Problem Brief

**Topic:** Teaching Cursive Handwriting

**Problem:** Cursive writing is no longer required in school curriculums. Not only will this affect children's learning development, it will mean that as these children grow up, less and less people will be able to read or write in cursive. They won't even know how to sign their names. Before the digital age, everything was written in script. Historical documents, letters from distant relatives will not be able to be interpreted. It is a dying language in a sense. It is extremely important for children to learn to write in cursive during the years when their brain is rapidly developing. If they can't learn this in school, there must be another outlet to teach them.

**Background:** Cursive handwriting is extremely important for developing reading and writing skills of young children. It helps teach reading comprehension, letter recognition, and penmanship, all of which improve a child’s ability to develop writing compositions. Writing in cursive causes a child to focus on movement, sensation and thinking all at once, activating the parts of the brain associated with language, cognition, memory and function. It helps children slow down to digest information and reframe it in a way that makes sense to them. In doing so, children are able to retain and recall the information they are writing about. Cursive writing aids children with reading and writing disabilities as well attention deficit disorders. Developing kinesthetic skills improves motor skills for those with dysgraphia. The fluidity and connections between letters helps children with dyslexia because they are not as likely to flip or invert letters. The grounding and sensory integration improves a child’s focus and calms overactive minds. Writing in cursive also promotes creativity in children. They are able to develop their own style and personality through their writing. Taking ownership in their writing abilities is in direct correlation with boosting their self-esteem. Being creative also helps a child generate more ideas which helps with developing writing compositions.

**User Group:** Children ages 7-10 that don’t know cursive or are at a beginner level and wish to learn. These children are goal-oriented and driven by rewards and positive reinforcement. They like to collect prizes to show proof of their achievements. They are hands-on learners and need clear and simple instructions. They like interaction and motion. They respond to bright colors, animated illustrations and bold typography. They like creating characters and developing their own personas. They thrive on competition, games and challenges. Clutter and too much text are overwhelming. Pictures are more appealing to them and communicate the message more effectively. They like options but need to be guided.

**Primary Goals:** Teaching children how to read, write, and understand cursive. Helping children learn to write letters, words and eventually full sentences on their own.

**Secondary Goals:**
- Improved motor skills - hand movement control, clear speech
- Reading comprehension and increased understanding, memory and recall
- Faster reading and writing abilities
- Learning to organize thoughts and strategize
- Good penmanship and note-taking skills
Problem Brief

- Creativity and idea generation
- Boosting self esteem and personal style

Plan of Action:
Create an app that can be used on an ipad or computer (with writing pad connected) to teach children how to read and write in cursive.
- Create a game course that progressively becomes more difficult
- Fun games and challenges throughout the course
- Everything is task oriented with some sort of ending goal
- Children create a character for themselves that will be with them every step of the way
- Constructive and positive feedback given
- Points and rewards given
- Children can see their progress as they move through levels
- Motion and animation used when transitioning between stages and tasks
- “Practice” section separate from game course
- Minimal text on the screen
- Mostly interactive/audio
Cursive handwriting is in danger because it teaches children ages 5-12. At the same time, improving cursive handwriting affects children ages 5-12.
Cursive handwriting improves reading and writing skills in children ages 5-12 because it teaches letter recognition, increases language fluency, and affects organization and strategy.
Cursive handwriting is in danger because:

- Typing is more efficient and preferred in the digital age.
- Cursive writing is no longer required in the school curriculum.

Cursive handwriting improves:

- Learning ability: digests and encodes information, increases ability to examine and retain information.
- Cognitive thinking: integrates visual & tactile info, improves spatial awareness, strengthens vocabulary skills.
- Focus: reduces classroom distractions, improves executive skills, allows children with ADHD.
- Creativity: generates new ideas quickly, develops a personal style & originality.

Cursive handwriting affects:

- Children ages 5-12
Persona: Davis, User Group: Children ages 7-10

Davis is a 7-year old boy just starting 2nd grade. He has a low reading level for someone his age because he struggles with pronunciation and letter recognition. Recognizing letters helps for spelling and sentence structure. He does better when the words on the page are big rather than small print. His reading is in direct relation with his writing abilities. The sharp angles, separate letters, and straight lines of writing in print are difficult for Davis, so he lacks confidence in his writing abilities. Part of the problem for him is keeping the pencil steady. Positive reinforcement from teachers helps Davis stay motivated to keep trying. Davis is an extremely active child that is constantly moving and easily distracted. His lack of focus is also a contributing factor to his poor handwriting.

Davis excels in art class. He loves to finger paint and build crafts with his hands. He uses bright colors and paints pictures of animals and his family. When he gets good grades on his projects he gets a sticker with some sort of inspirational or congratulatory phrase. He collects all the stickers he receives. Davis understands better when instructions are very simple and clear. He is a hands on and visual learner, so demonstrations are the most effective way for him to learn. He lacks organizational skills, so information must be organized for him.

Davis plays games on his mom’s ipad. He likes games where he gets to press buttons and interact with characters on the screen. His favorite game is Racing Penguin because he controls the penguin’s speed and jumping as it races through engaging illustrative scenes that change from level to level. Davis has a very competitive nature due to his two older brothers. He likes the challenges the game presents. He tries to get a new high score every time he plays. He is driven by improvement and rewards.
Wireframes

Cursive Crunch
Welcome back Curtis!

Practice | PLAY

Who’s Playing?
Curtis  Bella  Darian  Raj
Tricia  Steven

Add a Player
Name: |
Age: ▼  Grade: ▼
Reading Level: 0 1 2 3 4 5
Writing Level: 0 1 2 3 4 5
Cancel  △  Next ▶

Choose your Character:
Cancel  △  Save □

Home Screen
Player Profiles
Player Info
Choose Character
Wireframes

Play Mode Map

Game Instructions

Game Round 1

Game Completed
Style Tiles

**Style Tile Version 1**
- animated, youthful, fun, playful, exciting, adventurous, themed

**Style Tile Version 2**
- vector, flat, clean, social, universal, friendly, bright

- **name/logo**
- **color palette**
- **type treatment**
- **background illustration style**
- **button styles**

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**Cursive**
- **with friends**
- **Header Subhead**
- **instructions**
- **smaller copy emphasis**
- **type treatment**
- **button styles**
- **button and feedback**

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**Cursive**
- **challenge**
- **name/logo**
- **color palette**
- **type treatment**
- **button styles**
- **background illustration style**
Illustration Style
Character Development
Type, Color, Button Style

Great job!

Choose Your Character
Interface Revisions
Add a Player, Home Screen

Version 2

Add a Player
Name: Ali Fadorsen
Age: 8  Grade: Second
Reading Level: 0 1 2 3 4 5
Writing Level: 0 1 2 3 4 5
Cancel Save

Final Version

Add a Player
Name: Ali Fadorsen
Age: 9  Grade: Third
Simple  Difficult
Cancel Save

Final Version
Interface Revision

Version 1

Final Version
Drag and drop the print letters to match the cursive letters. You've got 10 seconds per round!

How to Play: Drag and drop the print letters to match the cursive letters. You've got 10 seconds per round!
Interface Revision

Exercise 1-3

Version 1

Great job!

g z a e

Version 2

Great job!

g a e

Final Version

lake

g z a e

Game Completion

Great Job!

time used: 5 sec
wrong answers: 1
correct answers: 1

Back to Map  Next Level
Final Interfaces
Final Interfaces

Loading Screen

Player Profiles

Add a Player

Choose Your Character

Add a Player

Name: Ali Fadorsen
Age: 9
Grade: Third

Simple  Difficult

Save ✔ Cancel ✗
Final Interfaces

Map View

Game 1-5

Correct Answer

Game Completion
Final Interfaces

Practice Mode - single letter with guides

Character Feedback (no touch mode)

Character Demo (no touch mode)

Lowercase Word - no guides (starting with “c”)
Sources:


