

Presented by



**Daphne Gray-Grant**  
Writing Coach and  
Author

Moderated by



**Catherine Jones**  
Editor  
Law Office Manager

# Writing the Employee Handbook

A photograph of an 'EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK' lying on a wooden desk. The book has a white cover with a dark blue horizontal band. A pair of glasses and a black and silver pen are placed next to it.

# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

# We'll be talking about 7 issues today



# The employee handbook

- 1. What it is and WHY it's valuable
- 2. Legal risks it presents (and how to mitigate)
- 3. How to generate more ideas for it
- 4. How to give assignments (and get them back!)
- 5. Why you should aim for a “crappy first draft”
- 6. How to use your computer for editing
- 7. How to manage the approval process



# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

# Importance of handbook

- Ensures employees are treated fairly & consistently
- Helps employer meet business goals
- Leaves room for managers to use discretion
- Done properly, can reduce legal claims relating to inconsistent or discriminatory treatment

# Subject matter

- Message from president/CEO
- Company history
- Vision, mission, values & goals
- Confidentiality agreement
- Telecommuting policy
- Dress code
- Benefits
- Time-off-work policies
- Computer & Internet use policy
- Conflict resolution

# Don't reinvent the wheel!



Go to: <http://buff.ly/1LBsrtj>



# Legal risks of handbook

- Could appear to create a contract
- Language might reduce company's ability to manage
- Language might not protect the employer against claims
- Language might appear to show favoritism to certain employees or types of employees

# How to mitigate risks

- Have text reviewed by an employment lawyer
- Include a disclaimer stating the handbook offers only policies and guidelines and is not a contract or implied contract
- Include a receipt and acknowledgement form for employees to **sign and date** (this should reiterate info in disclaimer)
- Place receipt/acknowledgement in employee's personnel file



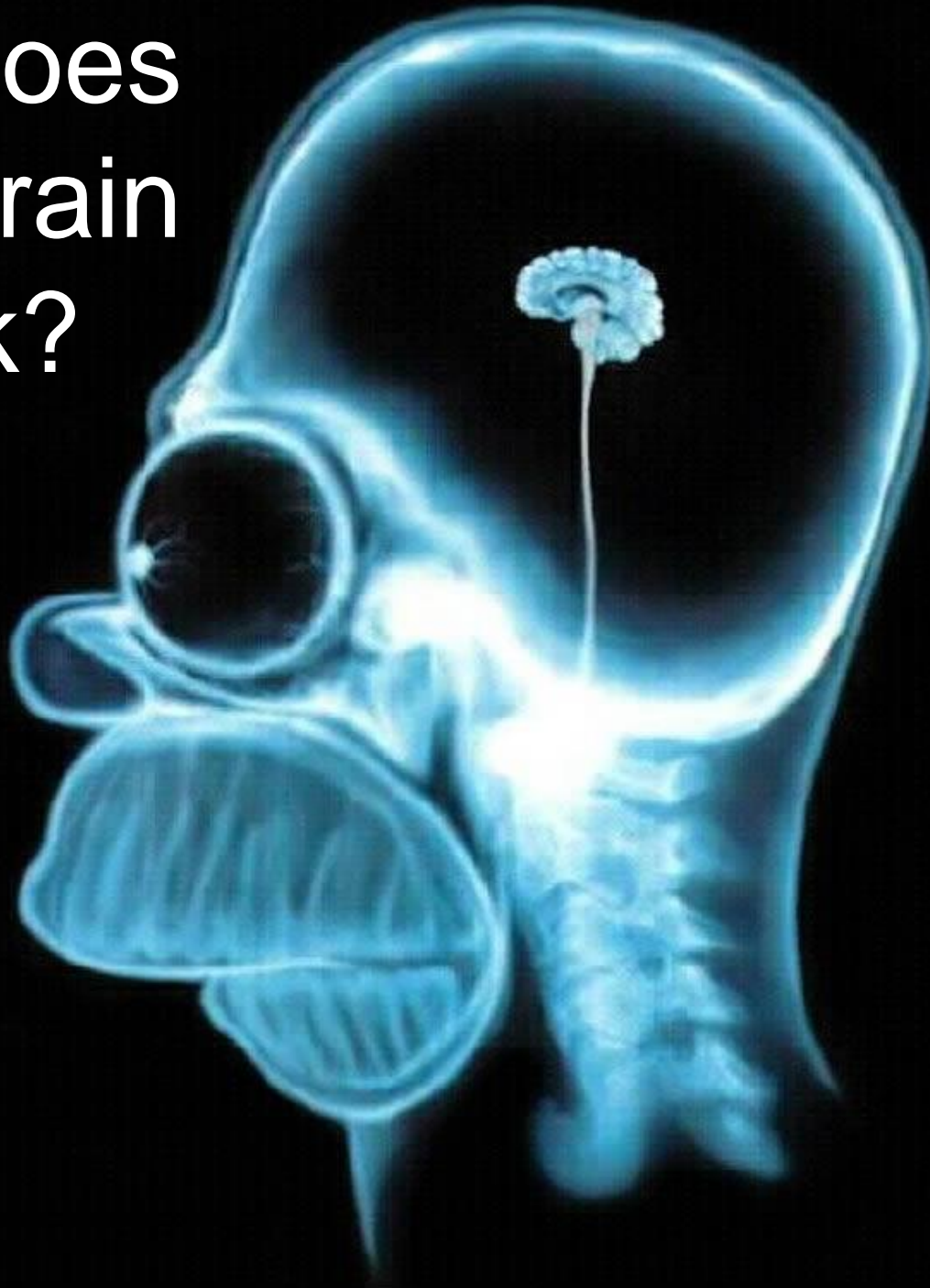
How to get  
more ideas

## Five-Paragraph Essay Outline

- I. **Introductory Paragraph**
  - a. **Create a topic sentence to draw in audience**
    - i. **Note subtopic 1**
    - ii. **Note subtopic 2**
    - iii. **Notes subtopic 3**
  - b. **Create a strong transition**
- II. **First Supporting Paragraph**
  - a. **Restate subtopic 1**
    - i. **Supporting detail or example**
    - ii. **Supporting detail or example**
  - b. **Transition**
- III. **Second Supporting Paragraph**
  - a. **Restate subtopic 2**
    - i. **Supporting detail or example**
    - ii. **Supporting detail or example**
  - b. **Transition**
- IV. **Third Supporting Paragraph**
  - a. **Restate subtopic 3**
    - i. **Supporting detail or example**
    - ii. **Supporting detail or example**
  - b. **Transition**
- V. **Conclusion or Closing Summary**
  - a. **Synthesis and or conclusion of thesis**
  - b. **Restate main topic and subtopics**

# Outlining...

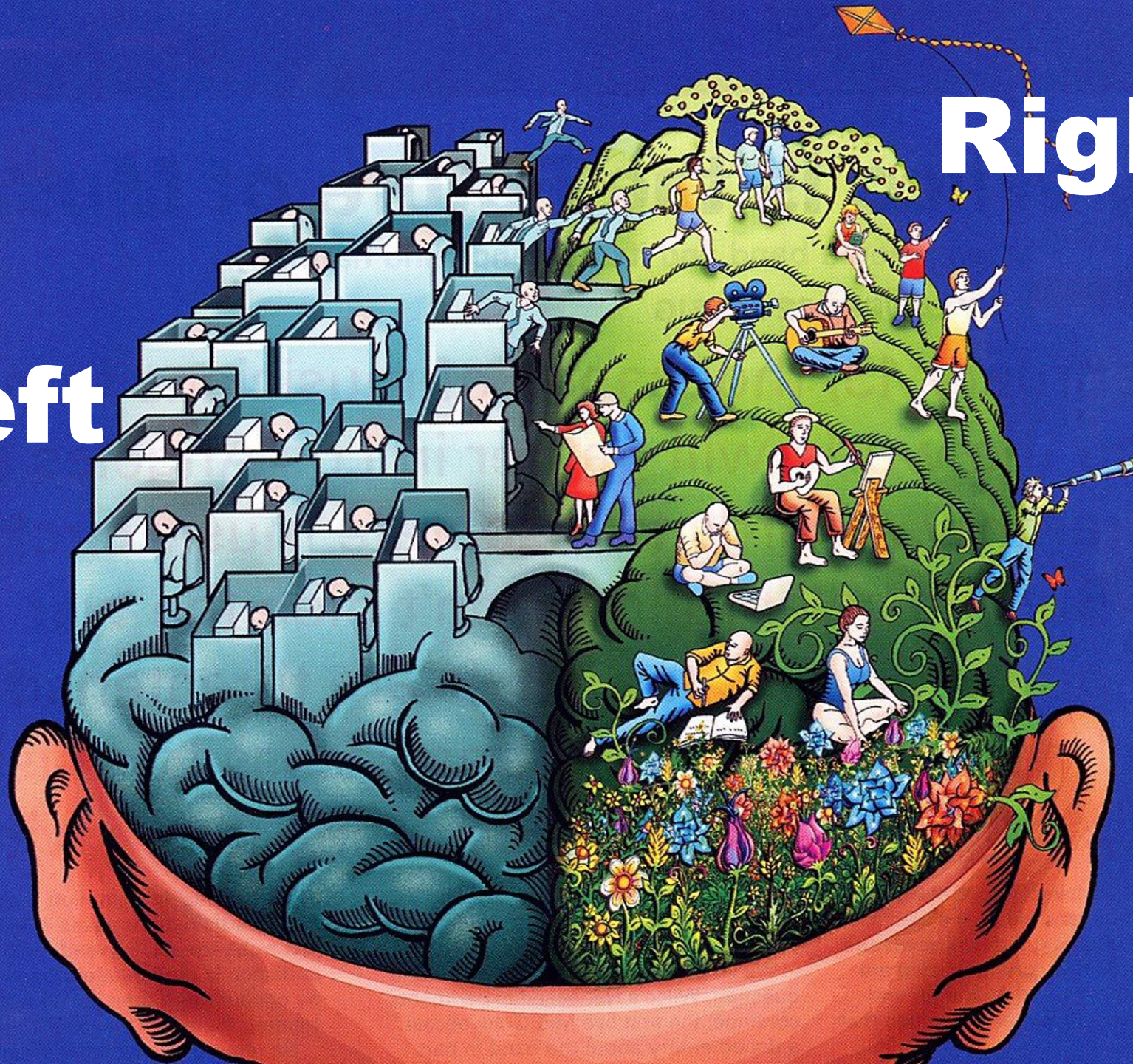
How does  
your brain  
work?





Left

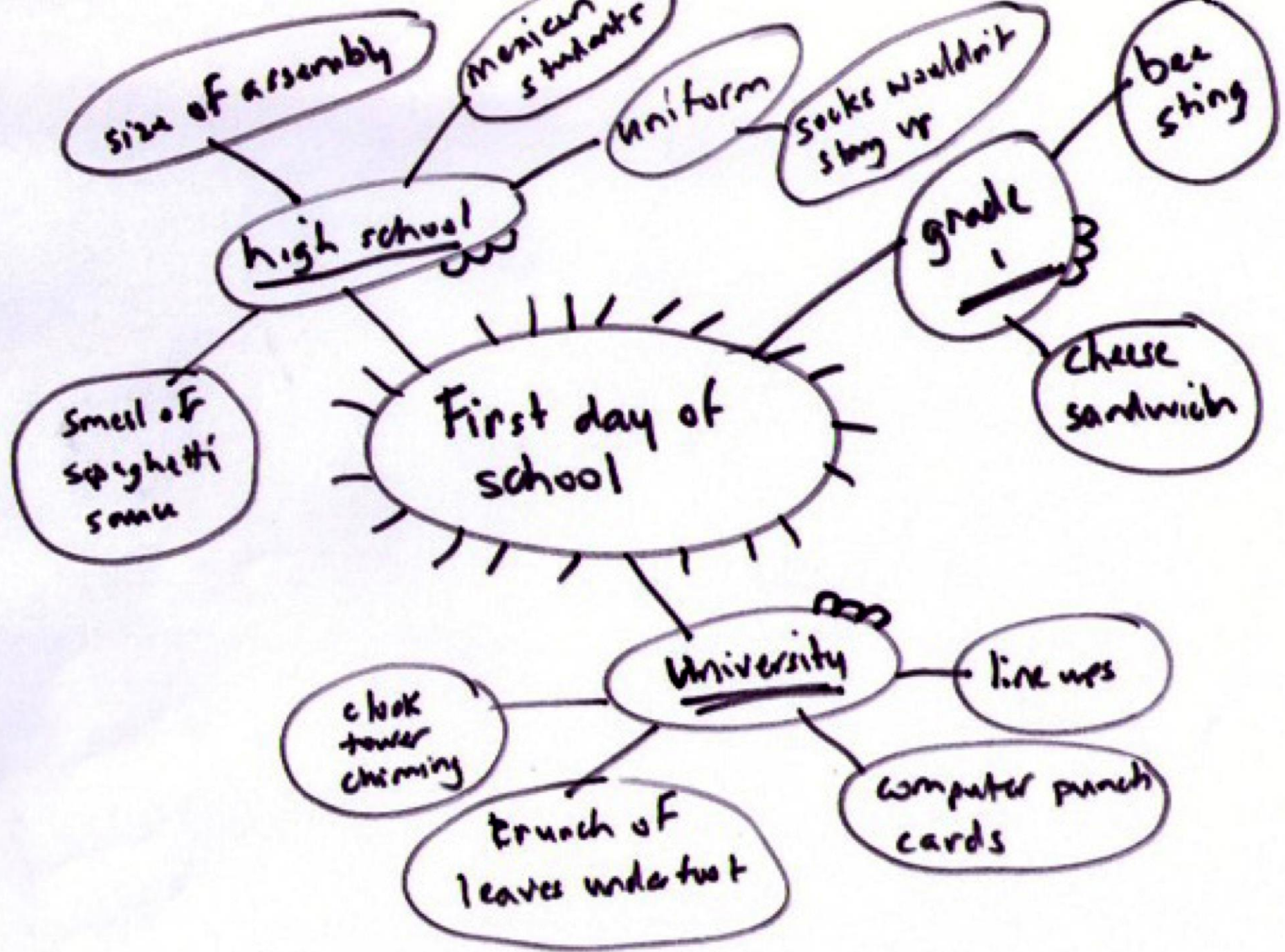
Right







**Only one person can drive!**



# Rules of mindmapping

1. Write down EVERYTHING
2. Don't be critical
3. Include *stories* (from yourself or sources)
4. Don't try too hard to be organized
5. Keep your writing hand moving
6. Draw pictures/use different colors
7. Know you don't have to FINISH!

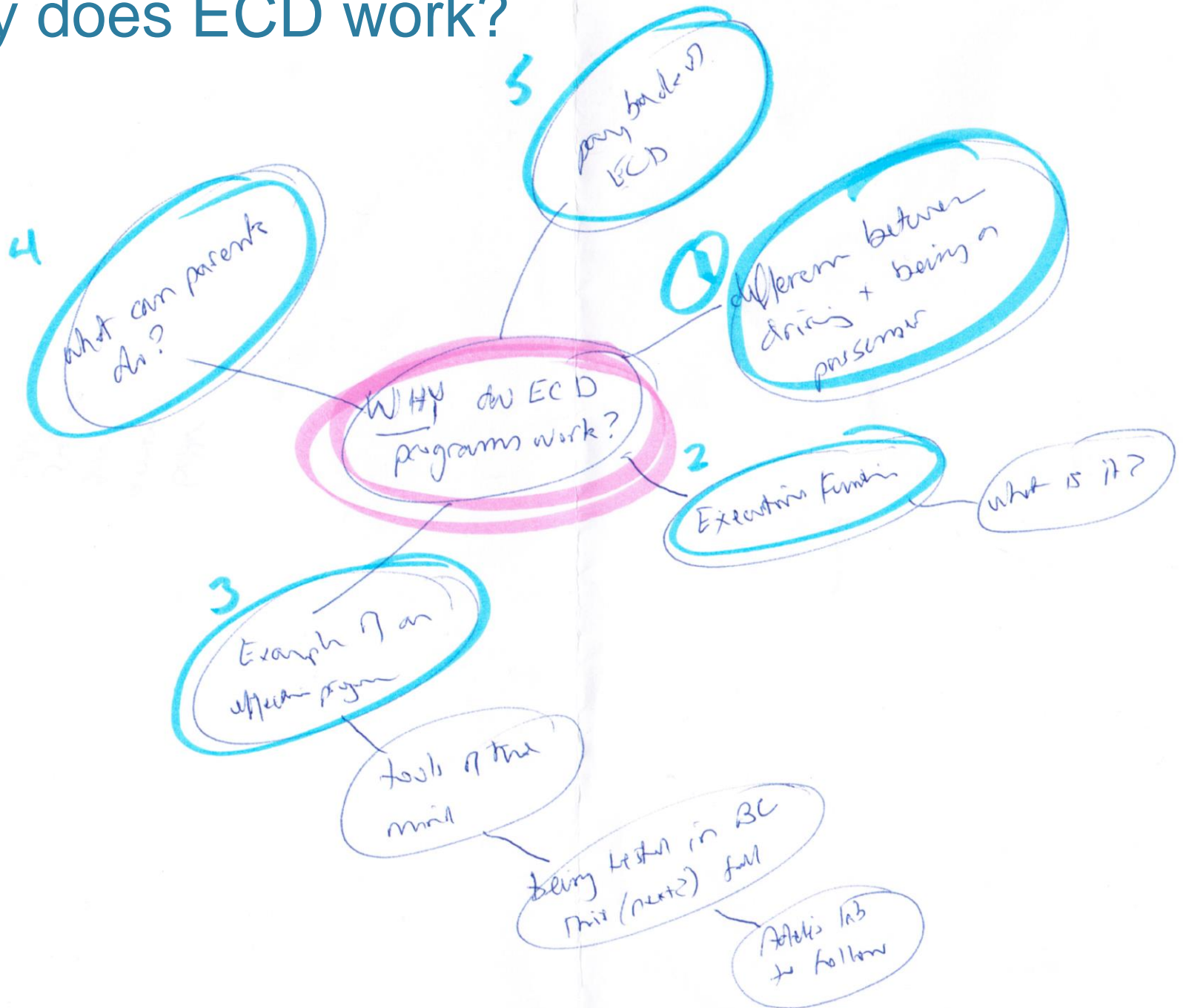


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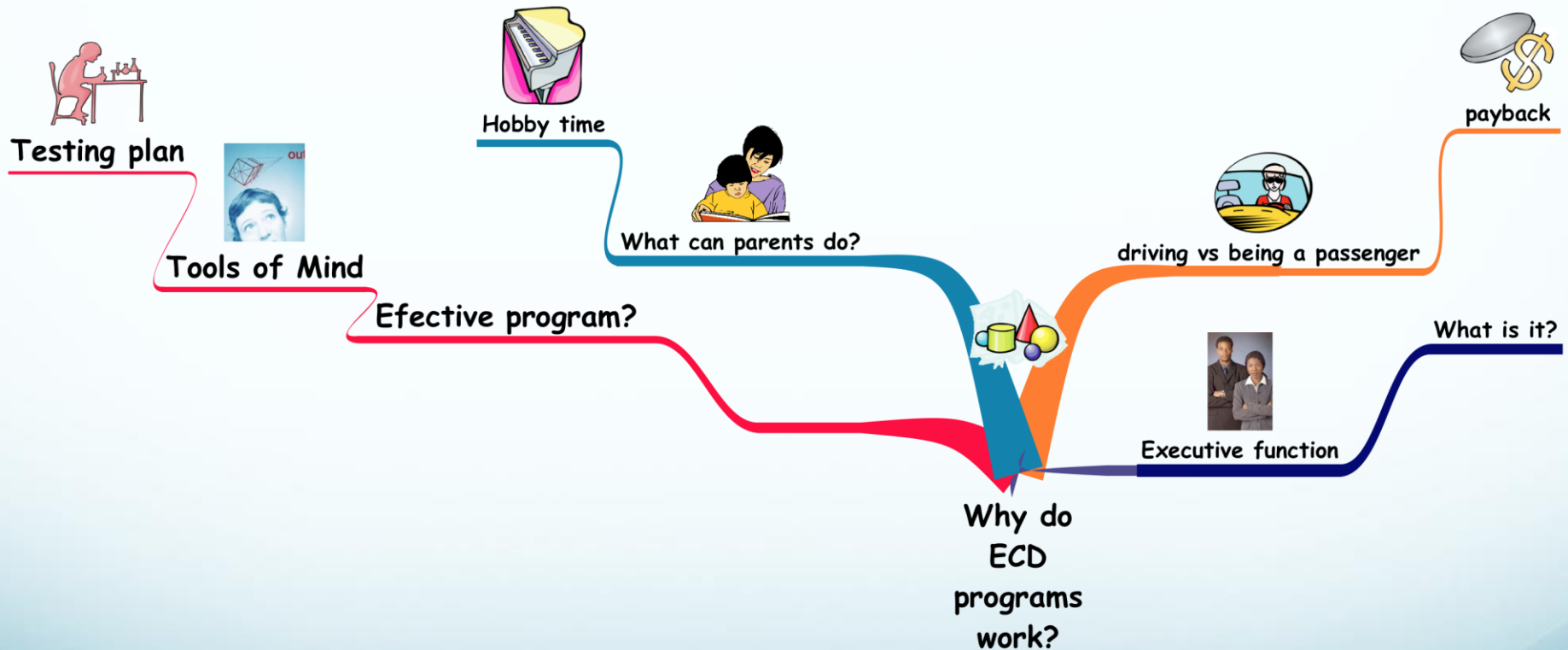
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# Why does ECD work?



# Why does ECD work?





# Making kindergarten more engaging

**H**ere's a question from neuroscientist Adele Diamond: "Put a driver and a passenger in the same car, give them a destination, and who do you think will learn the route better?"

The correct answer — the driver — is obvious because that person has the advantage of making all the decisions, visualizing the process and achieving the result. The passenger, quite literally, is just along for the ride.

"So why do we send our kids to school and have them simply be passengers?" asks Diamond, who is the Canada Research Chair in Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of British Columbia. "We've known for decades that hands-on is the best way to learn. Still, a vast amount of what happens in schools is lecturing."

A firm believer in investing in early childhood, Diamond believes ECD programs help make kids *drivers*. She says economists put the return on investment for early years education at between 15 and 17%. But she's concerned that British Columbia — home to numerous world leaders on the subject — is slow in showing much commitment to such early training.

One notable exception: In September 2011 the provincial government began funding an early childhood development pilot program in 12 kindergartens, four each in Surrey, Vancouver and Coquitlam. Known as *Tools of the Mind*, the program was developed by two educational psychologists, Elena Bodrova and Deborah Leong, and is based on the theories of Russian



**Adele Diamond, Canada Research Chair in Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience.**

“We’ve known for decades that hands-on is the best way to learn.”

# How to give assignments



# How to assign writers

- Give SMALL jobs to MANY people
- Give them a subject they're personally interested in
- Know that busy people usually get more done
- Give them a specific word count (e.g.: 300 words)
- Put the deadline in the subject line of the email
- Start with a FAKE deadline
- Send them a reminder a week before due day

# What % of time do you spend on:

- **Preparing to write?**
- **Writing**
- **Re-writing/editing**

(answer should add up to 100!)

# Ideal division:

- **Preparing to write = 40%**
- **Writing = 20%**
- **Re-writing/editing = 40%**

First drafts  
don't have to be  
perfect.  
They just have to  
be written.




The best flowers...



**YOU CAN  
ALWAYS  
FIX CRAP.  
YOU CAN'T  
FIX A  
BLANK  
PAGE.**

CHRISTINA DODD

Three ice cream cones are arranged horizontally. The left cone has a large scoop of pinkish-red strawberry ice cream. The middle cone has a large scoop of dark brown chocolate ice cream with some chocolate shavings on top. The right cone has a large scoop of bright yellow vanilla ice cream. All three cones are on light brown waffle cones.

**I love revision. Where else  
can you turn spilled milk into  
ice cream?** — Katherine Paterson?



**Stop editing  
WHILE you  
write...**







Just write!

# Turn off your monitor





# Consider the pomodoro



# Use a noisy timer



# “Prod” your productivity

writeordie.com



Write yourself notes



**Use computer to simplify  
your text**

# Ernest Hemingway

- Used short sentences.
- Preferred simple, concrete words.
- Favored the ACTIVE voice:
  - She made mistakes, *NOT*
  - Mistakes were made.
- Avoided adverbs.





<http://hemingwayapp.com>

Hemingway App makes your writing bold and clear.

Hemingway highlights long, complex sentences and common errors; if you see a yellow highlight, shorten the sentence or split it. If you see a red highlight, your sentence is so dense and complicated that your readers will get lost trying to follow its meandering, splitting logic — try editing this sentence to remove the red.

Adverbs are **helpfully** shown in blue. Get rid of them and pick verbs with force instead.

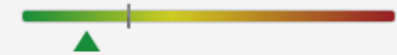
You can **utilize** a shorter word in place of a purple one. Mouse over it for hints.

Phrases in green have **been marked** to show passive voice.

Paste in something you're working on and edit away. Or, click the Write button to compose something new.

[Write](#)[Edit](#)

Readability



**Grade 7**

Good ?

Paragraphs: 6

Sentences: 10

Words: 123

Characters: 584

1 of 10 sentences are hard to read.

1 of 10 sentences are very hard to read.

1 adverbs. Aim for 2 or fewer.

1 words or phrases can be simpler.

1 uses of passive voice. Aim for 2 or fewer.

# Best length for sentences:

- 14 to 18 words.
- This is an AVERAGE.
- Some should be much longer (40 words okay).
- Others should be much shorter (one to five words).
- Variety of lengths gives rhythm to your writing.

# Grade level to aim for:

- Ideally, grade 7-9
- NEVER higher than grade 10!
- Remember: grade levels are arbitrary!





questions???

# Managing approvals:

- Never call it the “approval process”; instead, call it “fact checking”
- Start SMALL – expand book over time (specify version # in book and on release form)
- Find a senior champion – get his/her support to have a *very small* group for signing off





Any questions???

# Daphne Gray-Grant



**The Publication Coach,**  
[daphne@publicationcoach.com](mailto:daphne@publicationcoach.com)  
[www.publicationcoach.com](http://www.publicationcoach.com)



# Contact the Presenter

Daphne Gray-Grant

[daphne@publicationcoach.com](mailto:daphne@publicationcoach.com)

# Coming soon!

## Kanban for Legal Teams

John E. Grant