

Improving
Reading/Spelling Skills
via
Keyboarding

A Teacher's Manual
to accompany the student text:
Individualized Keyboarding
for Personal Typing and
Computing

by

Don McCabe

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The student's book for this course is entitled: *Individualized Keyboarding for Personal Typing and Computing*. The reason is simple. Most students want to be able to use a typewriter or computer keyboard. At the same time, most students who may happen to have a reading or spelling problem do not want to admit it. Fear of being looked down upon as being a "remedial" student may prevent them from taking a keyboarding course if their book were to be entitled, *Improving Reading/Spelling Skills via Keyboarding*.

Organization of the Manual

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Part I Basis for theory that students can learn to improve their reading and/or spelling skills by learning phonic patterns as they learn the keyboard

Modern English spelling is fundamentally a system of a comparatively few arbitrary contrastive sets of spelling-patterns, to which readers, to be efficient, must through much practice, develop high-speed recognition responses.

— C. C. Fries, *Linguistics and Reading*

One of the time-honored methods of teaching a person to respond to what Fries describes as “arbitrary contrastive sets of spelling-patterns” is that of having the person look at the word, say the word, try to see it in his mind, and then to write the word several times. The act of writing the word – if it isn’t a mere drawing exercise – does help lock the pattern of letters into the computer brain.

This is why many teachers for years have combined the teaching of writing with reading and why Maria Montessori advocated teaching reading through writing. If a person hears the word all, is shown the word all, writes the word all using the letters a-l-l and says, “AY EL EL, all” as the person writes it over and over and over again, the learner is not only practicing stroking techniques in penmanship, but the learner is also locking in the sounds of the letters with the words.

Imagine a person writing the following exercise longhand while hearing someone read the word, as he/she sees and writes the words.

all	ball	balls			
all	call	calls	called	calling	caller
all	recall	recalls	recalled	recalling	
all	fall	falls		falling	
all	halls	halls			
all	mall	malls			
all	small				smaller
all	tall				taller
all	stall	stalls	stalled	stalling	
all	install	installs	installed	installing	installer

By the time the person is finished, he/she can read and respond to all the words.

For convenience, we will repeat Fries' definition of reading (with our italics) and then we will paraphrase it.

Modern English spelling is fundamentally a system of a comparatively few arbitrary contrastive *sets* of *spelling-patterns*, to which *readers*, to be efficient, must through *much practice*, develop *high-speed recognition responses*.

— C. C. Fries, *Linguistics and Reading*

Modern English spelling is fundamentally a system of a comparatively few arbitrary contrastive sets of spelling-patterns, to which *typists or computer operators*, to be efficient, must through much practice, develop high-speed *digital (or kinesthetic)* responses.

— C. C. Fries, *Linguistics and Reading*

Copying words, if done "actively," is a help to learning to read. This is often considered to be a kinesthetic mode of learning. Remember, however, that drawing words (copying passively with no concentration) does not help.

Typing is kinesthetic. The automatic muscle responses to letters and letter patterns help in almost precisely the same way as the automatic muscle responses in the fingers (or throat muscles when vocalizing or subvocalizing) help a person remember a word after the person has finished writing it.

Typing can provide the drill	drill	drill	drill	drill
	ill	ill	ill	ill
	rill	rill	rill	rill
	drill	drill	drill	drill

or as Fries describes it, "much practice" that is necessary for some students to learn to read or spell or type or as he puts it, "develop high-speed recognition responses."

Others would say that since typing uses both hands, both sides of the computer brain are automatically involved. Integration of both right and left hemispheres of the brain is considered desirable by most experts on reading,

Part V: How AVKO's approach differs

Traditional Keyboarding

- Designed for average students.
- Above average students succeed quickly.
- Average students success with effort.
- Below-average students struggle. Only with great effort will they sometimes pass, but usually the slow, the learning disabled, and the dyslexic will fail.
- Teaches single letter-finger-key

AVKO's Keyboarding

- Designed for "slow" students.
- Above average students zoom through.
- Average students succeed quickly.
- Below average students meet with success. The slow, the learning disabled, and the dyslexic achieve measurable success.
- Teaches spelling patterns.

Sample traditional exercise
used to teach the letter h

hat thin hug eight march show
ship happy throw mouth huge
height ghost spaghetti hawk

Analysis:	Letter	No. Used
	h	15
	a	5
	c	1
	e	4
	g	4
	l	5
	k	1
	m	2
	n	1
	p	3
	r	2
	s	4
	t	9
	u	3
	w	2
	y	1

AVKO exercise
used to teach the letter h

ash hash; ash cash; ash rash ash
rash crash; ash mash smash;
ash rash trash; ash lash flash;

Analysis	Letter Patterns	No. Used
	ash	7
	h + ash	1
	c + ash	1
	r + ash	3
	cr + ash	1
	tr + ash	1
	m ash	1
	sm + ash	1
	l + ash	1
	fl + ash	1
	Total ash's	18
	Total h's	19

To test AVKO's theories have one group copy these paragraphs either longhand with pencil or on a typewriter.

tNo:e dGoo rdrseae hvae bltui-ni
 rspnsseoe to lpsnlgei pttm,srae os
 hyte cna syleai rdea nda pllse nn-o
 rwsdo lki:e dptneoi,o pctnii,o
 ncradtn,kioaio nda cglngngi.i dGoo
 tpstsyi rae gdoo rdrseae hwo qckylui
 bldui pnuo ehtse bltni-iu rspnsseoe
 ot dvlpoee wne pptrsna.e

dGoo rdseae lrdyaea knw"o
 sbcnscsl"yuoioiu hte pptrsnae os htye
 dnto' ndee trngaii ot tpye yb
 ptrts.nae

rPoo rdrseae dnto' nkwo hte ptrnsae
 nda nt'do nwko hte wdrso os hyte
 mtsu ypte ltree-yb-ltr,ee srtkoe-yb-
 srtko.e

rPoo rdrseae ndee gtrnrii ni
 ptrnsae ot bcmeoe gdoo tpsyt.si

Note: the paragraphs above are identical to the paragraphs in the other column with only one small difference. We deliberately scrambled the letters and punctuation marks so as to obliterate normal patterns and to force letter-by-letter copying.

Have the other group copy these paragraphs in the same way as the first group.

Note: Good readers have built-in responses to spelling patterns, so they can easily read and spell non-words like: depotion, piction, incordation, and cligging. Good typists are good readers who quickly build upon these built-in responses to develop new patterns.

Good readers already "know subconsciously" the patterns so they don't need training to type by patterns.

Poor readers don't know the patterns and don't know the words so they must type letter-by-letter, stroke-by-stroke.

Poor readers need training in patterns to become good typists.

Note: If a group of good readers can type or copy both sets of paragraphs equally well and equally fast, then, and only then, would AVKO's theories be all wet. Or just try to copy both sets yourself! We're sure you'll understand why AVKO's approach works so well with students who otherwise would fail in traditional typing or keyboarding classes..