In *Psychology Today*, William R. Klemm wrote that writing cursive develops eye-hand coordination; to write legible cursive, fine motor control is needed.

"Cursive writing helps train the brain to integrate visual and tactile information. The benefits to brain development are similar to what you get with learning to play a musical instrument," he wrote.

Learning cursive was not easy for me and I don't think it was easy for many of my fellow students in the 1950's. Learning anything new is challenging and that's a good thing. Challenges push us to try new things, push our limits, and see what is possible when we give the effort.

Today, sorry to say, many young people don't value the written word; not even on their computers or the Internet. Texting has taken place of dictionary words. Easy, fast and almost instant gratification in the form of a cryptic answer. Email has replaced written notes and many of those are written poorly. Spell check doesn't pick up grammar errors and many of the words that have several meanings.

I'm a writer and have been for years. I'm a former newspaper reporter, have had a newspaper column for 17 years (*Suburban News Publications, The Arizona Republic, This Week News),* was a writer for *Hearing Health Magazine* for six years and have authored two books.

I know E-books are the latest and greatest in the book world, but I'm not a fan, for the most part. I want to hold a paper book in my hand; or a magazine or newspaper; not read it on my computer. It's even been proven that reading on electronics into the night disrupts our circadian rhythms making sleep difficult. The experts say to turn off electronics, including televisions, long before going to sleep at night.

When I'm writing, I start out using pen and paper. In cursive. Then I transfer my thoughts to the computer. When it's time to read and edit, I print a copy to read. So I'm glad for computers, but I still value my early training in cursive to be able to write.

As Klemm said in the quote above, cursive "helps train the brain to integrate visual and tactile information." When I learned to play piano, even before I learned cursive, it was a similar experience. I was terrible at first. Looking at the music and feeling the keys under my fingers was difficult. But my teacher was patient and in time I made music.

And in time, I learned cursive. It's infinitely easier than printing.

Our historical documents are all written in beautiful, even artistic, cursive. Learning to write cursive you also learn to read it. Will young people be able to read our country's historical documents if they aren't taught cursive? Or will they have to have "old" people interpret them?

I'm all for progress. But with progress, we must take care to not leave important skills behind us.

When I was writing my column on the topic of cursive writing (http://daybydayliz.com/2015/05/31/cursive-writing-instruction-has-proven-benefits/), I spoke with several teachers and retired teachers. Their response was unanimous that cursive writing is very important in the learning process. One teacher even said that it's not as time consuming as the naysayers are touting it is.

Music, art and drama are on a tenuous thread as well, in schools. Many of these teachers are holding their breath year-to-year wondering if they'll continue to be able to teach students to play instruments, sing/read music, perform on stage (which builds confidence), and learn visual arts. When a school district has financial problems, these are the first things cut. Not sports. Never sports.

Now cursive writing has either been cut or it's proposed to be eliminated from schools. Reading scores are a big problem as well. Makes me wonder about what importance schools and

homes are putting on reading books with young people; possibly the same young people who know how to text, but not write cursive – I learned in the third grade, the same grade students are supposed to be reading easily – the connection seems all too possible.

What's best for our children in their education? We learned the "reading, writing and arithmetic" method, with a large dose of music, art and outdoor exercise.

The basics still work. Without a calculator, can our young people do math? Can they read and write when the power goes off? Do they know how to write a thank you note and address an envelope and mail a letter?

I certainly hope so.

Teach them keyboarding, sure. But teach them the basics they can use no matter where they are and what their circumstances. Believe it or not, not every child/parent can afford a computer.

Basics, people, basics. Then let them use their imaginations to go their way.

Liz Thompson
614-277-3278
2993 Sawyer Drive
Grove City, OH 43123
www.daybydayliz.com