

Nellie Edge Online Seminar (NEOS) #2
Meaningful Practicum Suggestions
University Credit Option – Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting Matters!

- ❖ **15 hours of practicum project work is required for each unit of credit. Nellie Edge Online Seminar #2 may be taken for up to 3 units of credits.**

If handwriting motions are not automatic, it interferes with the whole writing process.

Watch the online seminar, chapter by chapter, and reflect on each practice. Print the Power Guide, documents, self-assessment guidelines, and Nellie Edge handwriting blogs. These will provide great content for your professional learning community (PLC)! Define goals and projects that are most meaningful for you. The following practicum ideas are only suggestions. You are always welcome to design a special project that meets your unique professional development goals relating to the online seminar topic. (You will find studying so much easier if you have the resources bound.)

1. Analyze your current name writing program:

How can you make it more intentional, systematic, and successful? How do you make the learning goals visible to each child? Include name writing guides for families, and support materials for instructional aides and classroom volunteers.

2. Connect kindergarten-friendly handwriting with teaching of high-frequency “heart words.”

Efficient handwriting motions for the words “I love you” provides the anchor sentence that children will write over and over again. Notice that the pink and purple “heart words” and related sentences provide authentic handwriting practice for all of the lowercase letters except p, q, x, and z! Have high expectations that children are capable of remembering what their target letters are, verbalizing the language for letter formation, working hard, and getting it right!

3. Develop a “Parents as Partners” in Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting and Fine Motor Development Activities packet to share with families.

Use the Nellie Edge Handwriting Blogs and Pinterest Fine Motor Development and Kindergarten Handwriting boards for additional finger dexterity building activities. Stress how helpful it is for the children to practice these skills in the classroom and at home. Remember — fingerspelling the ABCs is one of the best strategies for fine motor skills development!

4. Learn the Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting songs and chants from the *Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!* CD.

Teach them to the children with passion and dramatic flair! Remind the children of the key handwriting positive affirmation “I always start my letters at the top!”

5. Enhance handwriting skills by teaching children to draw and explore shapes.

Provide lessons that teach the child how to make a twinkling star (lift-the-pen motion), a spiral van Gogh-like star (continuous motion), and a five point star to help children integrate movement patterns. What do you notice? Are the children using rich art related language such as “a Van Gogh-like star”?

6. Read the excerpts from handwriting research.

Research additional handwriting “best practices.” Write a paper on why handwriting matters for “best practices” Write paper on why handwriting matters for children today. Share the paper with kindergarten colleagues, parents, and your school primary team.

7. Coordinate with preK-2 teachers, special education and literacy coaches in your school or district.

Develop a consistent approach to handwriting for young children in your school or district. What resources will you use?

8. Read about Growth Mindset and the power of how we talk to children and create a plan.

Read excerpts from *Choice Words* by Peter Johnston (Stenhouse, 2012); pages 172-173 from *Kindergarten Writing and the Common Core* by Nellie Edge, 2015; and the pages on *How to Talk to Children about Their Handwriting* in the Teacher's Guide to *Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting, Word Work and Phonics Skills*. Study documents and books about Growth Mindset. Create a list of empowering ways to talk about student handwriting progress. Stress that *hard work is valued* in your classroom. Hold high expectations. *Praise effort, hard work, and movement toward a handwriting goal—NOT how smart children are!*

9. Provide ABC Brain Exercises for harder-to-accelerate learning.

Notice which children will benefit from more intentional ABC work for quick visual retrieval of letters from long-term memory. Work with intervention team. Use ABC Phonics Play Dough Mats. (Free on Nellie Edge TpT Store)

10. Read *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning* by John Hattie (Routledge, 2012)

Discuss how you will use the practices shared in this Nellie Edge Online Seminar to make the learning of efficient handwriting practices visible for each student and their parents beginning with name writing. How will you involve students in self-evaluation? What is your plan to celebrate mastery? (See excerpts from document: *What is Your Research Base?*)

11. Take the Next Step to National Board Teaching Certification — Kindergarten Teachers as Researchers and Literacy Leaders: Use Self-Assessment Guidelines

- Begin gathering resources and studying the National Board Certification process.
- How will the strategies from Nellie Edge Online Seminars help take your teaching to a higher level?

National Board Certified Teachers have repeatedly told us that the philosophy strategies shared in Nellie Edge Live and Online Seminars helped prepare them for the NBCT process!

Nellie Edge Seminars helped mold me into the accomplished teacher I am today. I became a Nationally Board Certified Teacher because of the type of classroom and teaching style I have. I wouldn't have this style without Nellie Edge! –Katy Anholt, NBCT

Choose any one suggestion to develop an in-depth practicum or any combination of meaningful projects that would allow you to apply the skills shared in this seminar in the most useful and relevant way. How can you use the content of this Nellie Edge Online Seminar to make your teaching more effective and powerful to the lives of your students? What do you want to be doing in your classroom one week and one month from now as a result of this seminar?

Dr. Lifson at the University of the Pacific always allows teachers to design their own practicum project that meets their unique teaching and learning needs. **You DO NOT NEED to write a 3-page paper** unless that is a meaningful project and would be the best way for you to improve your teaching of Handwriting.

Handwriting practice is woven into authentic writing experiences that have meaning to the child — NOT isolated drill!