

## Keyboarding with Herzog

Lemoyne S. Dunn

### TYPING CLASS...

Most of us remember it. BORING! FFFF JJJJ FFFF JJJJ (ad infinitum). Yet like typing in its time, keyboarding has become a necessary skill vital to most forms of communication today. **E-mail is requiring even the highest managers and administrators to employ this skill, once reserved for secretaries, in order to effectively communicate with others.**

Keyboarding is a physical skill, much like skating or riding a bike. It is difficult for most people when they first attempt it, however extensive repetition makes the connections so automatic that the task becomes easier and requires less conscious thought. This frees the brain to deal with much more creative questions such as, “What do I write so that the board will give me the funds instead of the football (math, social studies, whatever) department?”

Herzog Research of Tucson, Arizona has created a novel approach to teaching this age-old skill. Although repetition is still required, they have made a couple of changes that make their method unique, and in my experience, more effective. **(Please bear in mind that I teach keyboarding and word processing in Grades 2 - 4. Our district starts this early because we believe that properly utilizing the power of technology will help children to become better writers and communicators and thus improve their self-esteem—not to mention test scores!)**

The first major difference comes in the “home row”. This concept is not ever mentioned in the Herzog method. It is replaced by “hub key sensors” or “little bumpies” as we refer to them. They are raised “caps” that are affixed to the “D” and “K” keys to act as extremely obvious tactile locators. Once the students are instructed as to the proper posture and hand positions, the “home row” comes naturally if their “middle fingers are on the bumpies”.

The second major difference from standard typing class is the order in which the keys are introduced. In Herzog, it is not by row, but alphabetically — the way we learned the letters originally. We teach keyboarding in a five day week, one-half hour per day. On Day 1, the students are informed that they are going to learn to type “the way big people do.” So much for motivation. I used to use stickers and such but found that it really wasn’t necessary. Then they are shown how to sit, how to hold their

hands, and how to take breaks. I stress this a lot, as carpal tunnel syndrome is not what a 9 year old really needs. We also agree on what each finger is called, as this varies with grade level and culture. This takes about 15 minutes and they're starting to get wiggly so we start on the letters A - G. I stop at G because it fits in the time and because A - G are all on the left hand. I tell them that A is under the "pinkie finger of the left hand" and they can look to be sure (almost all of them will because they don't trust me, themselves, or their keyboards.) I tell them to type the letter every time I say it and then I repeat it several times as I check for proper hand positions. The pace at this point is fairly rapid. When they leave, I ask them to practice if they have any kind of keyboard at home or to visualize it in their heads in bed if they don't. (What kid doesn't want an excuse not to go to sleep?)

On Day 2 they are instructed to begin the review of yesterday's letters that is attached to their monitor clips as soon as they are seated. I let them do this for 5 - 6 minutes as both a review and a warm-up. We then review hand positions and posture and go on to the letters H - P, which are all on the right hand. They are then given about ten minutes to type the selected words that contain only A - P. Day 3 is a repeat of Day 2, except that the letters Q - V require the use of both hands. This is an exciting novelty. Day 4 is a wrap-up of W - Z and punctuation. On Day 5, I explain which fingers do which numbers, although we don't practice numbers, and the remaining part of the period is used for practice and closure.

This method does not create executive typists in 2.5 hours. It does, however, give the students a complete and concise introduction into touch-typing without using up an entire 6 weeks and boring the kids stiff. At these grade levels we do not stress speed, although we do give a speed test at the end as a guide to us. What we do stress is using the proper fingers and "trying not to look". Throughout the year, the keyboarding skills are increased through the usage of word processing across the curriculum, with the content area teachers supporting the proper keyboarding techniques. It is taught again in the intermediate school and, if necessary, as remediation in middle school. We have found that by 5th grade most students can type approximately 20 wpm. We are expecting these same students to be typing approximately 40 wpm by 8th grade.

The good news is that this system can be used with any word processor, BASIC, or even with typewriters. For more information, please contact them at:

***HERZOG RESEARCH***

1433 E. Broadway  
Tucson, AZ 85719  
(602) 792-2550



.....