scopeIT EDUCATION

TECH TALK FOR PRINCIPALS

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Planning for Digital NAPLAN Implementation

NAPLAN Online - Is your school prepared?

This year, NAPLAN testing will begin transitioning from paper to online for students. Initially, this will be on an opt-in basis and the relevant states and territory authorities will determine the fixed date for mandatory transition. The NAPLAN website outlines benefits including faster turnaround of results, more precise results/accurate assessment and greater student engagement. It will also enable tailored testing to keep pace with the student's capabilities as they progress through the test.

This change is not only inevitable but makes absolute sense as we transition into the new electronic world. However, there is a massive shortfall in student touch typing skills that will prove to skew results and widen the gap.

### So how does this affect NAPLAN performance?

The NAPLAN website emphasises that the paper and online tests will assess the same criteria, but misses the point that students will have widely varied levels of skill in the simple act of completing the test. Where handwriting skills are practiced on a daily basis in classrooms and preschools from an early age, the skill of touch typing does not get actively practiced in most classrooms and is not an equal skill. By the time they complete their first NAPLAN test, some students will not yet have been shown the correct hand position for touch typing, let alone had the time and instruction to ensure that they are fluent in this skill.

The NAPLAN test is a timed examination, which means that only so much output, or answers, can be given by the student. Regardless of how much knowledge the student has, if they do not possess the typing skills to complete their test efficiently, they may fall short of actually being able to fully deliver the answers they know. The following case study reveals the potential scale of impact to student test responses.

Case Study: Kaleb, 12 years old (Year 6)

*Kaleb has had some exposure to computers and keyboards however mainly engages with touchscreen devices. Kaleb was asked to type a short paragraph during which his speed and accuracy was recorded. The results concluded a speed of **7 WPM with 86% accuracy**. He described the experience as "frustrating", and commented that finding the letters was his greatest struggle.*

The NAPLAN writing section has a 40 minute time limit which includes planning, composing, editing and proofreading. Based on a 30 minute period spent composing, here is the output based on Kaleb's speed, compared to a child able to type at just **half** the average adult casual typing speed.
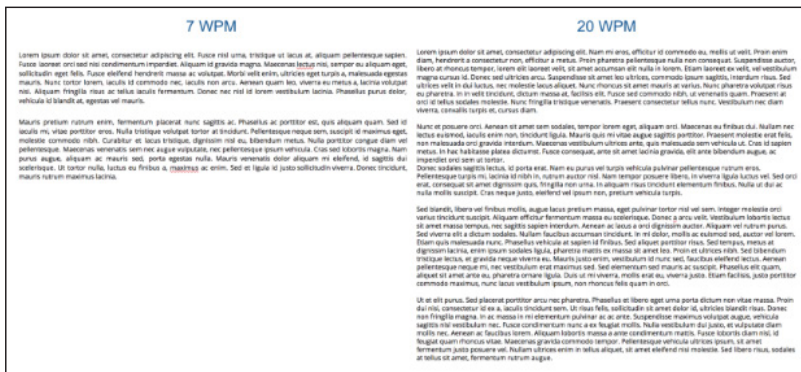
This comparison clearly highlights that students who can touch type at a reasonable speed are much more likely to perform at a higher level in the NAPLAN test than students who cannot.

Typing is a fundamental skill, complementary to STEM education. Communication is the cornerstone of our society's success and advancement. It is so important with the rate of progression of technology for us to equip students with the skills to succeed. The impact of improving student touch typing skills cannot be understated. Handwriting will always have an important place in student learning but we must also actively equip students with typing skills for their technology-rich futures.

Touch Typing Course now available

ScopeIT Education now offers a 10-week touch typing course as one of our range of in-school lessons. Our in-school lessons for primary schools cover a range of digital technology skills. Our courses are designed by professional educators to prepare students with digital technologies skills for their future success. **Contact us** today to find out more and book your place.

About ScopeIT Education

We hope that every Australian student can gain access to the skills and knowledge that they will need for their future careers. We offer the following educational programs:

In-school Classroom Learning: we deliver weekly classes to over 14,000 students per week across Australian primary schools. We bring our own lesson plans, mobile computing lab, trained educators, course pathways, assessment tools and equipment. We are a simple one-stop-shop for digital technologies education.

One Day High School Incursions: we offer a full day of learning for high school students.

Professional Development for Educators: a series of courses offered for those schools wishing to develop staff in digital technologies skills and knowledge.

CIY.Club: after-school clubs and school holiday camps for students aged 7-17, caters to the beginner through to tech genius.