



## Questioned Documents Section - 2014

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### **J16 Assessment of Early Childhood Writing Development Among Family Sibling Members**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will become familiar with a first-hand study into the individual development of writing characteristics assessed from three family sibling members each separated by two years in age, grades two, four, and six. Attendees will further gain an understanding of the evaluation process conducted in the study and assessment of each of the children's writing, specifically hand printing characteristics and the stages of their development. Examples of each of the sibling's hand printing samples will be exhibited to demonstrate identifiable writing characteristics when dissected feature by feature.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by the study of writing samples by three young siblings, educated in elementary school, assessing and understanding the development stage of the early writing habits, specifically hand printing. A review of each sibling's various writing samples and developing characteristics will also be discussed. This presentation will provide an evaluation of the sibling writing samples, the developing writing characteristics, and identifying features that discriminates between each child sibling from the other within the same family.

Handwriting is a learned behavior during elementary instruction. The learning process of writing development is a product of a young student's mental images of copybook letter forms taught in grade school. As the student matures, their writing becomes individualized and identifiable through a unique interaction of the writer's mental and physical abilities. Depending on the elementary school's educational curriculum, handwriting instruction is becoming less emphasized with regard to classroom instruction and the amount of time devoted to writing proficiency. Although there is less classroom instruction devoted to handwriting proficiency, elementary students will still be exposed to a basic handwriting structure. As the trend suggests and depending on the institution, elementary school curriculums are not providing the time to teach the cursive writing style, but rather emphasizing the hand letter or hand printing style of writing. Students exposed to learning with limited overall handwriting instruction will still develop individual hand printing habits such as basic letter construction, letter proportion, alignment, punctuation, and a personal "signature" as one matures.

As part of the procedure to a handwriting examination for comparison purposes, a forensic document examiner studies handwriting sample features to assess a writer's class and individual writing characteristics. A study will be presented on the analysis, assessment, evaluation, and noting of each sibling's writing habits as each one has progressed so far in the development of writing.

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#### **Hand Printing, Handwriting, Writing Characteristics**