

Write for Insight

“Write your name and the sentence ‘the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.’” Feeling hesitant and confused, we all stared at the blank piece of paper placed in front of us, and then continued to do as Mr. Cluff, the student council advisor, instructed. In August 2017, the exciting first day of my Freshman year at Pine View Middle School began. I had been elected to the student council along with five other students. When the bell rang, I anxiously sat in a desk with sweaty palms in Mr. Cluff’s large fluorescently lit classroom. Desks crowded the room. The person next to me was constantly clicking their pen and tapping their foot. The minty gum I was chewing, and the calming scent of the lavender air freshener allowed me to relax. Wanting to make a good impression, I wrote the sentence in my best handwriting. After we finished, he quietly examined each one of our papers occasionally mumbling “Interesting,” “Awww,” and “Good to know.”

He then set the papers down at his desk and walked to the front of the classroom. Mr. Cluff, a taller man with bright brown eyes and dark hair, did not wear the average teacher apparel. He always wore a button up shirt with the sleeves rolled up, as if he were about to dirty his hands, with a permanent smile on his face, making him always seem approachable. Standing in front of my desk he began to list the individual characteristics we each possessed. I will never forget the moment when he pointed at me and said, “You are responsible, a high goal setter, and a trustworthy person. You experience emotions deeply and value friendship and family. You will be a great addition to our council this year.”

My jaw dropped to the floor. I sat in awe wondering how he knew who I was prior to meeting me. He continued saying,

“I don’t know if you realized, but in the sentence, you wrote down every letter in the alphabet. By doing this, I feel like I already know you. Not only do I teach earth science to students, but I study Graphology. As your student council advisor, I want to teach you this science to help with your leadership skills.”

I instantly thought, *Graphology? Mr. Cluff is making up words.*

“Graphology is the science in which a person’s character is revealed through handwriting.”

I became intrigued. I wanted to believe he was making a wild guess when describing who we were, but I could not deny how accurate he was. Graphology is not a subject taught at school, but I have never wanted to learn more about a topic than I did right then. He explained we as human beings can read body language and intuitively understand what they are trying to communicate to us. He demonstrated writing by hand is another form of body language. Since your hand is doing the action, we can learn to further understand the meaning. While the words are flowing across the page, we are consciously unaware of the messages we are communicating to people. I had a desire to know how he was able to make conclusions with the messages people were sending.

Throughout the school year, he taught us new ways to look at handwriting. With Mr. Cluff’s willingness to teach us what he knew, I am now able to interpret what handwriting reveals about a person. With the way certain letters are written, I can determine characteristics. For example, I can recognize if someone is a high goal setter by the way they cross their “T’s”, how forgetful someone is by the way they dot their “I’s,” how good of a listener someone is by the way their “E” opens, how trustworthy someone is by the way their “O” closes, and the

volume of someone's voice by the size of their letters. Even the way the words run across the paper express the current emotions an individual is experiencing.

Some days, I would test Mr. Cluff's abilities by giving him a handwritten note from a close relative of mine and he would describe them and their life in elaborate detail. Watching him do this was chilling. However, Mr. Cluff only taught me the basics of this science, and I was left to further research on my own to kill my curiosity. I discovered a signature reveals a person's personal life. For instance, an individual's first and last name demonstrates their relationships with their family members. I can determine how close people are physically comfortable with you speaking to them based on the spacing of their words or letters. These new findings are few but writing my own name has become more enjoyable.

Being a Freshman, there was still plenty I needed to find out about myself. Graphology introduced new qualities I never knew I had and reminded me who I was. I gained a new sense of confidence in one of the most awkward phases of my life. Not only was I able to connect with myself better but was able to connect with people on a whole other level. Reading handwriting on my friends' homework assignments became a game we played during lunch. My social circle grew as kids from different cliques would come to me wanting to know more about themselves. Everyone thought I was a magician with my precise descriptions of their personalities. Doing this made me feel less alone on the journey of self-discovery.

Writing by hand is slowly becoming a lost art, so I often feel motivated to write in my journal. Instead of complaining about how writing hurts my hand, I have become grateful for my subconscious mind giving me insight. One day, I will be able to look back and see how much I have changed and grown as a person. Hopefully by then, I will have all the tools needed to boil down every aspect. I have learned about myself and will continue to do so if I keep writing.

I did not know what to expect walking into class the day we wrote the sentence, but what I do know is my life has been changed since. Mr. Cluff made me feel important and seen. I hope, I too, can have the same impact on an individual.