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**Sharing Best Practice**  
**Port Fairy**  
**27th April 2024**

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**James Lyra**  
Master Learning Intervention  
(Specific Learning Difficulties)  
B.Ed (ECE) / B.Sc (OT)

<https://riseliteracy.com.au/sbp-handwriting/>

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**Session 2: Handwriting Instruction – What does the evidence say?**

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**SBP** Objectives

- Handwriting research and links to written expression
- Handwriting instruction research
  - Limitations on specific method, dosage, sequence, prompts, line type, font choice, commercial programs
- What can we do in the classroom?

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**SBP** Key Terms

Written Expression

- CRITICAL THINKING**
  - Analyzing text/purpose
  - Analyzing text/structure
  - Analyzing text/audience
- ORALITY**
  - Grammar and syntax
  - Sentence structure
  - Paragraph
- TEXT STRUCTURE**
  - Sentence structure
  - Paragraph structure
  - Text organization
  - Text coherence
  - Text conventions
- WRITING CRAFT**
  - Mechanics
  - Spelling
  - Punctuation
- METACOGNITION**
  - Planning
  - Monitoring
  - Revising

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**SBP** Handwriting Research

It is a minefield - there is a lot of research on handwriting

What we can take away from the body of research is:

- Handwriting **IS** important
- Handwriting aids reading, writing & spelling (in fact, reading improves if you can write the words)
- Teachers **MUST** explicitly teach handwriting from the start of school
  - Min 20 minutes, twice a week
  - Optimal is daily 10-15 minutes

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**SBP** **Handwriting Instruction Research**

Current research asserts that a cognitive approach is the most effective instructional approach

- Explicit instruction on the formation of the letters i.e. teacher models, students practice
- Lots of practice and ideally then in the context of words

The exact specifics, i.e., a specific method, dosage, sequence, line type, and font choice, are lacking.

There are lots of commercial programs which be been developed with a sound theoretical framework BUT limited evidence of their efficacy

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**SBP** **What can we do in the classroom?**

Employing a cognitive load lens and other practical frameworks can effectively guide our practice and enhance our instructional strategies.

Prompts

- Abstract (head, body, tail using cat/seahorse analogies; tall man, short man, over the hill, under the hill, etc) or direct ('this letter sits here on the line')

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**SBP** **What can we do in the classroom?**

Line types

- The currently accepted use is 24mm dotted thirds. However, there are many differences in how they are used.
- Can we develop a system that starts with a strong scaffold but allows teachers to gradually remove the scaffold as students' writing develops?

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**S**  **B** **P** **What can we do in the classroom?**

Sequence

- Many handwriting programs (and common OT recommendations) are to group letters in their formation patterns. The background stems from early research on pre-writing patterns.
- However, it doesn't take into account more recent research on the importance of linking letter formations with orthographic patterns.

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**S**  **B** **P** **What can we do in the classroom?**

Let's look at some practical examples

- Line types
- Prompts
- Word-writing practice
- Graded dictations

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<https://www.sharingbestpractice.org/>

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