

Keyboarding

Primary Keyboarding Research (From Ian Jukes):

Our experience is that most kids are not physically or language capable to learn formalized keyboarding until grade 3. Initially, we want young children to **learn "keyboard relativity"** which means that we want them to learn the relative position of the keys on the keyboard.

Using a strategy based on Marilyn Ferguson's Brain Mind research, we:

1. Photocopy keyboards (use the one in the folder)
2. Divide the keyboard into left and right hand
3. Develop color schemes - (i.e. space bar level as brown keys for earth, next row as green keys for grass, next row as yellow keys for flowers, and the top row as blue keys for sky) and have the students color theirs correspondingly.
4. Help the kids develop neural patterns by laminating the keyboard, and placing it in the upper left corner of the student's desk.

Activities:

We then ask teachers to practice sequence skills –

- alphabetical
- reverse alphabetical
- new words, (vocabulary or spelling words) etc

for 5 minutes twice a day. Even if they don't do any practice, because of the position of the keyboard on the upper left edge of the student's visual field (which is where you should look while you repeat a phrase or name that you want to memorize), we learned that within a short period of time (a couple of weeks), the students memorize the relative positions of the keyboard.

Again, we do not teach formalized keyboarding until at least grade 3, because we find that students have neither the language skills or the physical skills to learn formal keyboarding until then.

Touch Typing (Grades 3-5)

Speed:

From grade 3 up, we aim to have the students keyboarding at one and a half times their printing or handwriting rate.

Typically that's 5 to 8 wpm for a grade 3 and 20 to 25 wpm for a grade 6. We actually measure their printing /handwriting speed (just as you would keyboarding speed) before we begin teaching them to keyboard.

We do not use keyboarding software like Mavis Beacon, Typing Tutor, or Slam Dunk Keyboarding, We use a word processor so that they can learn the keyboard and basic word processing skills at the same time.

After teaching the home keys, we don't teach more than four keys at a time (and preferably two) and we have the students writing words and sentences from the very beginning. Our aim is to have them reach the goal of 1.5 times their handwriting speed on the alphabetic keys within 6 hours of training - and we set this as our goal because we believe in the principals of payback - that if we are going to take time from a time limited environment, students need to gain a payback, that allows them to communicate quickly and accurately - we set it up so that the kids spend no more than 15 minutes focusing on keyboarding and we view it as performing the same function as stretching does before exercise.

Lessons:

The lessons are driven by the teacher - with the teacher calling out letter patterns that focus on develop neural linguistic patterns inside the students' heads.

There is high energy (Latin or Carribean) instrumental music playing – the kids sit down at their stations and begin to warm up by reviewing the letters, words, and sentences that they were working on last time - this typically happens for about 5 minutes.

Next the two new letters are introduced and we ask the students to do Neural Linguistic Programming (mind mapping) - we ask them to close their eyes and move their fingers back and forth between the letters - for example, I will call out fg fg fg fg (for about 20 seconds) then gf gf gf gf gf then fgf fgf fgf fgf then gfg gfg gfg gfg then gff gff gff gff gff gff gff then ffg ffg ffg ffg ffg and so on, then jh jh jh jh jh then hj hj hj hj hj hj then jhj jhj jhj jhj jhj and so on then gh gh gh gh then ghg ghg then hgh, then ghh, then hgg, and so on.

After about 3 to 5 minutes of this, they move on to the exercises that incorporate the new letters into new words and sentences.

We create a 15 minute tape that has a bong or bell every minute for the 15 minutes so that students can take speed tests any time they want - we ask the students to print out what they have been working on and we save it to a

Beyond this, the research also tells us that if there is not follow-up in the form of word processing practice, that 60 to 70% of the speed will be lost within 3 weeks. We also do not have our students transcribe (i.e. copy handwritten text) but want them to compose at the computer - and we absolutely stress the 5 stage writing process that emphasizes editing, proofing and publishing.

The primary intention of keyboarding is to make the keyboard transparent, where the primary focus is not on the keyboard, but using the keyboard to enhance communication skills by learning to effectively implement the 5 stages of the writing process and to extend it into effective research

strategies. Using the computer, the Web and various pieces of software is simply an incidental by-product of the process of making learners better thinkers & communicators.

By focusing on doing a few things well rather than a lot of things poorly, we can align our technology usage to our stated learning outcomes- having a deep understanding of the keyboarding, word processing, writing process & research is foundational to all areas of study. The skills are not taught in isolation but rather embedded into all learning experiences for all learners.

