
From: Noam Chomsky [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2017 6:53 AM
To: jeffrey E.; Valeria Chomsky
Subject: Re:

If done properly, like offering free and creative opportunities for kids, I think it can be good for the individual.

And with your immense help, for which I can't express enough gratitude, we're working our way through it I think

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On=Wed, Dec 6, 2017 at 9:09 PM, jeffrey E. <jeevacation@gmail.com>= wrote:

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. ♦=A0 . like being a hero (throwing yourself on a grenade) . good for the group not so good for the hero. ♦=A0 . as writing forces a linear slow pace. =C2♦ 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. ♦=ives me crazy.

On=Wed, Dec 6, 2017 at 10:51 PM, Noam Chomsky [REDACTED] wrote:

Good to=have a fun note.

I suspect that forcing children to do =nything is probably harmful. But it's possible to introduce writing and (secondarily) reading in a way that seems to enhance thinking. ♦=A0 That's the idea behind "invented spelling" (here's a =ink 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>). ♦=A0 Back in the early '50s, a philosopher friend of mine (Israel Scheff=er) 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.=C2♦ It was immediately obvious that the kind had learned the names of the letters and was spontaneously stringing them together to express himself =n writing. And making interesting generalizations. Thus the le=ter "A", pronounced /ey/, he used for the words "came," "pet", "pat"; the letter "i", pronounced /a=/, he used for "pie", "pot," "but/" . And so=on. It all made sense. Our kids did the same thing. Caro= wrote some papers about it, Charles Read and others carried it forward.=C2♦ Turns out to be a great way to teach reading too. Kids spontaneously=express themselves, often in creative way, and the transition to official =rthography is not that difficult now that they have the general idea.

There's a debate about it in educational circles, =nd though I haven't followed it, my impression is that old-fashioned f=rcing into a mold probably wins out, undermining the joy of self-expressio= and possibly reading.

As you may know, Galileo regarded inv=ntion of the alphabet as among the greatest of all human inventions. Can d= no better than quote his own words. He regarded the invention of the alphabet as "surpassing all stupendous inventions," asking =E2♦♦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! =f talking with those who are in India; of speaking to those who are not yet b=rn 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!=E2♦♦

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. it 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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