National Poll Reveals That Cursive Writing Education Is In Danger

A survey conducted by Really Good Stuff Inc. reveals cursive writing education in the United States is on course for extinction - could this be a result of the Common Core State Standards Initiative?

Monroe, CT (PRWEB) April 29, 2013 -- A recent national survey of 612 elementary school teachers in the United States, conducted by teacher supplies retailer Really Good Stuff, reveals that 41 percent of elementary school teachers no longer incorporate cursive writing instruction into their curriculum – an indication cursive writing may be heading for extinction.

Could this be a result of mandated state-approved curricula? Since 2010, 45 states have adopted the Common Core State Standards – an education initiative that aims to align state curricula along national standards. The Common Core standards do not contain any requirement for cursive instruction, leaving it up to individual states and districts to decide whether or not to include cursive writing instruction in their curricula.

While only 59 percent of teachers reported that they covered cursive writing instruction in their classroom, 67 percent of teachers said they plan to teach cursive in the future – signifying the possibility of a comeback for cursive writing. Additionally, 63 percent of teachers regarded cursive writing skills as either “Important” or “Very Important,” while 71 percent felt there would be long-term negative consequences associated with discontinuing cursive writing education. The consequences cited by teachers include poor fine motor skills development, and inabilities to accurately read cursive writing or develop a legal signature.

Responses from teachers included:
“...is that more and more children have writing accommodations, when simply a good foundation in basic handwriting throughout elementary school would have served him/her better in preparing and training for the more rigorous academics in the upper grade levels. So much emphasis is placed on critical thinking skills before children have mastered the basics (math, grammar, spelling, handwriting).” – Secondary Teacher, Texas

“...are unable to read cursive writing in middle school and my students enjoy the ease of using cursive over printing - once they thought writing was a chore, but as they learn cursive they see that writing can move more quickly. I think they should learn cursive so that they have a choice in the future as to how they'd like to write. Without at least being exposed to it, they don't have a choice. Even with computers, cursive has a place.” – 4th Grade Teacher, Florida

“... needs a signature. Furthermore, there are many students who prefer cursive because it is easier and faster to write. Overall I find the quality of students' work is better when they use cursive handwriting. In elementary school there are still a lot of paper and pencil tasks.” – 4th Grade Teacher, New Hampshire

“...writing requires time, patience, and perseverance. It helps build small motor skills and teaches attention to detail. Twenty-first century learning is fast paced and tech-oriented. Students are more apt to type their assignments than write them with paper and pencil, so handwriting is becoming more and more an unnecessary skill. Hopefully the skills I mentioned above will find a place in our new world of technology, because the time to thoroughly teach and learn the art of cursive writing is no longer available in today's school day.” – 3rd Grade Teacher, Minnesota
“Children learn natural spacing when learning cursive. Some will have long-term difficulty without it. Students will not be able to write as quickly when they need to (note-taking from lectures).” – 4th Grade Teacher, California

“I believe that the brain needs small motor skill practice and that our children get very little of this. Also, I am concerned that they cannot read cursive (notes from elders) and that they will not have legible signatures when they grow up.” – Secondary Teacher, Michigan

“I use D'Nealian cursive (lowercase connectors) with large motor (using whole arm) & fine motor movements when teaching phonics patterns in decodable words. For dyslexics, this is crucial to "seeing" words as units of language, rather than random letters stringing across a page. My son has used this method since 1993, and I have taught it to my special education students since that time, as well.” – 3rd Grade Teacher, North Carolina

Since the 1970’s, the emphasis on cursive writing education in the classroom has diminished in order to make room for a greater proportion of class time spent preparing students for standardized tests, teaching them word processing skills or spending time on more meaningful educational content. However, 82 percent of teachers stated that their school does not implement keyboarding instruction in place of cursive writing instruction – suggesting that in general, less time is being spent educating students on the writing process.

While 59 percent of all elementary school teachers surveyed taught cursive writing in their classrooms, 74 percent of second and third grade teachers, the two grades where cursive is typically introduced, taught cursive. A 2007 nationwide survey on writing instruction by researchers at Vanderbilt University revealed that 50 percent of second grade teachers and 90 percent of third grade teachers offered cursive writing instruction. Comparatively, the 2013 survey conducted by Really Good Stuff found that 65 percent of second grade teachers and 79 percent of third grade teachers offered cursive writing instruction in their classrooms.

About Really Good Stuff Inc.
Really Good Stuff® is an award-winning teacher supplies retailer located in Monroe, Connecticut. They strive to improve the classroom experience for teachers and students by developing creative teaching tools that apply to grades K-8. For more information about Really Good Stuff, please visit: http://www.reallygoodstuff.com/

The survey conducted by Really Good Stuff sampled 612 K-5 teachers from 48 states. The survey data represented herein has a confidence level of 95% with a confidence interval (margin of error) of +/- 3.96. These statistics are based on a population of approximately 1.7 million U.S elementary school teachers [2010 Census]. This data is filtered from an original sample of 902 respondents.
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