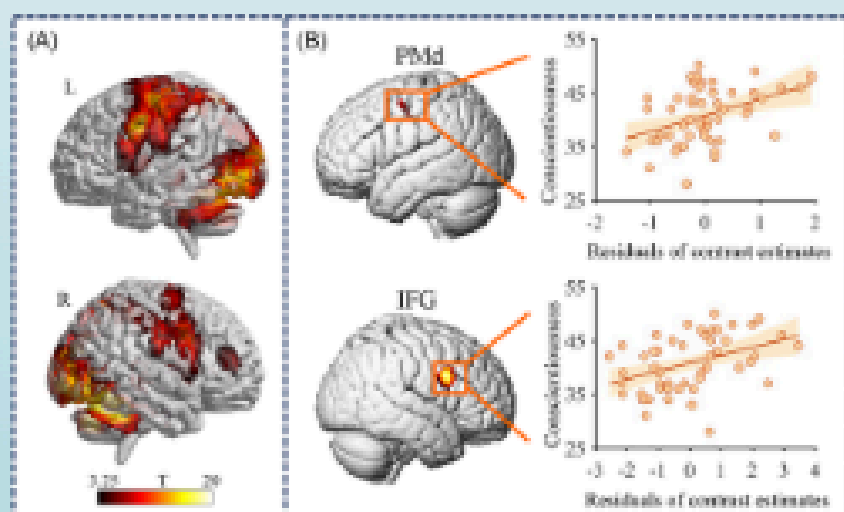
This piece, like most other written works today, was not made on paper. Indeed, it seems the likelihood of needing to write by hand instead of simply typing declines more and more with each coming year and its innovations.

But this increase in technological availability is juxtaposed with a subsequent decrease in handwriting abilities, and with this relationship comes many implications.

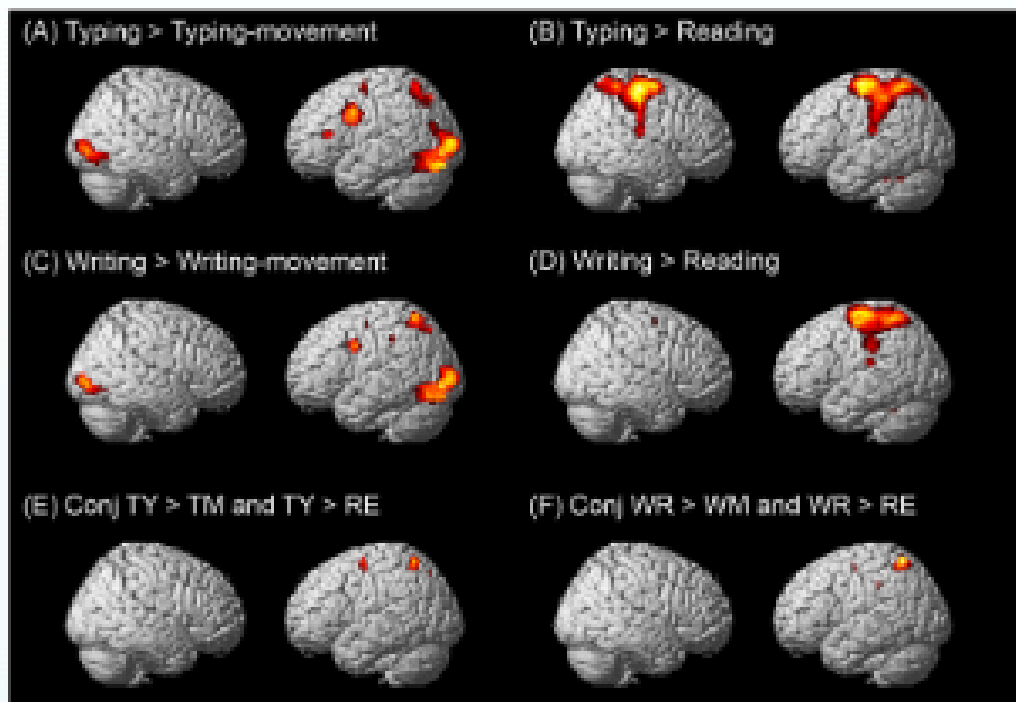
To examine this phenomenon, we must first address the cause: why are more people typing? Typical responses to this question would constitute the comparative efficiency of typing (especially in a time-constrained setting), its organizational benefits when taking notes (as Feke 20 states, "You could write your ideas down frantically on paper, but if you cannot read your notes afterward, you're out of luck."), or its ease in correcting mistakes afterward. Typing also notably reduces fatigue, and greatly expands accessibility for working in multiple areas.



Secondly, we'll discuss the obvious. Why should anyone choose to write by hand anymore, when one now has tools beyond our ancestor's wildest imagination at the fingertips of our disposal? Why should one still choose to do so, especially when the shortcomings seemingly outweigh the advantages? The answer lies deep beyond visually-noticeable parameters and extends beneath to the brain. The Norwegian University of Science and Technology conducted a study aimed at determining handwriting's relationship with learning and memory. Through recording the brain activity of 36 university students, researchers concluded that physical penmanship required more connections between the visual, sensor, and motor cortices of the brain. Students given a digital pen during the study were found to require visualizing the letter first, before activating fine motor skills to transcribe it down to paper.



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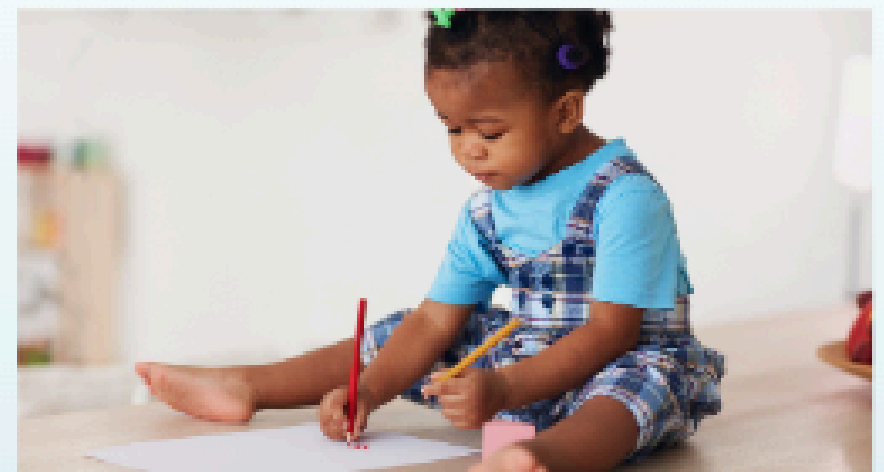
NTNU neuropsychology professor Audrey van der Meer shared “Our main finding was that handwriting activates almost the whole brain as compared to typewriting, which hardly activates the brain as such. The brain is not challenged very much when it’s pressing keys on a keyboard as opposed to when it’s forming those letters by hand”.

Van der Meer, who co-authored the study, elaborates saying: “When you have to form letters by hand, an ‘A’ will look completely different than a ‘B’ and requires a completely different movement pattern...because only small parts of the brain are active during typewriting, there is no need for the brain to communicate between different areas,”

Handwriting also reaps a multitude of educational benefits in childhood years: Oxford Learning attributes 4 benefits reaped through handwriting crucial for those in early developmental education. The following four include refining motor skills, stimulating brain areas, facilitating letter recognition, and creating critical literacy foundations, the applications of which only increase following individual advancements in education.

Though taxing, writing by hand still proves to be an invaluable asset in everyday life by aiding memory and boosting cognitive function.

Though it’s an unrealistic and largely impractical practice to immediately substitute all daily writing for paper, coaxing a marginal increase can, with time, lead to exercising a valuable habit that not only promotes cognitive growth but also leads us to appreciate the craft of penmanship.



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INFLATION AND DEFLATION IN A POST-COVID WORLD

Helen Anderson

Inflation is defined as the sustained increase in the price levels of goods and services, while deflation is defined as the exact opposite: a decrease in price. Economies all over the world fluctuate between the two constantly as economies shift, change, and grow, but both can have serious negative effects. The COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted the global economy as many businesses and sectors that relied on in-person customers and workers struggled or failed. In the years after COVID, we've seen a lot of inflation all over the world, with some countries dealing with it better than others. But firstly, we need to understand inflation to know how to deal with it.



Inflation is caused by resource scarcity in comparison to demand and/or an increase in spending. If necessary goods are scarce, prices will go up as people try to outbid one another for them, or if there's more spending, there will be more money in total circulation, leading to it being worth less. For COVID, the issues that companies and factories had in producing goods during lockdown meant a small supply in proportion to the demand. On the contrary, deflation is caused by an excess of goods or a decrease in spending. Excess goods mean that businesses make a substantial loss as they are unable to sell enough products to turn a profit, which prevents them from future spending. In addition, if prices are constantly decreasing, people will hold onto their money to wait for lower prices, also reducing overall spending, reducing the money in circulation, and increasing its value.

US inflation at 3.4%

Consumer Price Index, change from a year ago



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics





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There are many ways a government can reduce national inflation such as increasing interest rates, increasing tax rates, increasing reserve requirements, and price ceilings. All of these policies aim to either reduce the amount of available money to spend or prevent prices from climbing too high, but some are more effective than others.

The United States has had a difficult struggle with inflation, and although it tried many methods to reduce it, the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and the sanctions the US placed on Russia made this recovery much slower.

Finally, in 2024, the inflation rate seems to be in a downturn and it should stabilize in the future. Vietnam actually faced the opposite, its economy slowed down after COVID, but it had a very fast recovery as a direct result of its intense policies such as reducing VAT.

CROSSWORD: PAPER BASKET

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Activate
Ceiling
Demand
Inflation
Interest
Motor
Paper
Penmanship
Scarce
Typing



COVID-19 has had a widespread impact on economies all over the world and by understanding inflation and looking at these case studies, we can not only know what issues to avoid in the future but also know what macroeconomic policies are justified in times of economic turmoil.

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