

In Early Education, Why Teach Handwriting Before Keyboarding?

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Abstract

Legible written communication is essential for students to share knowledge (Rogers and Case-Smith 2002). If students lack proficiency in written communication, their composition skills will suffer, which can affect their self-esteem and grades. Whether or not this proficiency is in handwriting or keyboarding is a question worthy of discussion. In this article the authors define motor learning, examine the overlapping principles of motor learning in handwriting and keyboarding skill development, and discuss the need for fluency. The principles of motor learning indicate that handwriting precedes keyboarding when comparing skills and time needed to gain competency. Also discussed are correlations between handwriting and keyboarding skills and the impact of teacher attitudes toward each. As occupational therapists, the authors' recommendations are based on the review of literature and evidence their combined with their extensive experience as school-based occupational therapists. Using a school-based consultative model of occupational therapy at the continuing education or university educational level can facilitate the sharing of this knowledge with early childhood education teachers.