

AWARDS for INNOVATIONS

Keyboarding Instruction in Illinois

Final Report

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Professional development for pre-service and practicing teachers

Rationale:

Learning how to type used to be taught solely at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Today, however, keyboarding is being taught as early as fourth grade in many schools. This is due to the fact that many children are growing up with computers at home and in their elementary classrooms. Studies have shown that allowing students to type their papers helps them improve their reading, writing, and editing skills. High school teachers have known for years that students were teaching themselves how to type and were spending a considerable amount of time breaking bad habits in order to teach the correct way to type. Elementary teachers are not required to take a course that covers the methods of teaching students how to correctly type so many students are still learning improper ways to type.

Objectives:

The objectives of the project are to:

1. Collect data from school districts in Illinois to find out at what grade level keyboarding is being taught.
2. Collect data to find out what training in teaching keyboarding the teachers have had.
3. If need be, create a CD with keyboarding methodology that can be distributed to elementary teachers who provide keyboarding instruction in their classroom.
4. Analyze and interpret the data collected in objectives one and two.
5. Report the results of the research conducted through this project.

How the Project Will Improve and Positively Impact CTE in Illinois:

This project would address a growing concern among business educators throughout the state. Currently, elementary education majors are not required to learn the methods for teaching keyboarding. This project would create an awareness of the need while helping teachers be better prepared to teach keyboarding in their classrooms.

RESEARCH METHODS

The 550 participants were identified from the listing of high school business education teachers found on the Illinois State Board of Education’s Website. Only one business education teacher from each high school was selected. A survey was developed by the researchers and reviewed by several subject matter experts. The survey along with a cover letter and self-addressed, stamped envelope were mailed to the selected high school business education teachers. The paper survey included a Website so that the respondents could complete the paper survey or the online version. Follow up email reminders as well as paper surveys were sent to the participants that did not respond to the first mailing. As a result of both mailings, 143 responses were collected, and 141 of those surveys were usable surveys. This represents a 26 percent response rate. The paper responses were transferred to the Website and the results reported on an Excel spreadsheet.

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Collect data from school districts in Illinois to find out at what grade level keyboarding is being taught.

Survey Question: *At what grade level(s) is touch keyboarding first taught in your district?*

Survey results are depicted in Table 1:

Table 1 (n=141)

Grade	N		Grade	N
PreK	0		6 th	22
K	0		7 th	23
1 st	0		8 th	10
2 nd	9		9 th	73
3 rd	9		10 th	7
4 th	11		11 th	7
5 th	20		12 th	7

*total responses greater than 100% due to multiple schools in one school district.

Objective 2: Collect data to find out what training in teaching keyboarding the teachers have had.

This objective was subdivided into two objectives. The first part of this objective is to determine if touch keyboarding at the elementary level is currently taught by a certified business education teacher.

Survey Question Part I: *Who teaches touch keyboarding at the elementary level?*

Survey results are depicted in Table 2:

Table 2: (n=95)

	N			N
Classroom Teacher	34		Volunteer	1
Certified Business Education Teacher	19		Non Certified Personnel	8
Media Specialist	11		Other	1
Keyboarding/Computer Teacher NOT certified in Business Education	21			

The second part of this objective is to determine what training the person or persons teaching touch keyboarding at the elementary level received if not certified in business education.

Survey Question Part II: *If touch keyboarding is not being taught by a business education teacher, what type of training has that person received in the methodology of teaching touch keyboarding and document formatting?*

Survey results are depicted in Table 3:

Table 3: (n=52)

	N
No Training	36
Workshop	5
Inservice Training	2
Training Provided by Software Vendor	1
Business Education Methods Course	2
Other*	6

*Explanation of “Other” training:

Personal experience and well versed in computer skills
Graduate courses in Word and Office
Business Ed certified mentor
Instructional Technology classes
Certified in Computer Applications to teach K-5
Not sure

Objective 3: If need be, create a CD with keyboarding methodology that can be distributed to elementary teachers who provide keyboarding instruction in their classroom.

Survey Question: *Indicate what training, if any, you consider beneficial to elementary keyboarding teachers?*

Survey results are as follows:

There were 60 responses to this question. Out of those 60 responses, 24 (40%) considered an instructional CD with keyboarding methodology beneficial to elementary keyboarding teachers. This finding indicates that there is a need for the creation and distribution of a CD with keyboarding methodology.

Objective 4: Analyze and interpret the data collected in objectives one and two.

Analysis of Data Collect in Objective One: *What grade level is keyboarding currently offered in Illinois school districts?”*

The results indicate that 73 (52.8%, n=141) schools teach keyboarding at the 9th grade level. A distant second was 7th grade with 23 (16.3%, n=141) responses, followed closely behind by the 6th grade with 22 (15.6%, n=141) and the 5th grade with 20 (14.2%, n=141). This research seems to indicate that keyboarding instruction in Illinois is first taught at the middle school and beginning high school levels.

There is some evidence, however, that touch keyboarding instruction may be migrating to the elementary level. The research shows that the earliest grade level keyboarding is currently being taught in Illinois school districts is the 2nd grade level (6.4%, n=141). In addition, there are 9 school districts in the state of Illinois (6.4%, n=141) teaching touch keyboarding at the 3rd grade

level and 11 school districts (7.8%, n=141) teaching touch keyboarding at the 4th grade level. These results suggest that some school districts may be aware of recent guidelines such as the Computer Literacy Scope and Sequence guidelines published by South-Western Thomson based on the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) and also the National Business Education Association guidelines suggesting that touch keyboarding instruction be introduced at the elementary school level. Additional research needs to be conducted in order to determine if touch keyboarding instruction is indeed being pushed down into the elementary levels as deemed necessary by currently standards or if school districts will ignore these guidelines and continue to offer keyboarding at the middle-school and early high school level.

Analysis of Data Collect in Objective 2: If touch keyboarding is not being taught by a business education teacher, what type of training has that person received in the methodology of teaching touch keyboarding and document formatting?

The results clearly show that only 20% (19, n=76) of elementary touch keyboarding instruction is being taught by a certified business education teacher. In addition, the results show that 69% (36, n=52) of the non certified business education teachers have had no training and 96% (50, n=52) have not taken a business education methods course. These results are very disturbing considering that the research shows that improper keyboarding instruction not only impedes the further development of proper touch keyboarding technique and speed but can also lead to injury such as carpal tunnel syndrome. The findings of this research need to be shared and discussed at the local and state level in order to stop the current trend of allowing uncertified touch keyboarding instructors to teach this valuable and life-long skill before irreparable damages are caused by this trend.

Objective 5: Report the results of the research conducted through this project.

The preliminary results of the research were shared at the 2006 Connections Conference. As a result of that presentation, the Illinois Office of Educational Services has asked to use the findings of this study in a Statewide Advisory Board meeting for the Curriculum Revitalization Initiative of Business Education to be held in May. In addition, a proposal has been submitted to Delta Pi Epsilon to present the findings at their annual fall conference.