

Why Keyboarding?

by Todd Burleson
Hubbard Woods Resource Center Director
Winnetka Public Schools
Winnetka, IL



¹As our world becomes increasingly digitized, we need to explore how our students interact with it. There will always be a critical need for students to think and create in print. Research has shown that young children create more content while handwriting than when keyboarding; especially at a young age. This speaks to the concept of fluency.

Fluency is essential in handwriting and also in keyboarding. Once a student has mastered the basics of handwriting, it becomes even more essential that they begin learning keyboarding. For me, keyboarding instruction didn't happen until high school. Today's learners can not wait.

Children must learn touch typing — the ability to compose text without looking at keys — so they can focus on their writing, said Kathleen Regan, the director of curriculum and instruction at New Jersey's Glen Rock Public Schools. She calls it a “fluency skill” akin to memorizing the multiplication tables in order to



¹ <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c9/Apple_iPad_Event03.jpg>

more quickly perform complex mathematics.”²³

In order to effectively interact with technology, typing must become second nature; just as writing is for students who have mastered this skill:

“Does it matter how we type? Yes. Touch typing allows us to write without thinking about how we are writing, freeing us to focus on what we are writing, on our ideas. Touch typing is an example of cognitive automaticity, the ability to do things without conscious attention or awareness. Automaticity takes a burden off our working memory, allowing us more space for higher-order thinking. (Other forms of cognitive automaticity include driving a car, riding a bike and reading—you’re not sounding out the letters as you scan this post, right?) When we type without looking at the keys, we are multi-tasking, our brains free to focus on ideas without having to waste mental resources trying to find the quotation mark key. We can write at the speed of thought.”⁴



Having watched students of all ages painfully ‘hunt and peck’ to type, even their name, I can attest to the challenge students face when interacting with technology.

⁵“Most elementary-age children are digital natives, comfortable with smartphones and tablets. But they often operate those hand-held devices with a swipe of a finger. They have a much more difficult time trying to compose text on a keyboard, according to their teachers.

Keyboarding skills and keyboarding fluency will become even more critical as assessments become increasingly computer based.

² "Out of Touch with Typing | MIT Technology Review." 2012. 3 Oct. 2014

<<http://www.technologyreview.com/view/425018/out-of-touch-with-typing/>>

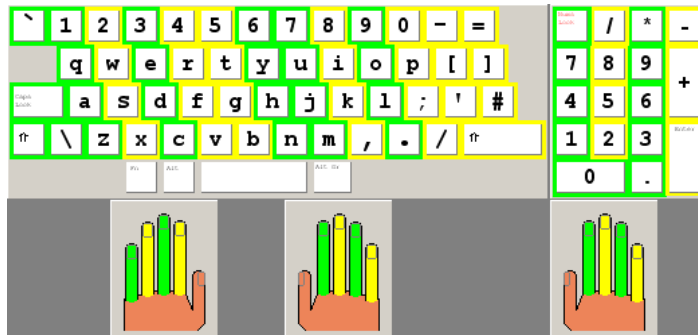
³ <<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/77/A-kid-drawing-or-writing.jpg>>

⁴ "Out of Touch with Typing | MIT Technology Review." 2012. 3 Oct. 2014

<<http://www.technologyreview.com/view/425018/out-of-touch-with-typing/>>

⁵ <<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c7/UnderwoodKeyboard.jpg>>

“Writing is a critical skill, and young students should have the opportunity to write frequently about meaningful topics,” Slover said. And when the writing tests are administered online, that means the students will be using a keyboard.”⁶

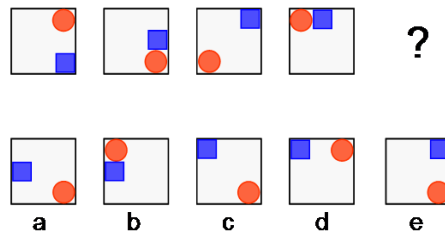


At Hubbard Woods basic keyboard and mouse fluency instruction in Kindergarten begins in December, while explicit keyboarding instruction occurs in third and fourth grade.⁷

⁸**“But the standardized tests linked to the Common Core make those expectations crystal clear because the exams — which will be given in 2014-2015 — require students to be able to manipulate a mouse; click, drag and type answers on a keyboard; and, starting in third grade, write online.”⁹**

Choose the figure that completes the series.

While standardized tests are controversial, we would be doing our students a disservice if we did not prepare them to effectively communicate what they know:



“On the Common Core assessments, some of these writings are going to be document-based questions or sorting through different types of text,” Regan said. “The last thing you want is for the kids to be struggling with the mechanical skills.”¹⁰

While the digital world does continue to evolve, helping our students communicate their understanding remains our core objective. Giving them *all* tools to do that is our mission!

⁶ "Out of Touch with Typing | MIT Technology Review." 2012. 3 Oct. 2014

<<http://www.technologyreview.com/view/425018/out-of-touch-with-typing/>>

⁷ <<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/79/FingerHandPosUSA.gif>>

⁸ <<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7c/FiguralRelation.png>>

⁹ "Elementary students learn keyboard typing ahead of new ..." 2013. 3 Oct. 2014

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/elementary-students-learn-keyboard-typing-ahead-of-new-common-core-tests/2013/10/13/d329ba66-3289-11e3-9c68-1cf643210300_story.html>

¹⁰ "Elementary students learn keyboard typing ahead of new ..." 2013. 3 Oct. 2014

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/elementary-students-learn-keyboard-typing-ahead-of-new-common-core-tests/2013/10/13/d329ba66-3289-11e3-9c68-1cf643210300_story.html>