



Teacher Handbook

The Left-Handed Writer



The Left-Handed Writer

*Original COPYRIGHT © 1987 Charles H Trafford Peterson
Directed Handwriting*

2nd Edition

*COPYRIGHT © 2007 Rand H. Nelson Peterson Directed
Handwriting*

All Rights Reserved.

*No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means,
electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information
storage and retrieval system without written permission from the publisher.*

Published in The United States of America

By:

Peterson Directed Handwriting

P. O. Box 278

New Alexandria, PA 15670

724-972-1671

<http://www.peterson-handwriting.com>

ISBN 1-890666-13-0

Contents

Introduction	4
Establishing the Correct Physical Approach	6
Compare Various Paper Position Adjustments	8
Avoid Inverted Movements	9
Consider Allowing Left-handers to Use Slanted Print	10
Things to Do for Left-handers in Primary Grades	11
Grade Two	12
Cursive Is An “Upstroke” Skill	13
Cursive As A Readiness Process Is Advantageous	16
Grade Three and Up	17
Category I Writers do not drag the hand through letters in words or hook the wrist.	17
CATEGORY II - Overhand	19
These Overhanded Adjustments Should Definitely Be Changed	22
Conclusion	23
Movement-Based Instruction	24

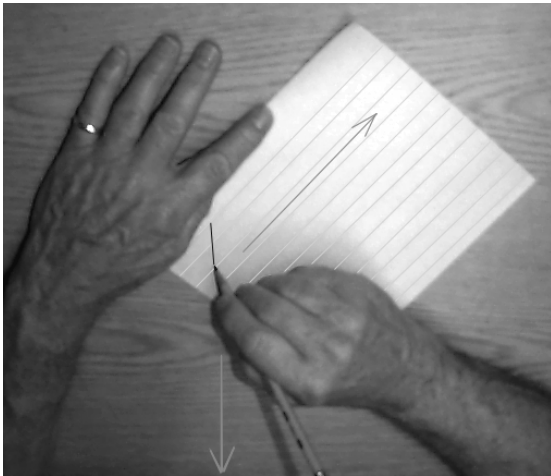
Introduction

If you are right-handed, imagine that you are suddenly thrown into a culture that learns to read and write from the right side of the paper to the left - just the opposite of the process used for symbolic language in the western world. Try to write your name backwards!

Rand Nelson

Without careful process instruction and directed practice, writing from right-to-left is an arduous task for right-handed people. If you were left-handed you would be able to learn to write “backwards” much more easily than right-handers. The natural writing movements of left-handed people would be better utilized if they could be permitted to write from right-to-left.

However, in the western world all children must learn a left-to-right process for written language. There can be no exceptions. This fact explains the problem faced by left-handed children. How in the world can they learn to write fluently going from left-to-right? The answer sounds quite simple: Left-handers need to learn to reverse the movements used by right-handed people.



Right-handers push horizontal strokes to the right, away from the body. They pull downstrokes toward the body.

It follows then that we must teach left-handers to pull horizontal strokes toward the body, and push downstrokes to the left, away from the body.



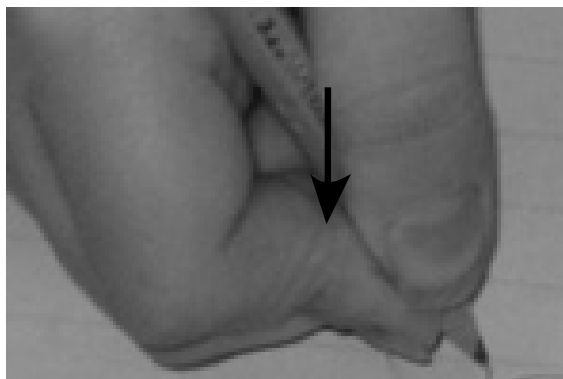
However, most left-handed children receive no readiness instruction to prepare them for this natural movement approach for handwriting. Since most left-handers have right-handed parents, no one at home is prepared to establish the environment and approach necessary to reinforce the leftward movement process that is crucial for left-handed handwriting. The problem can be observed by watching a preschool left-handed child as he/she colors a picture in a coloring book.



Note the position of the left arm. This position forces the child to rely on a "pulling" movement. Leftward sliding movements, pushing away from the body, are completely blocked.

Two innate tendencies exhibited by all youngsters contribute obstacles to set the stage for bad habits. One is the tendency to place a picture at body midpoint. The second is to orient the image so that it matches the vertical/horizontal perceptions of the child's world.

This "incidental" learning establishes an inverted movement that soon becomes a habit. When the preschooler begins to experiment with handwriting symbols the inversion continues and the child is forced to use a pulling movement for downstrokes, just like right-handers! If the child tries to reproduce a series of letterforms using a left-to-right process the left hand covers the symbols on the left side of the paper and the stage is set for establishing patterns that interfere with the non-mearring movement process that we should use in first grade! As a result, most left-handed children never have the opportunity to learn an efficient way to write.



Note how the distal joint of the pointer finger is bent backward.

Bad habits feel good. How many adults have you seen pinching on a pencil? Writer's cramp is a real problem when this habit must be used all day.

When the child comes to school the teacher faces a difficult problem. Left-handed children require special attention and gentle persuasion. If we are to succeed in helping the left-handed children we must direct their practice very carefully. Most children will need to learn a completely new approach to writing.

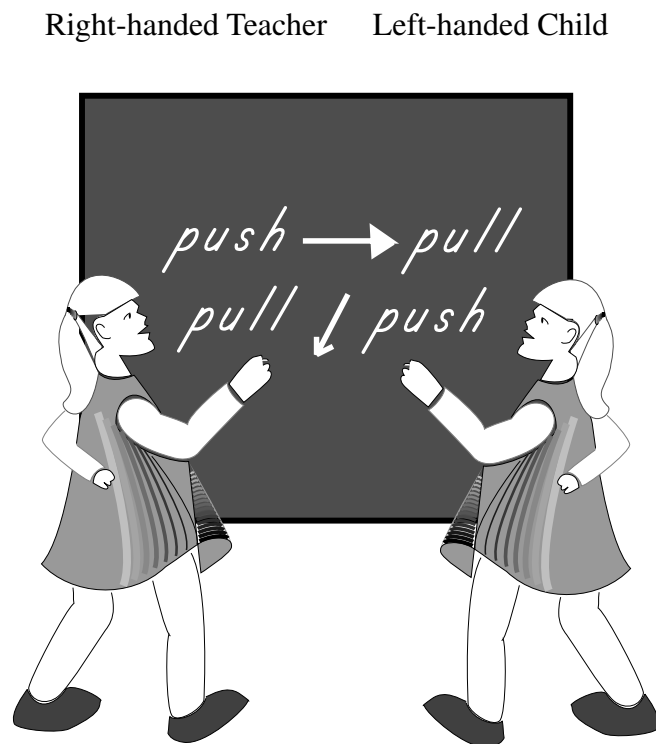
This handbook begins by suggesting ways that this new approach may be taught. It explains the various problems and encourages exaggeration to help create the opportunity for pupils to learn correct position and movement. Finally, it explains what to do if the inversion habits cannot be broken.

The techniques, analyses, and teaching strategies herein were originally suggested by the monumental research conducted by Dr. E. A. Enstrom in his doctoral dissertation at the University of Pittsburgh combined with the constant research and development effort by Educational Self-Development and Peterson Directed Handwriting.

Establishing the Correct Physical Approach

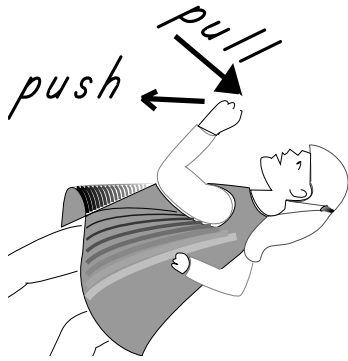
Assign seats for left-handed pupils that permit them to watch the teacher at the chalkboard from the right side of the room so that they are looking to the left. Their field of vision will be oriented leftward and this may help them relate teacher demonstrations to their own "place in space."

If you are right-handed, ask left-handed pupils to place their left hand on your right hand as you perform simple line exercises on the chalkboard:



After several repeated attempts, have pupils try to trace the same lines independently. Observe the position of their body, hand, elbow. Be sure the child stands well to the right side of the tracing exercise.

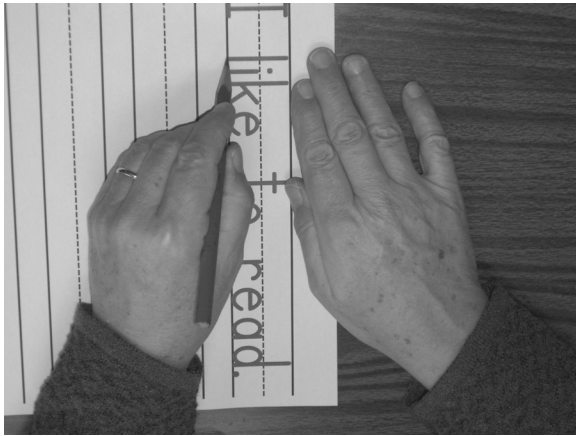
The transfer from chalkboard to desk is difficult for many pupils. You may need to start by using masking tape on the paper to establish the leftward orientation of downstroke movements.



Observe how the chalkboard picture looks when turned on its side:

This looks very funny, doesn't it? However, if you keep this leftward orientation of the writing surface in your mind, you will see the validity of the exaggerated teaching techniques that follow.

Since virtually all primary-age left-handers have never received help with leftward orientation, many teachers find that the following exaggeration is necessary:



Turn the paper completely on its side, as illustrated. Start at the left side (which is pointed toward the top of the desk) and make a series of "pushes" from the top of the paper toward the bottom of the paper. Emphasize the position of the left elbow and the absolute leftward push of the hand toward the left side of the desk.

Remember that this pushing movement has been completely blocked in all other handwriting/ crayoning tasks before you have provided this new opportunity. The new "push" movement is really natural - it's just that left-handers have never had the opportunity to use it because they previously approached a square horizontal paper position which blocks pushing leftward in our symbolic language system.

This exaggerated paper position can be modified to a less severe turn once the leftward push motion has become fluid. But even if you continue this position for months, do not worry about the drastic difference between reading the writing and producing it. Reading horizontally is a learned process. The act of writing is really nonvisual, so one need not worry about the exaggerated paper position.

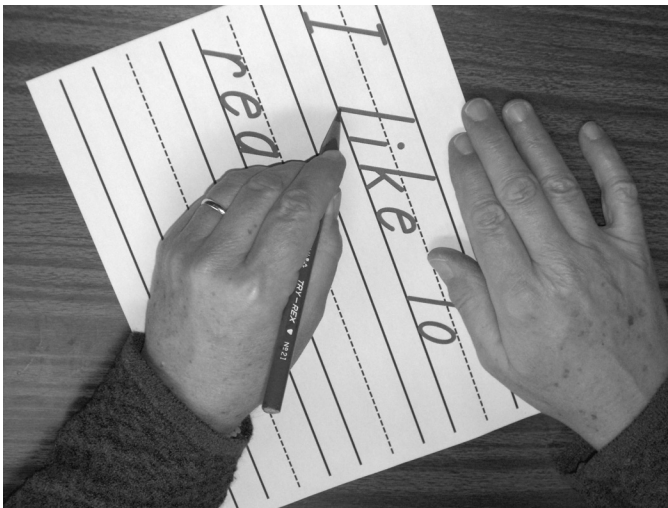
Compare Various Paper Position Adjustments

Most commercial handwriting companies picture so-called “correct paper placement” as a slight turn to the left, between a 30 and 45 angle. However, these publishers do not show correct arm and elbow position. The position shown is usually much like the picture here.



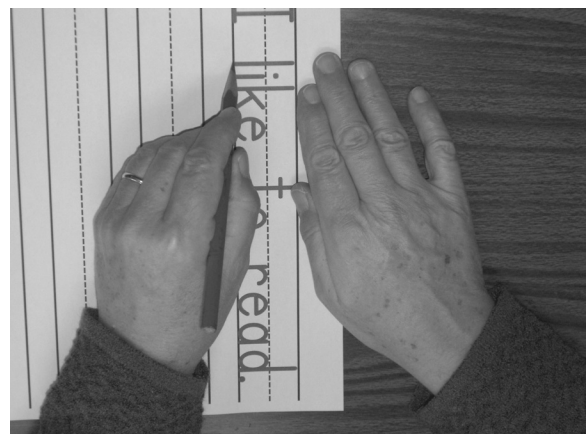
Paper position alone does not enable a left-hander to learn the sideward “push” movement for downstrokes. Indeed, if left-handers could place the paper far enough to the left of the body to permit the correct elbow/arm position they would be able to push sideways as if they were writing at the chalkboard. Of course the school desk isn't wide enough, and the child would not be able to hold the paper with the right hand.

The following picture shows a paper position with good elbow position (close to the body) and arm entry which allows the left hand to use the pushing movement. The key for the teacher is to help pupils learn arm and hand position relative to the image area that is defined by the ruling on the paper.



Notice that the arm enters the page near the bottom right corner. Rotate your manual to put the image of the paper into “reading position,” and you will see that the print letters shown are slanting forward.

To create vertical downstrokes with the same efficient, easy-to-control movement, the paper would have to be rotated to the extreme position shown earlier. And, the child would have to keep the elbow in the same position. That's part of the coaching problem. We show the child a rotated position for the paper, but don't notice that he or she changes the elbow/arm position to get it back to the left side of the page.



Avoid Inverted Movements

Whenever you see the left-hander's arm near the left side of the paper, even when a child in first grade says it feels good that way, the child will be forced to pull printwriting downstrokes inside of the hand. This movement will definitely lead to inverted writing, which means that the left hand will cover previously written words as the child moves from left-to-right.

The following pictures illustrate the factors that lead to "overhanded" inverted writing:



I. Wrong Paper Position and Arm Entry:

Arm on the left side of paper forces the child to make letters inside of the hand - forcing the child to write like a right-hander.

Square paper placement (Reading Position) may feel good to the child but will create many problems in upper grades. Note how the beginning letters are being covered by the writing hand. Also consider that the letters shown in the picture are huge. The spaces shown are 3/4".

Imagine the struggle to complete a spelling test each week. The child must constantly move the writing hand out of the line of sight in order to track what has been written. Is it any wonder the child labors to finish written work or exhibits legibility problems like poor size or spacing.

PAPER POSITION IS NOT THE ONLY KEY FACTOR!

2. Poor Arm Entry:*



1. PAPER POSITION RELATIVE TO ARM POSITION.
2. DESK HEIGHT AND THE ARM POSITION IT FORCES.
3. PAPER POSITION NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE CORRECT ARM ENTRY.

Again, the arm is on the left side of the paper. Child is trying to please the teacher by turning the paper. However, arm position is the real cause of the inversion. Check the position of the left elbow. Notice how the downstroke movement is inside of the left hand.

*Unfortunately this picture of so-called correct paper placement (with poor arm entry) is shown in many commercial texts for primary grades as the best position. Please reject that information!

Consider Allowing Left-handers to Use Slanted Print



The extreme exaggeration of the paper position illustrated is related to the usual first grade vertical manuscript (printwriting) style. We have seen that the perpendicular paper position allows a pure leftward push that travels toward the left side of the desk.

If you turn the paper to only a 45° angle (or the 60° angle that we usually recommend) the same pure leftward movement will create slanted print. There is no doubt that the higher a left-hander pushes the downstrokes the more fluency is possible.



Teachers in grades 2-6 should teach slant print as a matter of course. It is developmental anyway, so it should be no big problem to give left-handers in first grade a head start with slant. Since the “push” movement is so very crucial to developing correct left-handed writing it may be better to teach slanted print to your left-hander than the exaggerated paper position required for vertical print.

THE AUTHOR IN NO WAY SUGGESTS ABANDONING VERTICAL PRINT IN THE EARLY LEARNING SITUATION BUT POSES THAT A SLANTED PRODUCT ON LEFT-HANDED PUPIL PAPERS BE ACCEPTED WHEN DOWNSTROKES ARE CONSISTENTLY PUSHED LEFTWARD.

THE PENMANSHIP PROCESS CANNOT BE EFFICIENTLY TAUGHT UNLESS VISUAL RECOGNITION AND GRAPHEME STROKE SEQUENCES ARE AT LEAST marginally INTERNALIZED. LANGUAGE SKILLS MUST BE SUFFICIENTLY ADVANCED TO ALLOW AT LEAST minimally FLUENT WORD PRODUCTION AND SIMPLE SENTENCES.

More teachers need to recognize:

1. The need to teach physical (penmanship) processes.
2. The difference between left-handed and right-handed processes.

Our web site offers an Information Directory. The directory page offers links to many helpful presentations that will help you with all students. Some use animation, like the one on left-handers, which will help to bring these static pictures to life. Please visit to work through the presentations. There is no cost beyond your time. Work actively with the animations and you will likely learn much of what should have been included in college methods instruction - and some things that were not known a few years ago.

www.peterson-handwriting.com/info.html

Things to Do for Left-handers in Primary Grades

1. Seat left-handed children on the right side of the room as they face the chalkboard. This puts the chalkboard to the left in their field of vision.
2. Check desk height. If the desk is too high it forces the elbows far away from the body. The child cannot learn to hold the paper with the correct leftward position without an extreme rotation. The desk top should be no higher than the child's bottom rib.
3. Be sure left-handers hold the pencil a little bit farther back on the point, about 1-1/4 inches from the point. Use a rubber band or pencil gripper to help establish this habit.
4. Provide an arm entry reminder. Use a "magic spot," taped to the lower edge of the desk where the child should place his arm. Some teachers make an arm cutout and tape it to the desk to provide an arm position track.
5. To keep the left elbow "in," closer to the body, some teachers have the child use a ball of paper under the left armpit. When the elbow gets too high, the paper drops.
6. Use A PETERSON POSITION GUIDE or masking tape as a desk position reminder for the top of the child's paper. Teach students to place the paper to match the guide. Correlate paper position goals all day. Watch closely and remind students to keep the paper high on the desk away from the body. Also remind pupils to maintain some space between the tummy and the desk.
7. Use a dark marker and make a downstroke guide that the pupil can place under his practice paper. The dark lines under the practice paper provide a visual track to develop the consistent pushing movement needed to avoid the inversions that could develop.

Grade Two

Please review the previous section carefully. All of the illustrations and descriptions of writing left-handed pertain to second grade as well.

However, there are some additional considerations that second grade teachers must analyze. Our research shows that the seven or eight-year-old child may be able to learn the leftward pushing motion more easily because of language experience, physical maturation, less reliance on body midpoint visualization and, most importantly, a burning desire to learn cursive writing. **So we may have one more chance to help the child who has resisted the correct movement patterns!**

In manuscript (printwriting) two-thirds of the movements required are “downstrokes.” Those children who resist change from *reading position* for the paper continue the inverted pulling movements. They are able to succeed enough so that they resist even the most persistent teacher. Note that the writing hand is completely covering the first word written. The movement caught by this picture is a “pull” toward the body.



Note also that the paper is positioned very close to the body to allow the writing hand to approach from the side of the image area. You can see the child's hair in the picture. It's likely that the child will begin to pronate (hook) the wrist to uncover images hidden by the hand as words are written.

As long as those children who persist with inversion continue to print, which permits them to lift the hand between letters, they may not be motivated to try the sidestroke process. It is also true that composition skills are not yet developed to the point where sentences are produced fluently. Cursive writing may be the key to helping them. When faced with the need to slide the pencil sideways, the child may be motivated to try the sidestroke process.



Many right-handed teachers in first and second grade have great difficulty because not only do the children resist correct coaching, the teachers themselves are unable to “see” the leftward push movements that lefties should use. Arm entry and elbow position considerations literally baffle many teachers and parents.

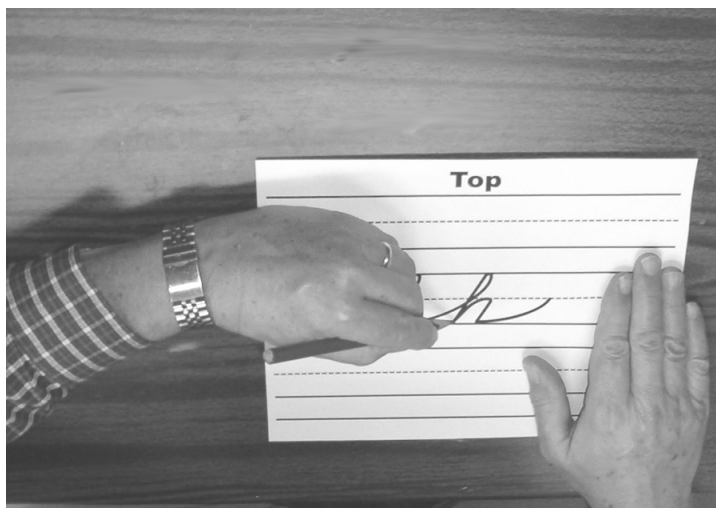
Please visit our web site to digest the presentations on preschool readiness and helping a left-handed child. The animated presentations will reveal much and allow you to “feel” the difference between left-handed and right-

handed movement processes. You will also learn how to use a simple technique for coaching a left-hander with your right hand.

Cursive Is An “Upstroke” Skill

Cursive writing requires good lateral sliding movements (left-to-right sustained movement) to produce and join the letters. Thus arm placement at the left side of the paper presents a huge roadblock.

When children see that joining strokes pose a whole new movement you may be able to show them how to keep their hand under and to the right of letterforms instead of out to the left side of the page.



Let us illustrate:



Notice that the paper is in reading position and that the left arm enters from the left side. This makes the rightward sliding strokes, which must be pushed in front of the hand, feel very awkward and difficult to control.

The child usually moves the paper closer and the elbow up higher on the desk to better handle the pushing required. Soon the hand begins to cover the letters.

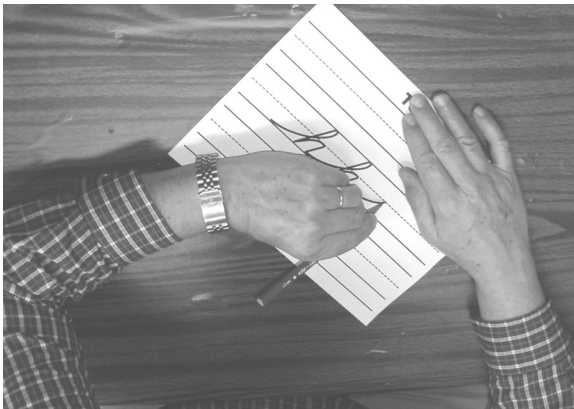


When this happens the child may move the elbow up farther and begin to hook the wrist in order to get the hand above the letters he writes.



The pronated wrist improves the rightward movements. The child, falsely, feels more comfortable. This accommodation is probably the most common approach used by the left-handers who have never learned how to use paper and arm positions that allow downstrokes to be pushed sideways toward the left side of the desk.

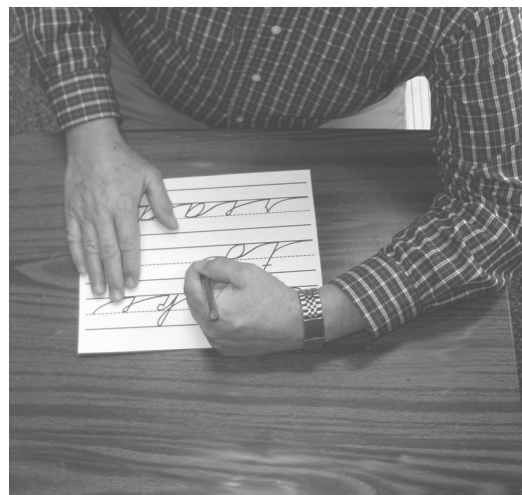
Often "forward" slant can be achieved with wrist movements, which pleases the child because his writing looks all right.



Good paper rotation but bad arm placement may seem to be fine in the beginning.

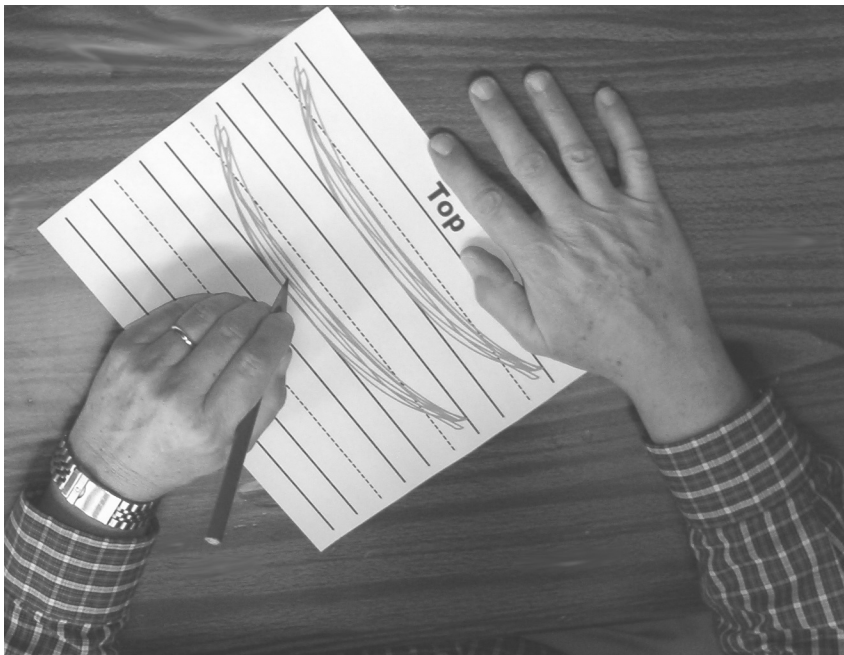
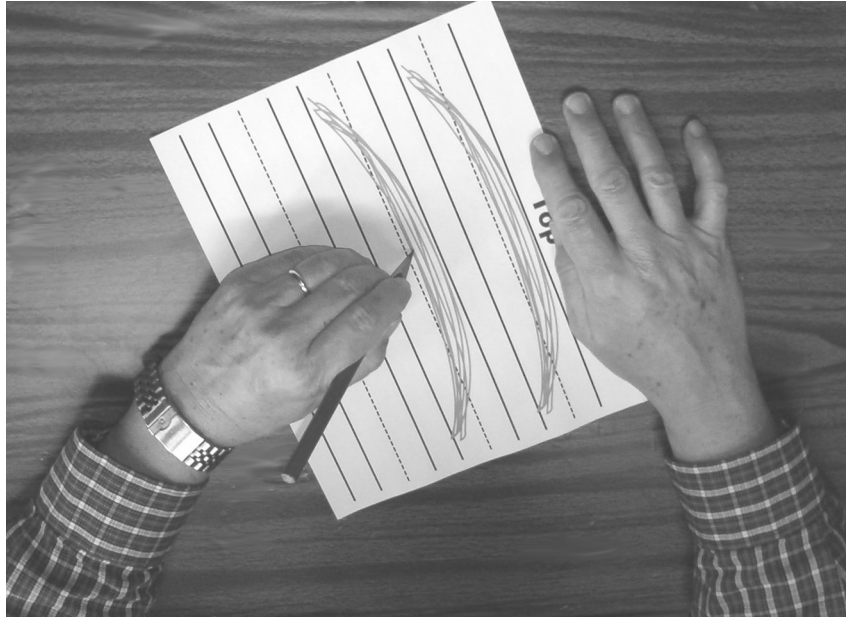
But, it will eventually lead to a posture similar to the pictures below in most cases. It is an unfortunate habit that can be quite debilitating. Note how the body is leaning and twisted in the image on the right below.

Poor posture is not healthy...



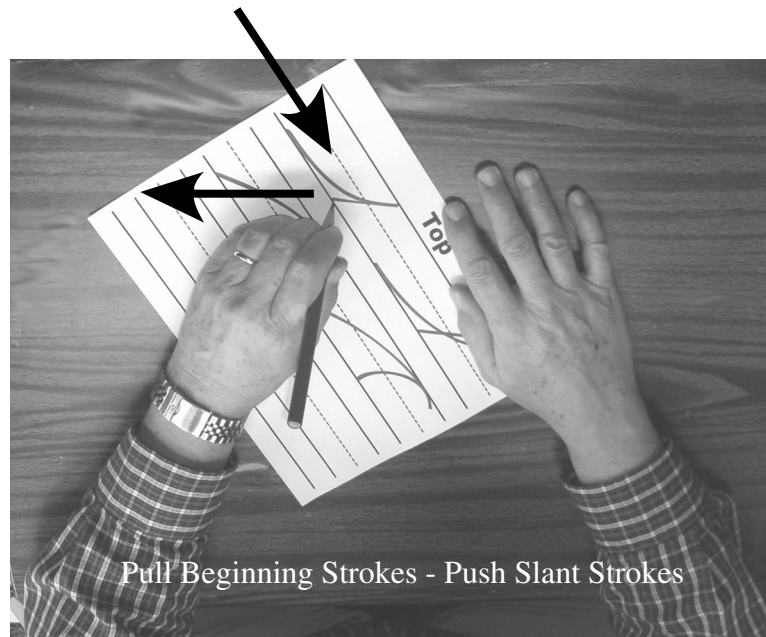
Correct Paper, Elbow, and Arm Position

Introduce long line exercises that help to build left-to-right movement skill. Have the left-handed children position their paper and arm as illustrated. The actual amount of paper rotation needed to achieve arm entry will vary with the height of the desk. Adjust the desk surface height so that the surface is as close as possible to the height of the child's bottom rib.



Use the elbow as a pivot. Slide the hand over and back. Start at the the left side and pull to the right side of the paper. Keep the wrist straight and the hand completely under the baseline. Slide all the way across the page. The movement can be compared to a windshield wiper on a car. Explain that left-handers pull toward the body and push away to go back. (Right-handers push the exercise away from the body and pull to come back.)

Build the sharp top, loop top, round top and roll top basic strokes used for letter formation and joining strokes. Left-handers pull the upstroke movements and push the slant strokes. You may need to provide a slant guide under the paper to help with understanding of the “new” direction for the slant strokes.



Note that the arm entry is from the bottom but close to the right side of the paper rather than the left. The image area is above the hand. The left elbow is close to the body. This elbow position is not possible if the desk surface is too high. As the height of the writing surface increases, the elbows are forced out away from the body.

CURSIVE AS A READINESS PROCESS IS ADVANTAGEOUS

One of the great advantages of starting cursive readiness practice in second grade is the fact that transition pressure is eliminated. You can provide enough time to build good habits without rushing children to use cursive for communication. Districts that delay the introduction to cursive until third grade always experience problems because the children try to do too much too soon. This is particularly true of left-handed pupils who are faced with a major patterning process in a right-handers' world!

Help children to master the movements for the four basic letter tops as presented in the Peterson teacher and pupil books before introducing the letters. Note the size of the writing. We need to establish success at the gross-motor level then work down to a more practical fine motor size. This is true no matter what the age of the student. Encourage easy lateral sliding movements, precise slant strokes, and baseline control. Emphasize physical position and be sure left-handed pupils pull upstrokes and push slant strokes to the left.

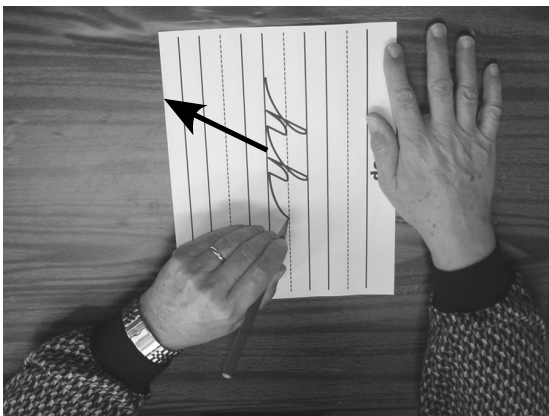
Grade Three and Up

Third grade teachers cannot be expected to have the major instructional responsibility for introducing the leftward sidestroke method of writing left-handed. The expanded daily writing needs of the third grade curriculum cause time problems for the regular teacher. Consequently, unless the classroom teacher is absolutely masterful, left-handers will not receive the attention and training they deserve.

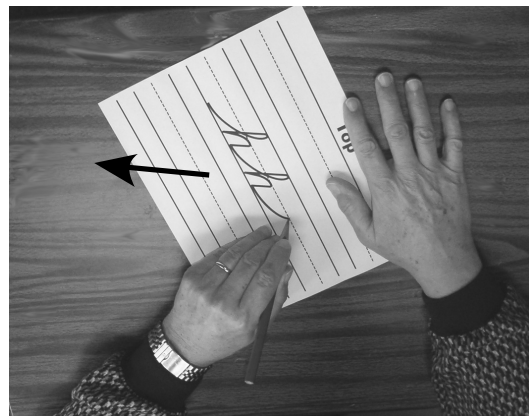
The following illustrations depict the various paper position adjustments that teachers may encounter. They are grouped into two major categories. The first category shows the most common paper position/arm position adjustments that permit a child to write with his/her hand below the baseline.

Category I writers do not drag the hand through letters in words or hook the wrist.

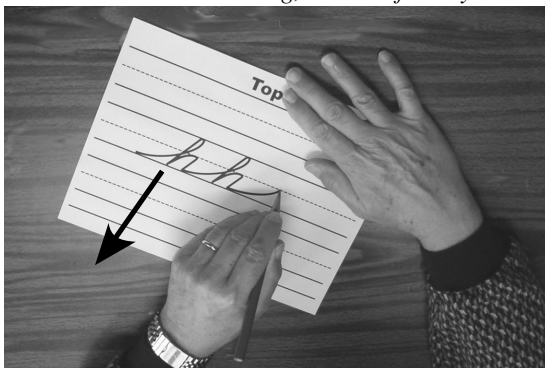
I-1. Exaggerated, very effective



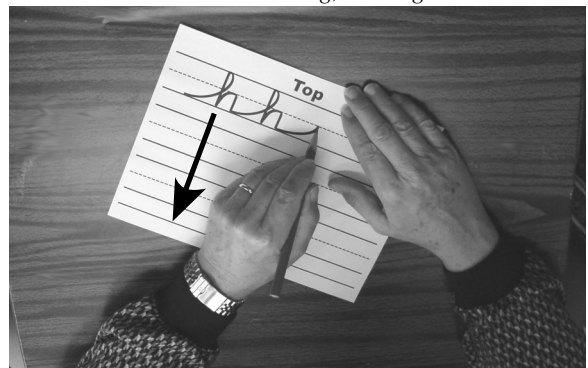
I-2. The "sidestroke" approach



I-3. Slower writing, but satisfactory

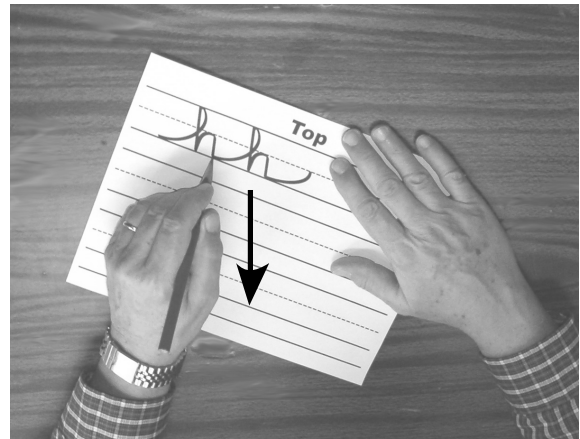


I-4. Slower writing, less legible

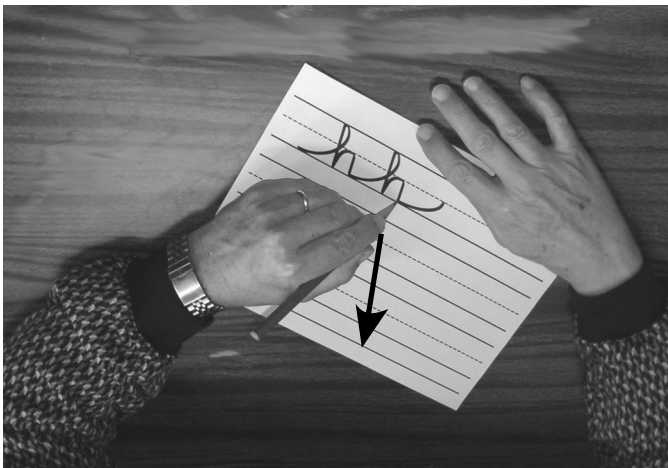


Some Category I writers do not push downstrokes leftward. They pull downstrokes toward the body (like a right-hander) which creates a backhand slant.

With some coaching these youngsters may be able to reorient the slant. We suggest using a “slant reminder” sheet under the practice paper. Have the pupils practice the pushing movement that creates natural slant. This establishes a pull-push tracking process that helps a left-hander increase writing speed and legibility.

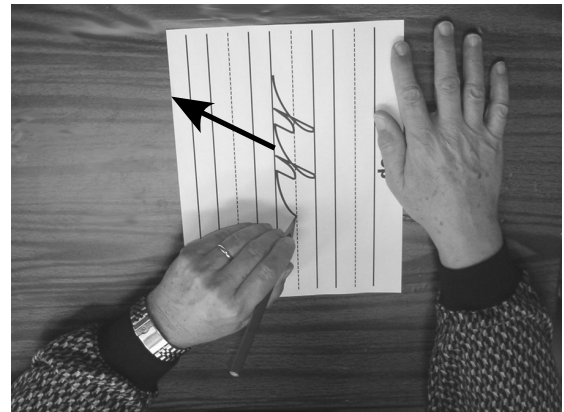


I-5. Very slow, backslant, less legible



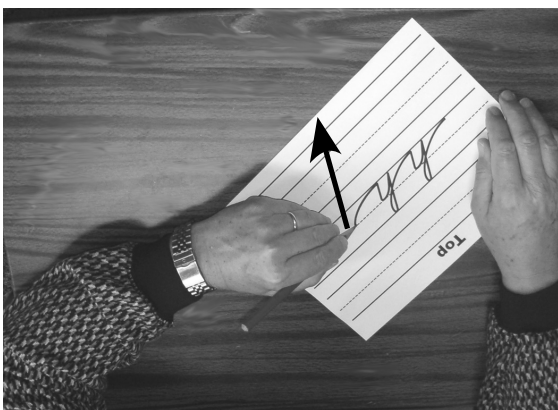
The I-5 illustration depicts poor arm entry. Notice that the arm enters the paper from the left side. Children who write this way write slowly and laboriously. Leftward sidestroke movements for downstrokes are blocked.

I-1. Exaggerated, very effective



The above approach may need to use Position I-1 pictured at the right to correct the problem. Failing to learn that process, the child may be better off learning the II-1 (Category Two) overhand technique presented later.

I-6.



This adjustment usually upsets teachers who discover pupils using it. This usually occurs because the side-stroke writer is seated at a desk that is too high. Notice the arm. The elbow is out to the left on the desk, so the child simply turned the paper (almost upside down) to permit the arm to enter the paper from the lower right-hand corner of the paper. The “upside down” paper position works for them!

CATEGORY II - Overhand

Category Two left-handers represent the majority of left-handed writers. This is not to imply that it is therefore more natural - quite to the contrary! Writing this way is testimony to the discrimination left-handers face wherever written language travels from left to right! Frankly, overhanded writers were forced to write this way because they had established the wrong approach to the paper long before they entered school. Then, because printwriting is the first writing style introduced, the inherent danger of approaching the task from the left side of the paper was masked because letters are made singly, permitting the child to lift the hand between letters. The "hook" that is identified in upper grades is virtually nonexistent in first grade, so many first grade teachers never identify the need to teach a special approach for left-handers.

Category Two writers have several similar characteristics as illustrated in the following pictures. These six adjustments for overhanded writers are presented in terms of efficiency. Number II-1, for example, is absolutely the best way to write overhanded.

All overhanded writers should be steered to use this adjustment. Since all category II writers approach the paper from the left of the writing they are forced to use their left hand as if the right hand were guiding the pencil. They have become left-handers who use right-handed movements. Although "sidestroke" is the best way to write left-handed, this is the best way to write overhanded.

II - 1, Wrist rolled out.



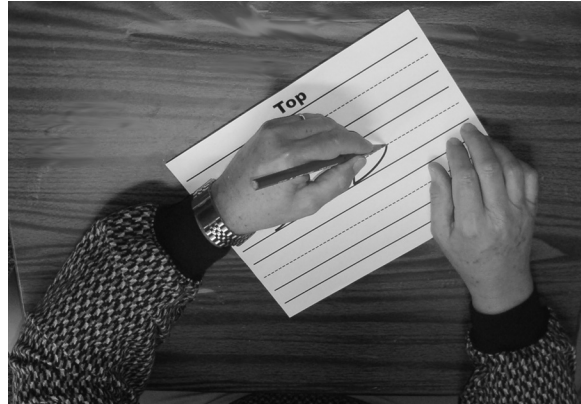
Note that the writing arm entry and rotation of the paper combine to allow the writer to view the writing directly without twisting the body, slumping or twisting the neck. The paper rotation allows the arm to be completely above the working line of writing. The arm and hand will continue to cover lines above the active image area and therefore may still smear hand and clothing. However, the fact that the child can see a whole sentence at a time is a huge advantage for composition fluency. Please keep in mind that the degree of rotation needed will depend on the position of the elbow which is controlled by the height of the writing surface relative to the body.

The wrist action is a bit like that used to throw a frisbee - particularly for execution of undercurve and slant strokes. These two movements are used most frequently in cursive writing which likely contributes to the fact that this adjustment allows the most fluency of all overhand adjustments. This adjustment generally affords fluency and legibility comparable to what would be considered average for right-handed students.

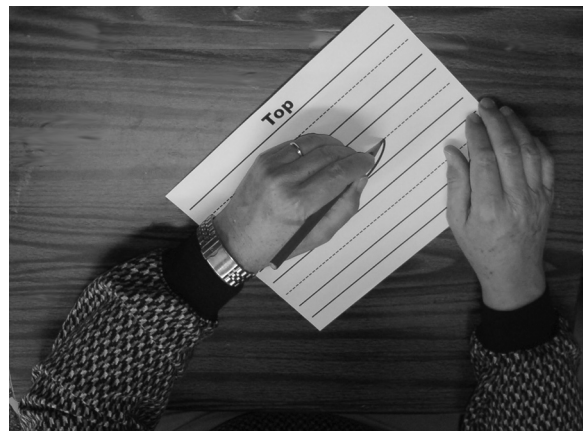
Numbers II-2 and II-3 are also fairly efficient but as the pictures illustrate, direct vision of the product is partially or completely blocked.

There are only subtle differences between Category II numbers 1, 2, and 3 (note the flatness of the wrist in II-3).

II - 2, Wrist only slightly rolled out.



II - 3, Wrist flat, writing obscured.



Category II, numbers 4-6 are probably the most common adjustments. It might be better to say it is common to see a lack of adjustment to the paper position. The students persist with a "reading position" for the paper.

The lines on the paper travel horizontally across the desk. The paper is located at body midpoint which puts half of the image area on each side of body midpoint. This position for the paper likely contributes to control and fluency issues.

II - 4, Square Paper.



A recent study using writing-like tasks (goal oriented movements) on a computer and digitizer allowed sophisticated measures of movement control and accuracy. Measures showed accuracy of movement was significantly higher when the task was executed on the writing-hand side of body midpoint.

Are Graphomotor Tasks Affected by Working in the Contralateral Hemisphere in 6- To 10-Year-Old Children?

Bouwien C. M. Smits-Engelsman,
Stephan P. Swinnen, and Jacques Duysens
Motor Control, 2004, 8, 521-533
© 2004 Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc.

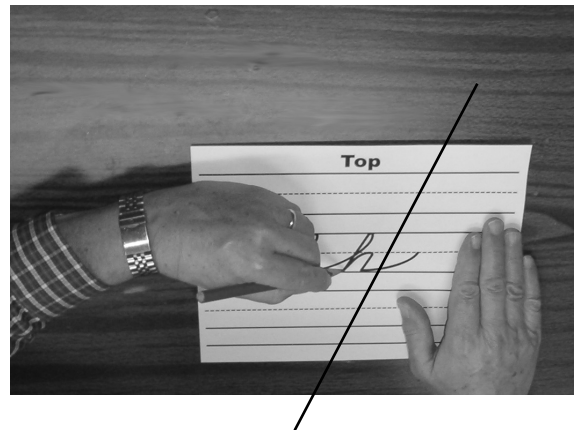
It would be fantastic if similar studies could be done taking into account the various adjustments pictured here. But it is highly likely that objective measures would support the subjective observations and recommendations put forward in this manual.

The black lines over the images follow the plane of body midpoint. Consider the angles and the twisted body positions they indicate.

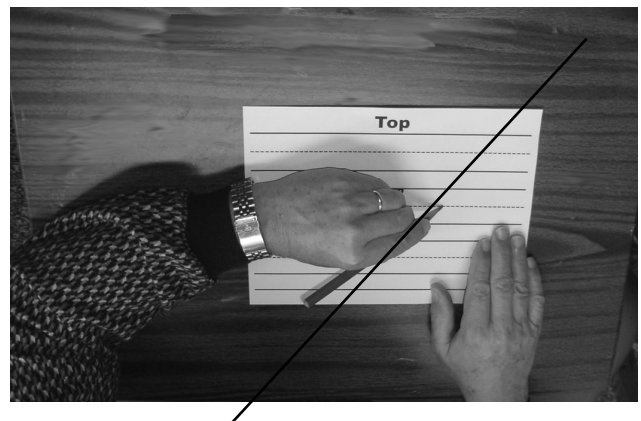
Students using adjustments similar to those pictured in Category II - 4, 5 and 6 will likely achieve much better fluency and legibility if they can be guided to use the overhand approach pictured earlier and again here (Category II-1).

Note the plane of body midpoint. Good, solid posture is possible with this approach. The paper is moved leftward as the lines of writing grow from page top to page bottom. The page is held high to begin and moved closer as words are added across the page.

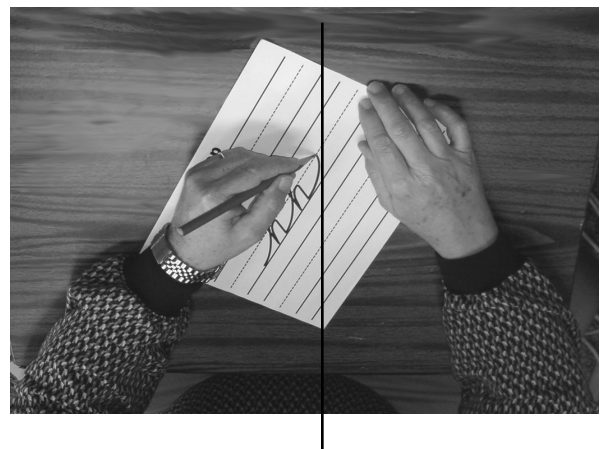
II - 5, Square Paper, wrist slightly rolled out.



II - 6, Square Paper, wrist flat, writing obscured.



II - 1, Wrist rolled out.



The Following Overhanded Adjustments Should Definitely Be Changed

These pupils may represent the left-handers that received extensive attention in first grade. It is paradoxical that the children who tried hard to follow instructions for paper position, but never learned an arm position that would allow them to push leftward for downstrokes, are the ones who suffer most from their habit. The excessive arm height causes an obviously awkward body posture that is hard to miss. This results in a writing process that is very laborious and tiring.

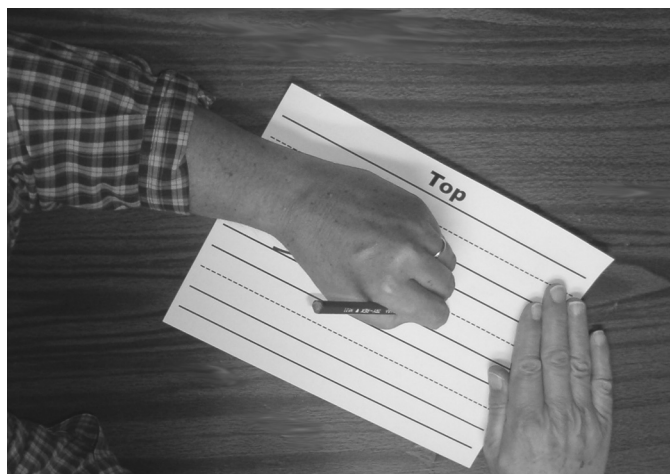
Category II-7



Category II-8



Category II-9



The paper is rotated to the "left-handed angle" but the child has reacted by twisting the body to place the elbow high on the desk in order to get the writing arm and hand into the entry position used with the "square" paper position.

These pupils will be ever grateful to you if you can convince them to hold the paper in the same position as a right-handed person (Overhand Adjustment II-1).

Overhand Adjustment II-1, represented here, is also a better approach than the position illustrated for Category One, Adjustment I-5.



I-5. Very slow, backslant, less legible



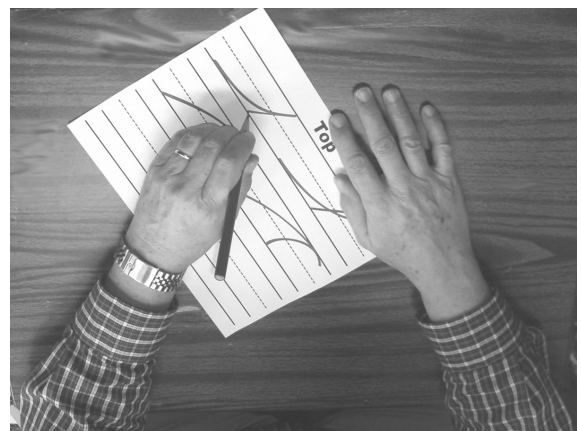
If you find that the Category I-5 pupil cannot learn to push downstrokes, you may find the child does extremely well in improving speed, quality, and slant using the "best" overhand approach pictured above.

CONCLUSION

We hope all teachers will use this comprehensive information to make a major change in the treatment of left-handed writing instruction. We do not suggest that left-handers be embarrassed or singled out as if they are handicapped or unusual in any way. Rather, we only hope to inform and instruct that large minority of children who happen to be left-handed. Indeed most left-handers are forced to write as if the right hand were guiding the left hand, simply because teachers and administrators sorely neglect their needs.

Research shows that Category I left-handed writers using the "push leftward" SIDESTROKE movements actually write faster (with superior legibility) than right-handed pupils! Please work through the animated presentation linked to the Information Directory on our web site. It will allow you feel and understand the difference between overhand and sidestroke approaches and show you how to coach the sidestroke process.

Pull Beginning Strokes - Push Slant Strokes





Movement-Based Instruction

The Peterson Method uses a unique strategy called a *DIRECTED LESSON*. The directed lesson provides opportunity for the child to learn and practice control of the movement sequence at a pace set by the teacher. A grammar of action creates a rhythmic template for each stroke. Learning how to move with rhythm is a challenge that enhances internalization for all. And in the case of a left-handed child, it creates a need. The need to move smoothly across the page can motivate the child to try a process that enables the movement.

A "Trace & Copy" learning experience cannot present the same movement challenge that can motivate a child to try a better approach. Please investigate the curriculum and materials Peterson Directed Handwriting provides for instruction of physical language skills. The movement challenge offers great opportunity for all of your students and can affect the processing of written language in many ways that go well beyond the appearance of the handwriting on student papers.

Our web site offers a wealth of information that can help you no matter what "program" your school is using. Please visit us at: www.peterson-handwriting.com. The Information Directory is a great place to start. And, please don't hesitate to phone as questions arise. The call is free.

1-800-541-6328

Peterson Directed Handwriting
315 South Maple Ave.
Greensburg PA 15601
Fax: 724-836-4110