From Rhetoric to Practice: Issues in Teaching and Learning

*Touch Keyboarding*

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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

December, 2004
I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

(Signed): .................................................................
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my father, Edward John Burns. As an Electrical Engineer he constantly strives towards high standards, a sound work ethic and good humour. Thank you for your standards, insight, support and encouragement.
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA</td>
<td>Commercial Education Society of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETYA</td>
<td>Department of Training and Youth Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Electronic Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIT</td>
<td>Hunter Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>Higher School Certificate</td>
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<td>ICFIP</td>
<td>Industry Curriculum Framework Information Package</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<td>KLAs</td>
<td>Key Learning Areas</td>
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<td>NCAE</td>
<td>Newcastle College of Advanced Education (now amalgamated with the University of Newcastle)</td>
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<td>New South Wales</td>
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<td>Recognition of Prior Learning</td>
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<td>Repetitive Strain Injury</td>
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<td>University of Newcastle</td>
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Abstract

*Touch keyboarding* as a vocational skill is disappearing at a time when students and educators across all educational sectors are expected to use a computer keyboard on a regular basis. There is documentation surrounding the embedding of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) within the curricula and yet within the National Training Packages *touch keyboarding*, previously considered a core component, is now an elective in the Business Services framework. This situation is at odds with current practice overseas where *touch keyboarding* is a component of primary and secondary curricula. *From Rhetoric to Practice* explores the current issues and practice in teaching and learning *touch keyboarding* in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Through structured interview participants detailed current practice of teachers and their students. Further, tertiary students participated in a training program aimed at acquiring *touch keyboarding* as a skill to enhance their studies. The researcher’s background experience of fifteen years teaching *touch keyboarding* and computer literacy to adults and 30 years in Business Services trade provides a strong basis for this project. The teaching experience is enhanced by industry experience in administration, course coordination in technical, community and tertiary institutions and a strong commitment to the efficient usage of a computer by all. The findings of this project identified coursework expectations requiring all students from kindergarten to tertiary to use a computer keyboard on a weekly basis and that neither teaching nor learning *touch keyboarding* appears in the primary, secondary and tertiary curricula in New South Wales. Further, teachers recognised *touch keyboarding* as the preferred style over ‘*hunt and peck*’ keyboarding while acknowledging the teaching and learning difficulties of time constraints, the need for qualified *touch keyboarding* teachers and issues arising when retraining students from existing poor habits. In conclusion, this project recommends that computer keyboarding be defined as a writing tool for education, vocation and life, with early instruction set in the primary schooling area and embedding *touch keyboarding* within the secondary, technical and tertiary areas and finally to draw the attention of educational authorities to the Duty Of Care aspects associated with computer keyboarding in the classroom.