

FAQ and Advice on Teaching Typing In Education

With over 20 years experience teaching the KAZ Typing Tutor system, together with feedback from teachers around the world, we have put together the following information which we hope you find useful.

Why Teach Typing and can the time be justified?

We teach students handwriting skills so they can write. Should we not teach them keyboard skills so that they can type?

In today's world of computers and technology and with an ever increasing percentage of coursework and assignments having to be presented in typed format, schools can no longer prepare students for the working environment without equipping them with the essential 'life skill' of touch typing.

Children who are not taught to type from a young age will be at a disadvantage throughout their school years and beyond into the workplace.

In fact, twenty years of data suggests that a lack of keyboard skills interferes with the typing process and that the majority of students will never master the skill of composing 'straight to the screen'.

Q. Why?

A. Because they can't look at the monitor and type simultaneously. They need to keep looking down at the keyboard.

Governments spend billions each year funding schools, ensuring they are able to invest in hi-tech equipment. However, this equipment is never fully utilised as children are not taught to use their computers correctly. They waste precious minutes aimlessly searching the keyboard for the correct keys to press as they type using just two or three fingers and then waste further time correcting their typing errors!

Touch-typing at eight

Keyboard
skills may
be taught
alongside
handwriting



CHILDREN will learn how

Imagine driving a car and having to continually look at the controls!

Well, that's what most people do on a daily basis at their computer, but as this is 'the norm' for the majority, it isn't considered to be a problem. In fact, many people think that because they can type quickly with 2 fingers they do not need to learn to touch type.

However, the reality is very different. Typing at speed with ten fingers will naturally always be far faster than 'hunt and pecking' with just two. Additionally, people that freely touch type, be it at school or at work, will be able to focus 100% on the task at hand. Being able to type correctly removes a barrier to creative writing, as the need to keep alternating between screen and keyboard is eliminated and the students effectively 'think type' words straight onto the screen, without being aware of the actions of their hands and fingers - *rather like playing the piano*. They are in the 'flow' of full creative writing at speed with the added bonus of accuracy, saving further time in correcting errors.

In some countries, such as the UK, the skill doesn't even appear on the school curriculum. Consequently, being able to touch type quickly, accurately, with rhythm and good posture is not regarded as a priority or necessity. The result is a school system that keeps delivering generation after generation of students to the work place handicapped in their use of computers - *rather like runners in a race wearing lead boots. They all know where the finish line is but all arrive at different times!*

Forward looking countries have 'typing' as mandatory in their curriculum and turn out students equipped with the 'life skill' of touch typing, ready to enter the working world - PREPARED.

When Should We Teach Typing?

It's a fact that young children today have more access to computers than ever before and are keen to work and play on them. This has resulted in a huge number of software products being designed specifically for them!

Teaching keyboard skills at an early age boosts confidence and familiarises students with the computer.

The main consideration is that keyboards are not normally designed for children's small hands - although they do show remarkable dexterity when using other types of keyboards, as when playing computer games or texting on mobile phones. It's remarkable how quickly they 'get to grips' with the layout of different keyboards and 'pick up' shortcuts! Therefore it is imperative that they are taught the correct finger and hand control when typing at an early age, as it establishes and cements good habit, which will stay with them for the rest of their lives and guard against RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury).

The downside of teaching students to type correctly at an older age is that bad typing habits will already be firmly in place and difficult to correct, therefore we recommend you start with your youngest students in Year 1.

Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)

Most people associate Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) with working in an office. However, this is not the case. RSI can happen wherever there is repeated action/overuse of any part of the upper body. With the ever increasing use of computers at work and at home, the incidence of this debilitating disease is on the increase.

It is generally agreed that the best way to prevent RSI is education and in regard to typing, there are three main elements:-

1. Posture
2. Correct keyboard skills
3. Regular breaks

Whilst typing, correct posture is essential as it can prevent strain on various parts of the body.

Typists should:-

1. Sit with their back straight, with their body centred in front of the F and J keys.
2. Lean slightly forward, just enough to be comfortable so that there is no pressure on the back.
3. Relax their shoulders so that they do not feel tense.
4. Raise their monitor so that their eyes are level with the top of the screen.
5. Sit at arms length from their monitor.
6. Keep their elbows close to their body - as this keeps arms stable and wrists at the correct angle.
7. Keep their wrists in line with their hands and parallel to the keyboard.
8. Keep their fingers slightly curled and not straight and should return them to the resting position over the home keys after striking each key.
9. Keep their knees square so that their body is stable.
10. Place their feet flat on the floor - adjust chair if necessary or use a footstool.

Regular breaks should be taken in order to rest fingers, hands, other parts of the body and eyes.

We explain to students that learning to type is also about muscle memory.

Just like a golfer learns how to stand and swing correctly in order to avoid muscle problems, typists need to remember which keys to press and train their finger muscles to press the right keys whilst always maintaining correct hand positioning.

Clearly, teaching typing correctly helps prevent RSI.

For more information on Repetitive Strain Injury please consult our website.

How Should We Teach Typing?

Schools teach typing in various ways. Some have dedicated IT teachers who deliver learning on a traditional classroom basis but the majority use self-teach software products.

We at KAZ teach typing using a software typing tutor.

Many teachers are not certified to teach typing and are of the opinion that teaching keyboard skills is simple, but unless there is efficient planning, correct instruction and sufficient monitoring, students will learn bad habits and quickly lose interest. Students need support and feedback. Get it right and the results are astounding.

Typing correctly is a motor skill. As we start to learn, the information is stored at the centre of our conscious thought. As we develop the skill, the information moves into deeper areas of consciousness that bypass conscious thought, making the movements appear completely automatic. This works whether typing, playing the piano or even driving a car.

Our research has shown that traditional teaching methods involve hours of repetitive typing drills in order to achieve this goal, but as they consist of meaningless repetition of keystrokes that take hours of practice, it takes a very determined and motivated learner to succeed.

We also found that to 'balance' this inherent boredom, games and other diversions are introduced but all this actually does is extend the learning process. All that is actually needed is a quicker and more efficient learning method.

Additionally and surprisingly, we also found that combining learning to type with learning other elements such as spellings etc. interfered with core learning. Focussing on the meaning of words whilst learning to type meant split concentration. Imagine trying to concentrate on creating content while practising handwriting.

Learning to type correctly requires full concentration.

The copyrighted and trademarked ACCELERATED LEARNING method we have developed for the KAZ Typing Tutor was designed to address these problems. It was scientifically developed especially for schools and further education by the same course team of experts responsible for producing over 55 RSA/NVQ level computer and office skills courses and relies on specific combinations and progressions of just 11 words in 5 phrases. This ACCELERATED LEARNING method was the subject of a year-long student research trial by the UK's Open University, which judged it so effective that they introduced it to **ALL** their students.

Typing evangelist Prof. Marc Eisenstadt of the OU had this to say about KAZ Typing Tutor.

"I'm continually receiving thanks from Open University students who had felt 'stuck in the molasses' when working at their computers, and now can concentrate on their work rather than the keyboard."

Marc Eisenstadt, Chief Scientist, Knowledge Media Institute, The Open University

The 4 key elements of teaching typing are:

1. Set up and posture
2. Technique
3. Accuracy
4. Speed

Students should be seated and correctly positioned at the keyboard at all times. They should always start with their fingers placed on the 'home keys' and practise how to stroke 'the keys' firmly and rhythmically. It is extremely important to place emphasis on technique, rhythm and accuracy and NOT on speed. Speed will automatically develop with practise and can be honed once the basic motor skill has been mastered.

Initially, whilst using our software students will get visual and/or audio feedback as to whether they are pressing the correct keys. They will however still need to occasionally look down in order to develop hand-eye coordination. This is the only time we allow this. We emphasise the need for each student to learn at their own pace and allow them to make errors along the way. The nature and frequency of errors will change as they progress.

It is important that students are not introduced to 'copy typing' from text to screen too early. If they have not sufficiently mastered the skill, the likelihood is they will revert to looking between the text and the keyboard, make more mistakes and losing their place in the text they are copying.

Our teaching software and lesson plans are specially designed to enable students to learn via software instruction, however it's also important for teachers to supplement and reinforce these aspects of learning.

Key features of the KAZ Typing Tutor:

1. High quality learning content.
2. Unique and revolutionary teaching method using 'brain balance' - engaging the major senses of sight, sound and touch simultaneously.
3. Special Needs Enabled - uses a strong multi-sensory approach throughout.
4. Simple, fresh and uncluttered interface that doesn't distract the learner.
5. Uses just 11 words in 5 trademarked phrases.
6. Short modules to maintain student focus and concentration and to fit in and around curriculum timetables.
7. Ability to keep the students attention and motivation.
8. Finely tuned to achieve the single aim of teaching typing quickly and easily – unlike other typing tutors that are over complicated with games, analysis and dozens of lessons containing tedious typing drills.
9. Focuses on only teaching the skill of typing and not any other subject (does not confuse students by teaching a combination of subjects such as English with typing - allows them to complete the typing course with 100% attention).
10. Allows students to work through the course at their own pace and enables them to return to any module easily should they wish to refresh.
11. Simple, yet discreetly challenging 'SpeedBuilder' module to increase both speed and accuracy.
12. Flexible product that can be used on your school server or online over the internet - reducing teacher's workload in school, whilst encouraging learning at home.
13. Teachers guide, lesson plan and motivational material included.
14. Ability to import student's database in C.S.V. format.
15. Easy to use back office which keeps track of student progress and performance.
16. Free telephone support if needed.

Having chosen a fast, simple and effective typing tutor, lead by example and teach yourself too, if you have not already done so. You will have empathy with your students and will have taught yourself a 'skill for life'.

About KAZ Typing Tutor For Schools



The KAZ Typing Tutor was a 2006 BETT Awards finalist - the first and only typing tutor to be recognised as such and was awarded 'Silver' by 'bizziebaby' in 2013.

With in-excess of one million users, KAZ has been widely used in hundreds of primary and secondary schools and in further education worldwide, teaching students to type Easily, Efficiently and Effortlessly, whilst equipping them with an invaluable 'life skill'.

It is still the **ONLY** Typing Tutor available across such a wide range of platforms.

Should you have any further questions or would like a **FREE** no-obligation Online trial of our KAZ Typing Tutor for your school please contact us at enquiries@kaz-type.com

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