

# Project Concept Note: Keyboarding Strategy for Kindergarten

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# Introduction

There has been some controversy over when children should begin learning keyboarding skills. Researchers of elementary learning have found that children with keyboarding skills compose faster and are proud of their work: their documents have a neater appearance, motivation is better, and composition and editing are easier. Thus, language arts skills improve. Elimination of another subject to make room for keyboarding is not necessary. Keyboarding should be incorporated into most subjects. Keyboarding is simply another method for communicating their ideas.

The Rosegrant Study <sup>1</sup>found that the four to five year old could at least develop logical search strategies for locating individual keys when needed. Two other studies have indicated that keyboarding may be less cognitively and physically demanding than handwriting. It is easier to locate one of 60 keys and depress it than it is to copy a single letter. Using speed as a proxy for cognitive load, keyboarding is arguably less taxing than handwriting.

In cooperation with Herman Wood, Cobb County Technology Integration Specialist, an interactive learning tool and support materials would be developed to introduce the concepts of keyboarding and initial strategies for kindergarten and first graders. The basic premise: as children are learning their letters, they can also learn recognition of those letters on the keyboard and learn what hand is used to input those letters. The curriculum would include print materials for parents and educators for additional activities to reinforce the learning skills necessary for keyboarding.

## Career and Personal Goals

Education and learning have always fascinated me. I am of the opinion that education is one of the greatest gifts and precious opportunities. The ability to learn makes the world a better place. The ability to share using technology enhances our world, promotes understanding and fosters creativity.

I received my primary education when computers and keyboards were unavailable. I did not learn to "type" until I was in my late teens, there really was not a use for it until then. Times and technologies have changed dramatically. Curiousness fueled my desire to learn more about how people learn, why people learn, what is useful learning and how does interactive media play a role in learning.

I expect to meet the following goals throughout the process of this project:

- \* Further develop my interest in e-learning
- \* Utilize and strengthen my Flash Technology skills
- \* Apply my usability and information architecture skills
- \* Further develop my creative illustration skills

Completion of this project will provide me with confidence and skills to work in a variety of environments:

- \* Usability
- \* Information architecture
- \* Integrating technology with learning

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<sup>1</sup> Rosengrant, T. (1985). Using the microcomputer as a tool to read and write. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 18, pp 113-115

## Communication Objectives:

The objectives listed below were developed with the help of the Cobb County School District.

### **Goal for Kindergartner Keyboarding:**

**The student should be able to recognize the letters of the alphabet on the keyboard and use the correct hand to strike the key.**

The following standards should be **introduced** during kindergarten:

- \* The learner will be able to recognize and use the letters and function keys on the keyboard with teacher guidance.
  
- \* The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of standard keyboarding techniques and correct fingering techniques.
  
- \* The learner will be able to use word processing skills to type words, phrases, and sentences.
  
- \* The learner will be able to use word processing skills to edit a typed document.

It is important to keep in mind that this project will only encompass the kindergarten introduction to keyboarding. Correct fingering would prove to be a difficult physical task at this age. Again, this project is an introduction of the keyboard.

The objective of the project is to make the learning effective and fun and appropriate for this age group. It is hopeful that in time the project can be expanded to include material for first and second graders.

## Business Objectives:

At this time, the project has no business objectives. It is hopeful that the project will be successful enough to find a sponsor who might host the project for free. The reasoning behind this concept is two fold. First, the creator of the project does so willing and in cooperation with the Cobb County School District will consent and assign to Cobb County School District of all right, title and interest in and to the material, including ownership of the entire copyright in the material. <sup>2</sup>The school district understands that this project is a learning project for the creator and that the project is to be used for educational purposes only. The second reason is personal. My belief that education is a shared experience and should be easily accessible outweighs my belief in making a dollar. I am fortunate to be in a situation at the present time where I am able and willing to provide this service simply for recognition. I am confident I will have other opportunities to create for pay in the future.

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<sup>2</sup> I have obtained some forms that the County has requested I sign and return. I will bring them to my meeting and review them with Ameeta as well. Herman Wood has suggested if these forms are not agreeable he is still willing to work with me on the project in some other manner to be discussed in the future.

# Target Audience

## Primary Audience

The primary audience for this project is Kindergarten students in the Cobb County School District, Georgia. They will be the primary users and learners. The teachers of those students are also members of the primary audience as they will oversee the students and provide guidance as well as engaging the students in additional exercises to reinforce the keyboarding experience.

## Secondary Audience

The secondary audience for this project will be parents and possible teachers from other districts that may be interested in implementing the materials. There may be a secondary audience of home school families as well.

# Competition and Inspiration

At this time, five sites have been identified to be reviewed and analyzed.

- \* <http://www.kiddonet.com/gb/flash/phonics/Intro.html>
- \* <http://www.billybear4kids/games/online/alphabet/alphabet.htm>
- \* <http://www.learningplanet.com/act/fl/aact/index.asp>
- \* <http://www.cogcon.com/gamegoo/games/frieda/frieda.html>
- \* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/>

# Skills

## Research

This project relies upon research in both e-learning and educational curriculum and methods. It is my intention to use Herman Wood's expertise in these areas to assist in guiding the project to meet the needs of the kindergarten learner and the teachers in the Cobb County School District. I have recently read Michael Allen's Guide to E-Learning and have done some initial research into teaching (introducing) keyboarding to kindergarten children. Information from these readings will be incorporated into the deliverables to support design and technical decisions for the project.

## Soft Skills

The soft skills necessary for this project will be great listening and observational skills. The need to accept criticism and the ability to change or alter the design or concept as necessary to achieve the project's goals and mission is another set of important soft skills I will use to complete the project. Time management will be critical not only for the completion of the project, but also for cooperating with both Mr. Wood and my advisor and instructor. Mr. Wood has agreed to make every possible effort to respond within a reasonable amount of time, and has agreed to meet as necessary.

## Flash Technologies

The intention is to complete the interactive technology portion of this project using Flash. Flash provides sound and animation capabilities that can provide motivation for the young learner.

## Illustration/Artistic

Visuals will need to be created for the supporting materials as well as simple animations. I envision I will create and deliver these as part of Senior Project 2.

## Print Technologies

I believe I may need some assistance and guidance in this area. I have only taken one layout course on line at the Art Institute. I am open to suggestions in this area. I know the Art Institute has many resources that I may not know about. I believe I have enough knowledge to produce prototype materials. I am willing to find help here.

## Resources

### Human Resources

As has been stated, Herman Wood will assist in advising on this project. He has read the syllabus and understands the nature of the project. He has made several recommendations for the direction of the project and will assist in providing and approving additional curriculum materials (or at least to point out possible flags).

I have also asked Ameeta to be my advisor in-house at the Art Institute and she has agreed. Dara has also offered some direction as well.

### Technical Resources

The technical resources necessary for this project are a PC or MAC that can accommodate

- \* Flash
- \* Illustrator
- \* Possibly incorporating php (not certain of this yet)

### Financial Resources

None necessary at this time, but there may be some to consider for the production prototype and supporting print materials.