Name:

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The Handwriting Debate

The development of computers has had a huge effect on society. As a result, many schools around the world have introduced computer classes, and some encourage students to use computers in other classes, too. This not only allows students to take notes and complete assignments more quickly but also helps them gain the skills they need for jobs they will do in the future. However, the new focus on computer skills means that many schools in developed countries are spending much less time teaching students how to write by hand.

Surveys show that many parents are concerned about the fact that their children spend so little time developing good handwriting skills. In the past, learning good handwriting was considered a necessary part of a good education, and these parents feel children are losing an important skill. However, some education experts say such parents are too focused on the past. The world has changed, they say, and typing is now more important than writing by hand.

On the other hand, recent research has shown that writing by hand may help people learn more quickly. Karin James, a psychologist at Indiana University in the United States, studied the brains of children when they were writing letters by hand and when they were typing. She found that children who wrote letters by hand used an additional three parts of the brain that children who were typing did not. Virginia Berninger, a psychologist at the University of Washington, also found that the brain was more active when writing by hand than when using a keyboard. Even more importantly, she found that when children wrote by hand, they used a wider range of vocabulary and expressed more complex ideas.

Handwriting is also important because it increases the hand's strength and flexibility. In particular, it strengthens the small muscles in the hand and allows people to make very accurate, small movements. This can be very important in certain jobs, such as for doctors who perform operations. All this research suggests that schools should think again before focusing entirely on having children use computer keyboard to write.

Name:

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1. Why do some schools encourage students to use computers?
a. It takes students less time to learn how to type than it does to learn how to write.
b. It allows teachers to spend less time working with students in their classes.
c. It helps students perform tasks in class faster and prepares them for future jobs.
d. It helps students learn by connecting them with other students around the world.

2. Many parents are worried about their children because they
a. believe that their children are not learning in important skill.
b. think that the world is changing and their children need computer skills.
c. are not able to teach their children how to use computers at home.
d. feel that spending so much time studying will harm their children's eyes.

3. Karin James found that
a. a combination of writing and typing is the best way to help children learn.
b. the brain has a hard time handling information when a person is writing.
c. children who are typing use fewer parts of the brain than children who are writing by hand.
d. most people prefer to write letters to their children by computer rather than by hand.

4. How can learning handwriting help doctors?
a. It encourages them to focus more on their patients when performing operations.
b. It gives them stronger muscles which help them carry heavy medical equipment.
c. It helps them do their job better by allowing them to see small movements more easily.
d. It improves their ability to move their hands accurately while performing surgeries.

5. Which of the following statements is true?
a. Typing helps students come up with more ideas and organize them better.
b. Children use a larger variety of words when writing by hand.
c. Good handwriting has recently become an important skill.
d. Teachers spend a lot of time preparing for classes that teach typing.