



Episode 02: Why Posture Matters

Hosts: Tracy Stackhouse · Cory Dundon · Michelle Maunder



LISTENER NAME

DATE LISTENED

TOTAL LISTENING + REFLECTION TIME (MINS)

CPD HOURS CLAIMED



Episode Summary

This is our first case episode. Cory brings a composite of a 12-year-old boy referred for handwriting help, poor legibility, ideas that will not make it onto the page, and a request from school for support, but within minutes the real story is sitting underneath him: a postural system that cannot hold him upright long enough to write. The assessment tells a bigger story. He shifts his whole body to cross the midline, props his head on his arm, fatigues within minutes, and his writing falls apart as he tires. We use Tracy's sensory postural model, shared as a visual in the notes, to organise what we are seeing. From there we go underneath the output to the inputs: his clinical observations, the poor prone extension and supine flexion, the jumpy ocular tracking at midline, and the tonic labyrinthine reflex test that tipped him into autonomic overwhelm, and what they reveal about vestibular processing and postural adaptation. Tracy walks us through centre of gravity, why the eyes recruit help when the vestibular system cannot find stability, and how treatment starts: fast linear vestibular input, prone extension, and sound woven in, always building toward integration rather than chasing the handwriting itself.



Resources & Mentions

- Tracy's sensory postural model, the visual flow chart used throughout this episode, adapted from Ann Grady's work in neurodevelopmental treatment.
- The Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (Beery VMI).
- The Print Tool, from Handwriting Without Tears.
- Clinical Observations of Motor and Postural Skills (COMPS).
- Jean Ayres, Sensory Integration and Learning Disorders, referenced for the tonic labyrinthine reflex and autonomic dysregulation.
- Check out DFX's Learning Journeys to build your clinical reasoning skills: <https://dfxlearningjourneys.thinkific.com/>



Reflection Prompts

Take a few quiet minutes to consider each prompt and write freely. Add or remove a prompt block to suit the episode.

- 1** Handwriting tests measure the output, but legibility and fatigue trace back to underlying sensory motor functions we have no neat tests for. Where in your own practice are you measuring output when the real story sits underneath?

- 2** We argue for reading the postural system before the child writes: do they have to hold the paper, prop the head, shift the whole body to cross midline? What postural signs could you watch for before a task even begins?

- 3** The tonic labyrinthine reflex test tipped this boy into autonomic overwhelm, locating the problem low and deep in the nervous system. For a child you're puzzling over, how might you look beneath the visible skill to the postural and vestibular foundations?

- 4** Tracy describes treatment that builds from the base: fast linear vestibular input, prone extension, then movement off the midline, always toward integration. Where might you be tempted to treat the surface skill rather than build from the foundation up?

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Clinical reasoning is what bridges the gap between the assessment data and the treatment plan. For a recent case, how clearly can you trace the line from what you observed to why you chose the intervention you did?
