

Handy Dandy Handwriting

Summary

These activities have been provided to help your students improve their fine motor skills. By doing so, it will help to increase students' handwriting and also their fine motor use in painting and other areas.

Materials

- Clay
- Whiteboards
- Whiteboard markers
- Whiteboard erasers
- Timer
- Lacing Cards
- Pins
- *Pin Pictures*
- Paper
- [Handwriting Alphabet Page](#)
- Pencils
- Crayola Erasable Markers
- Lacing Cards
- [My Very Best Handwriting](#)

Background for Teachers

These activities have been provided to help your students improve their fine motor skills. By doing so, it will help to increase students' handwriting and also their fine motor use in painting and other areas. Even if you feel that some of your students already have good use of their fine motor skills, keep in mind that they can always work to improve those skills.

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate a positive learning attitude.

Instructional Procedures

Invitation to Learn

Put out [My Very Best Handwriting](#) on desks and have students write their names in their very best handwriting on the top line. Tell them to imagine that they are the teacher, and must show their students what good handwriting would look like. When they are done, collect them and save them to use at a later time.

Instructional Procedures

Explain to the students that today they are going to have a chance to do some fun activities that will help them to become better at writing their letters. Then go through and explain each center to the students.

Magnificent Molding

Prior to this activity, as a class, come up with a list of objects that remind them of that month. For example, for September you could have listed: book, apple, school, desk, leaves, football, etc.

Post this list in the room where all students can see it and go over it occasionally, so that students are familiar with the words and recognize them.

Say to your students, "Today you are going to play a fun game using our words from this month."

Let's review over our words first to make sure we remember them."

After reviewing the words, say to the students, "One of you is going to pick one of the words from our list and you are going to use this clay to make the object. If I picked the word, book, I would then take the clay and mold it to make it look like a book. The tricky part is I only have one minute to make it. So, when I am ready to start molding, I will start the timer. The rest of you are going to watch and without saying a word, you will make the word with clay. So if I choose to mold a book you will mold the letters: b, o, o, k, which spells book. When the timer goes off, you show your guesses to each other. The person that used the clay will then say the correct answer and you will see if you got it correct. When you are done, you will then move to the next person and they will now make an object from the list using the clay."

Practice playing as whole class until everyone understands.

Extensions

Middle Students

When students have an idea of what the object is, they write a sentence about the object. If I have made a book, then an example of a sentence they may have written would be: I read a book.

High Students

Students make a list of three clues about the object. For the word book, they could write:

I like to read this.

It is full of pages.

We read them every day.

Lace It Up!

Say to the students, "Remember our list of words from this month? I have made some lacing card pictures of each word. Here is a picture of a book. If you notice, there are holes around the edge of the book. This is so you can lace around the edges using this shoelace. Let me show you what it would look like."

Slowly lace around the edge of the object, demonstrating for the students how they need to go in every hole and then out and around to the next hole.

Say to the students, "You are going to have a chance to lace around our different objects. I will have the cards all in this container and the laces in another container. You will come up, pick one object and then lace around it. When you are done, you will unlace it, and then put the picture and the laces back in their containers. Then you may pick a different picture to lace around."

Demonstrate unlacing the card and putting away the picture and laces for the students. Have a students also demonstrate it.

Extensions

Middle Students

After lacing the cards, students will pick a picture and write a sentence about it on their whiteboard. They will then share their sentence with someone in their group.

High Students

Students will lace a card, and then write a short story using that object.

Poke a Picture

Say to the students, "How many of you have ever poked a hole in a paper? Do you know what happens when you hold it up to the light? The light will shine through. Today we are going to be able to make pictures using pins a paper. When we are done, we will be able to hold it up to the light and see it shine through our picture."

Show the students the picture that you are going to have them use. Say to your students, "Here is the picture we will use today. Did you notice that it is a picture of one of the words on our word list? You will each get to take one of these pictures and carefully pick out a pin to use. The safest way to do our pin picture is to make sure that no one gets pricked or hurt with the pin, so

we will carefully move our pin and picture to the floor or carpet area."

Move your students to the carpet if you have it in your classroom, if not, you can get carpet samples and then move them to the floor. Have them sit in a circle and watch you demonstrate. Say to your students, "pick a spot that you want to start at. Poke a hole right on the line using your pin. Then make another hole right next to it. Make sure not to make it on top of the other hole, but right next to it. Continue to do this until you have the whole picture done. Then hold it up to the light and see how your picture shines through!"

Extensions

Middle and High Students

If students get done in time, have them draw their own picture for someone else to poke. Have them exchange pictures with a friend and then have fun!

Magical Markers

Say to the students, "for this activity you are going to use some very special markers. These markers are fun because you can write with them, but if you make a mistake, you can erase them! So, if we make a mistake, we can erase it and fix it.

Show your students a Crayola Erasable marker. "This is our special marker. Today we are going to use them to trace our ABC letters and practice our handwriting. I will take this [ABC sheet](#) and track over each letter using our special markers. Watch how I carefully trace over the letter A using our special marker."

Demonstrate this by doing three to four letters. Make a mistake on one of them. Say to the students, "Oh look, I made a mistake. But that's okay, because I can erase my mistake using this eraser. Now I can write the letter again and this time do a nice, neat job."

Have a student come up and demonstrate also.

Say to the students, "When I get done with the alphabet, I can look back see what a nice neat job I did! Remember, this is not a race to see who can get done first. We are all going to do this in our best handwriting!"

Extensions

Middle Students

After practicing the alphabet, have students write their spelling words with the erasable markers. Then have them pick two letters to erase from each spelling word. They exchange papers and see if they figure out which letters are missing.

High Students

After practicing the alphabet, have students write a sentence for each of their spelling words. When they are done, they go back and erase each spelling word. Have them trade papers with a partner and then see if they figure out which word goes in each sentence.

Divide students up into different groups and get them started at a center. They can stay there for a set amount of time and then switch (10 min). Due to the amount of centers and time, you can do this activity for a number of days.

Using the examples provided, you can accommodate to the different levels in your classroom and also use these centers throughout the year as your students become better with their writing.

Extensions

Family Connections

Have students take home the pin picture they created and share it with their family.

Assign students to write all their families names in their best handwriting at home and have them return it.

Assessment Plan

At a predetermined later date have students write their name again in their best handwriting.

Have them compare it to the first time and mark if they did a better job.

Have students write the alphabet, lower and upper case, on paper and then grade it based on neatness.

Bibliography

Research Basis

Ellison, C.M., Boykin, A.W., Tyler, K.M., & Dillihunt, M.L. (2005). Examining classroom learning preferences among elementary school students. *Social Behavior & Personality: An International Journal*, Volume 33 (Issue 7), Page 699-708.

In this article we learn of a study that was done on a variety of students and that most students preferred to learn in a cooperative learning environment. It also states many of the benefits for using cooperative learning in your classroom.

Devany, M. (2005). Why I organized learning centers in my classroom. *Teaching Music*, Volume 13 (Issue 1), Page 44-47.

In this article we learn why a teacher felt it was important to set up learning centers in her room. She shares the importance of them and how they can help to reach the many different levels of students in your classroom.

Authors

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