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**From:** jeffrey E. <jeevacation@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 7, 2017 4:09 AM  
**To:** Noam Chomsky  
**Subject:** Re:

no question in my mind that it is a huge benefit for the group. but my conjecture is that it is not necessarily good for the individual. . like being a hero ( throwing yourself on a grenade ) . good for the group not =o good for the hero. . as writing forces a slower pace. I wonder if in a large population , handwriting will be correlated with G . anyway , I need to get my mind off the way you have been getting screwed. drives me crazy.

On Wed, Dec 6, 2017 at 10:51 PM, Noam Chomsky wrote:  
=blockquote class="gmail\_quote" style="margin:0 0 0 .8ex;border-left:1px solid #ccc;padding-left:1ex"> Good to have a fun note.

I suspect that forcing children to do anything is probably harmful. But it's possible to introduce writing and (secondarily) reading in a way that seems to enhance thinking. That's the idea behind "invented spelling" (here's a link to some of the work:

[https://pages.wustl.edu/files/pages/imce/treiman/Read%20%26%20Treiman\\_Childrens\\_Invented\\_Spelling\\_final.pdf](https://pages.wustl.edu/files/pages/imce/treiman/Read%20%26%20Treiman_Childrens_Invented_Spelling_final.pdf)  
<[https://pages.wustl.edu/files/pages/imce/treiman/Read%20%26%20Treiman\\_Childrens\\_Invented\\_Spelling\\_final.pdf](https://pages.wustl.edu/files/pages/imce/treiman/Read%20%26%20Treiman_Childrens_Invented_Spelling_final.pdf)>  
) . Back in the early 1950s, a philosopher friend of mine (Israel Scheffler) brought me some pages on which his two-year old son had written things that he thought were gibberish, wondering if I could make something of it. It was immediately obvious that the kid had learned the names of the letters and was spontaneously stringing them together to express himself in writing. And making interesting generalizations. Thus the letter "A", pronounced /ey/, he used for the words "came," "pet", &quot;pat"; the letter "i", pronounced /ay/, he used for "ie", "pot," "but/" . And so on. It all made sense. Our kids did the same thing. Carol wrote some papers about it, Charles Read and others carried it forward. Turns out to be a great way to teach reading too. Kids spontaneously express themselves, often in creative way, and the transition to official orthography is not that difficult now that they have the general idea.

There's a debate about it in educational circles, and though I haven't followed it, my impression is that old-fashioned forcing into a mold probably wins out, undermining the joy of self-expression and possibly reading.</div>

As you may know, Galileo regarded invention of the alphabet as among the greatest of all human inventions. Can do no better than quote his own words. He regarded the invention of the alphabet as "surpassing all stupendous inventions," asking "what sublimity of mind was his who dreamed of finding means to communicate his deepest thoughts to any other person, though distant by mighty intervals of place and time! of talking with those who are in India; of speaking to those who are not yet born and will not be born for a thousand or ten thousand years; and with what facility, by the different arrangements of twenty characters upon a page!"

Shortly after, the same observation was made about the more fundamental matter of sounds (Port Royal Grammar 1660). I discovered all of this about 50 years ago and wrote about it. Unknown then, still unknown, in my view some of the most profound insights in the human sciences.

Smart guys, the founders of modern science.

On Wed, Dec 6, 2017 at 5:48 AM, jeffrey E. <jeevacation@gmail.com> wrote:

on a more fun note. is is possible that learning how to write and read, in fact slows down your thinking process. forcing children to write and organize their thoughts in a medium that does not lend itself to speed. is not natural?

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