How to Teach Typing to Elementary Students

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How to Teach Typing to Elementary Students

They say that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to master a skill.

That might sound like an incredibly high number on its own, but when it comes to typing, your students will probably rack up that many hours before they graduate from college… if not high school.

Now, as your students are just starting out, *you* have the tremendous responsibility of giving them the proper foundation for their computer skills.

Later down the line, knowing how to type correctly could be the difference between them spending just two hours writing up a college essay versus four.

(And just think how many essays they'll have to write during the course of their college career… you could be saving them days, if not weeks of their lives!)

You may never get the thanks you deserve, but you'll know that you've made a real impact on their lives.

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Through our courses, we aim to help students:

- Become comfortable with computers
- Type with all ten fingers
- Type without looking at the keyboard
- Type at the speed of thought

While you might not get them typing like pros in just one semester or even an entire year together, you *can* get them started. And we're here to help.

In this guide we'll help walk you through getting your EduTyping account set up and the overall strategy of teaching students to type.

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Planning your curriculum

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Weekly schedule

When it comes to typing, **we recommend getting 15-35 minutes of practice a day for younger students**. This regular interaction with the computer is crucial in helping students build up familiarity with the keyboard as well as the muscle memory in their fingers.

Through years of experience, we've discovered that the best combination of learning is as follows:

- **Lessons focused on finger placement**
  First things first, students need to take it one letter at a time. Our core EduTyping Lessons focus on introducing new letters and teaching students the correct positioning of their fingers on the keyboard

- **Typing practice with interesting content**
  In order to show students the relevance of this skill to the rest of their lives, we have developed a library of *In the News* and Practice lessons, filled with content that is relevant to students. As a teacher, you can also set up your own Custom Lessons to help reinforce other

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topics your students are learning.

- **Custom Problem Key Lessons**
  To prevent students from picking up bad habits as they learn to type, they should regularly work on correcting the keys they have trouble with. Our platform automatically tracks the keys students tend to miss and creates custom lessons for them. This helps students break bad habits before they start.

- **Typing Games**
  Games are a very important part of students typing practice, as they provide a healthy boost to their speed and accuracy through time pressure. We have included a number of games on EduTyping platform, suitable for all levels.

We recommend starting **each day** with the EduTyping lessons, enabling students to work through at their own pace. Depending on the benchmarks you set, some may want or need to go back through lessons to improve their accuracy stars.

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2-3 times a week you may want to supplement the lessons with either an *In the News*/Custom Lesson.

And at least once a week we recommend having the students work on their Problem Keys and to play some of our typing games.

Each different activity addresses a different aspect of the skill of typing, thus having a regular mixture of the activities is key. Together, these will help students learn the correct positioning of their hands on the keyboard, correct their mistakes, and improve their speed and accuracy.

Read on for more detail on how to teach typing *the right way*.

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Teaching students to type

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Begin with proper touch typing technique

When starting to teach typing to elementary grade levels, it's essential to stress correct posture and finger positions on the keyboard. Not only is this good for typing, but for their health as well.

In the first "Learn to Type" unit of the curriculum, we help students develop good typing habits from the very beginning of their lessons. This way, it becomes much easier for students to progress faster in the future.

Correct positioning one letter at a time

The whole process of teaching how to type is covered for you in our curriculum.

In order to make learning to type easier for younger students and to suit their smaller fingers, we introduce new keys one row at a time to keep things within reach.

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Below each lesson an interactive keyboard is displayed that shows which finger should be used for which key.

In this formative stage, your main responsibility is to make sure that students are using the fingers they are instructed to.

Before lessons, stress to students the importance of using the right fingers for the right keys. One example we like to use is that of pedalling a bike—

Imagine if you tried to use just your right foot to pedal the bike… you'd have to hop back and forth from side to side to get anywhere! Not only would you look silly, but you'd go really slow!

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Instead, we use both of our legs. One for the right side and one for the left side. This way we can keep our feet on the pedals and just focus on pedalling!

It's the same with typing. Yes, you can type with just two fingers instead of just ten. But the whole time you'll have to be hopping from key to key, moving your whole hand around to find it.

This is called hunting and pecking, because you have to hunt for each letter before you can press it. (You might want to do a very dramatized version of this).

Instead, a fast typer who uses all 10 of their fingers can type without even looking down. They can go much faster this way, because it's a lot less work for their hands.

During lessons— Keep an eye on students as they work to make sure that they are following the recommended finger placements.

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We can show them what to do, but we need you to see that it actually happens!

Engage students with relevant content

Once students have gotten a handle on the basic keys, you can move on to slightly more complex content.

This is key to helping keep students engaged in the practice. If they don't see the relevance of a subject, they'll simply tune out.

That's why we have built up whole sections of content with topics that are interesting to young students. From the *Kids' Choice Awards* to *Fun Facts about Tigers*, there is something for all.

What's more, we add fresh content to this section each month, so you have a constantly growing library of content to work with.

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Reinforce other subjects during typing time

If that's not enough, you also have the power to create your own lessons, through the feature of Custom Lessons and Timed Tests.

This is without a doubt my favorite feature of EduTyping, as it enables you to create tailored content for your students that is relevant to other subjects they are learning and to create fun lessons they will enjoy.

For elementary school teachers I know that this is especially important, as keyboarding is just one of a dozen other subjects that you're responsible for teaching.

For example, if you've just covered a unit on Martin Luther King Jr., you can add a typing article cribbing content from the unit. Or, you can add vocabulary terms from science or math subjects.

The list of how you can use Custom Lessons is endless!

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The best part is the fact that all of our platform's features—like **instant feedback** and **tracking of speed, accuracy, and problem keys**—are all in place, giving you full flexibility with full benefits.

Stop students from building up bad habits

As world-renown playwright George Bernard Shaw once said,

"Success does not consist in never making mistakes but in never making the same one a second time."

Being the only person in history to win both a Nobel Prize *AND* an Academy Award, Shaw definitely knew a thing or two about success.

In fact, his advice is especially important for anyone who wants to succeed in typing.

You see, **every time you practice typing, your fingers build up muscle memory** to help them know where to go.

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When done correctly, this helps you type faster and more accurately.

However, if you do this incorrectly and keep making the same mistakes over and over again you'll be building up **bad muscle memory**, dooming you to a future filled with typos.

To prevent that from happening we designed a feature to **keep track of the keys that students tend to mess up on**.

With every lesson and timed test that students take, our program tracks their **"Problem Keys"** and creates a custom lesson for them to address them.

This helps to nip building bad muscle memory in the bud.

We recommend having students work on their problem keys at least once a week to correct their mistakes early on.

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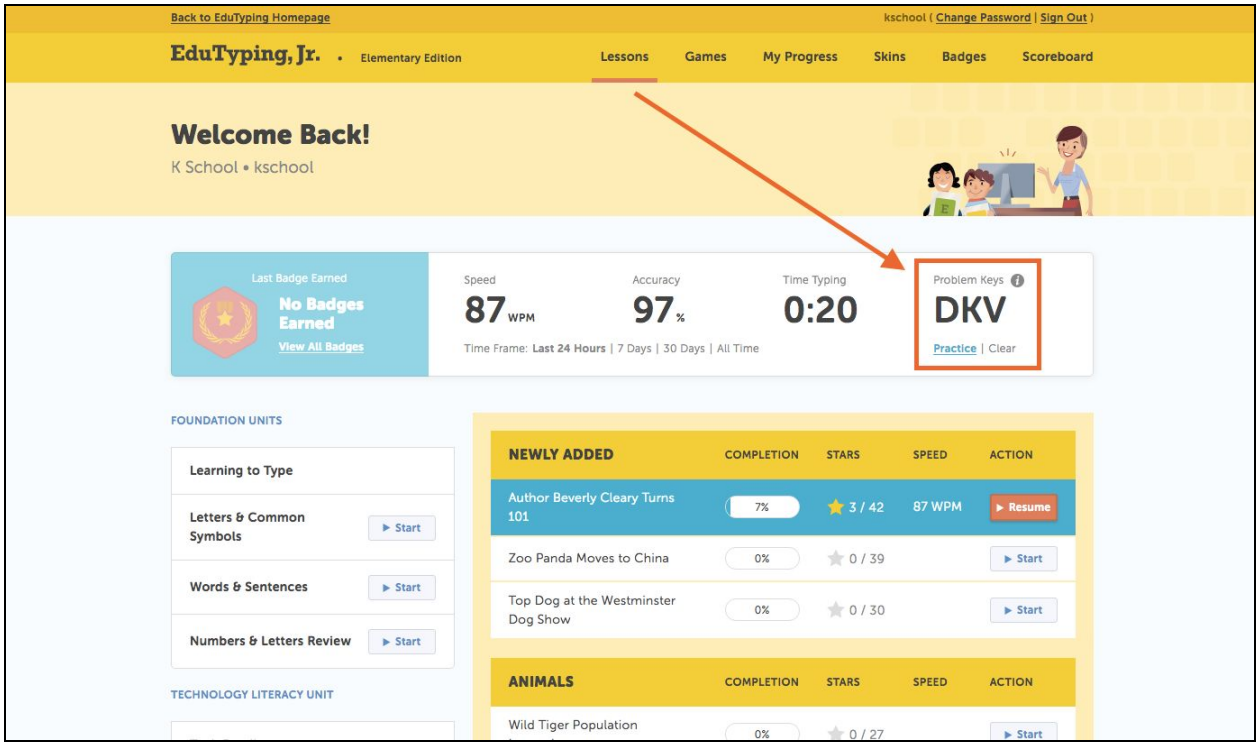
Students can access their Problem Key lessons from their lessons page.



Make typing EXTRA fun with games!

The final element to a well-rounded typing curriculum is of course: games.

Those who teach younger students are masters at turning absolutely any subject into a game. You know that anything otherwise will lose their attention in about 3 seconds.

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I know that while reading this guide, in the back of your mind you've already been thinking about how to turn these lessons into a bigger activity.

Well, before you strain yourself, let me just tell you that we've already got you covered.

Over the years we've developed a number of typing games that not only help reinforce typing skills, but are also fun!

These typing games are so fun and addicting that students won't want to stop practicing.

Though we have a number of games available, we've selected three here for you that we believe best fit Elementary students' abilities.

Keyboard Ninja
Good for: BEGINNERS

In this typing game, you type letters to slash fruit as the fly across the screen. This is a great exercise for beginner

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learners to drill in the layout of the keyboard, as you type just one character at a time.

Ninja Cat and Zombie Dinosaurs
Good for: BEGINNERS

Another great typing game for beginners, as you start with one letter at a time, in this game you press keys to zap the dinosaurs that are chasing you.

Tommy Q: Zombie Defender
Good for: ALL LEVELS

There's something about battling zombies that kids (and adults) just love! The typing challenges correspond to the lessons, so if you've just finished covering Home Row basics in class, you can let students play with just those letters.

When it comes to games, the only trouble is that students can get caught up in the time pressure and forget all about the finger placements they've been taught.

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So, when introducing a typing game to your students, make sure to remind them to keep their fingers on the home row, and to use the fingers they've learned to use for each key.

Two-finger typing may seem easier, at first, but remind them that the only way to get really fast is by using all ten fingers!

To help enforce correct finger placement, one option is to tell the class that their scores will be recorded, offering recognition or a prize for the highest three scores. Anyone who is found to be using two-finger typing or another incorrect form will be disqualified from the competition.

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Setting Benchmarks for your Class

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How do you set the standards for how well your students should be typing?

In this section we'll show you what criteria is used in measuring typing proficiency and how to determine the best benchmarks for your class.

What we're measuring:

> "**Words-per-minute (WPM)**" is the measure of a person's typing speed
>
> "**Accuracy**" denotes the number of mistyped characters.

Though we have some general recommendations by grade level, in order to assess the unique situation of your class, we recommend first letting them try out some of our lessons.

After a couple of lessons and timed tests, you can use the students' results to help you determine the appropriate benchmarks for your class.

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Generally we recommend selecting a target on the lower end of the results. From there, every 3-4 weeks you can reassess and raise the benchmarks. This is a great means of keeping your students motivated and challenged to achieve more!

Otherwise you can always refer to our general recommendations as follows:

Grade	WPM (Words per Minute)	Accuracy
K	5-7 WPM	80%
1	7-10 WPM	85%
2	10-12 WPM	85-88%
3	13-15 WPM	88%
4	15-18 WPM	90%
5	18-20 WPM	90%

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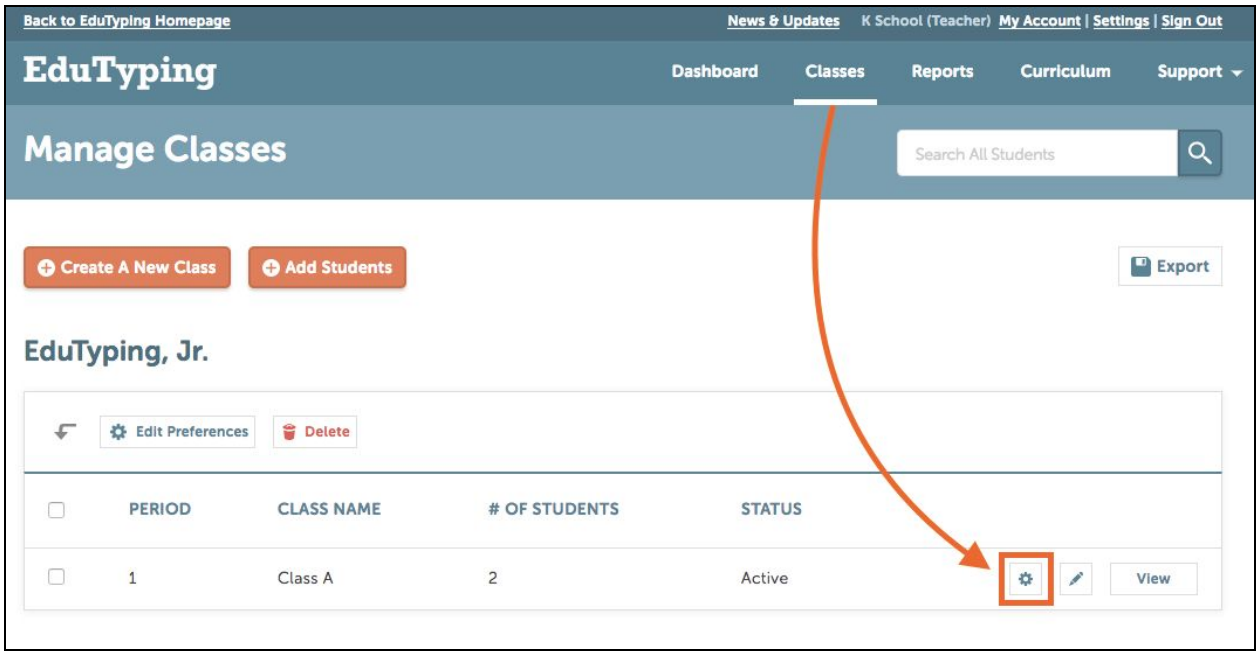
Automatic Grading

One of the biggest time savers for teachers is the automatic grading feature of EduTyping. You see, once you've set your benchmarks, the program will automatically generate Progress Reports and Grades based on the standards you've set.

Here's how to set that up:

While logged in to the Teacher Portal, go into your **Classes** and then press the little gear icon to the right of the class to **Edit Class Preferences**.



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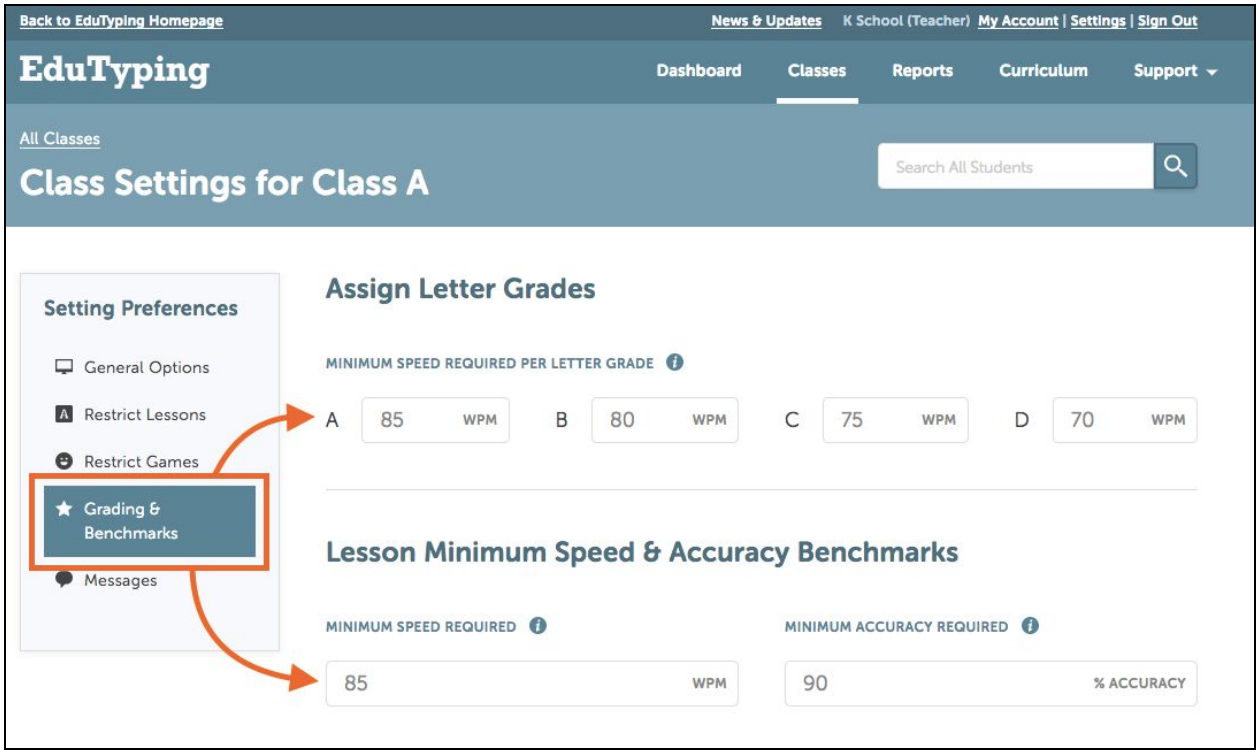
Select **Grading & Benchmarks** from the menu and you'll be able to assign minimum typing speeds per letter grade, as well as minimum speeds and accuracy for Benchmarks and Lesson Star Rewards.



Make sure to **Save All Changes** below.

Then, once you're ready to generate a progress report just click **Reports** in your menu bar and select the type of report to create and the class.

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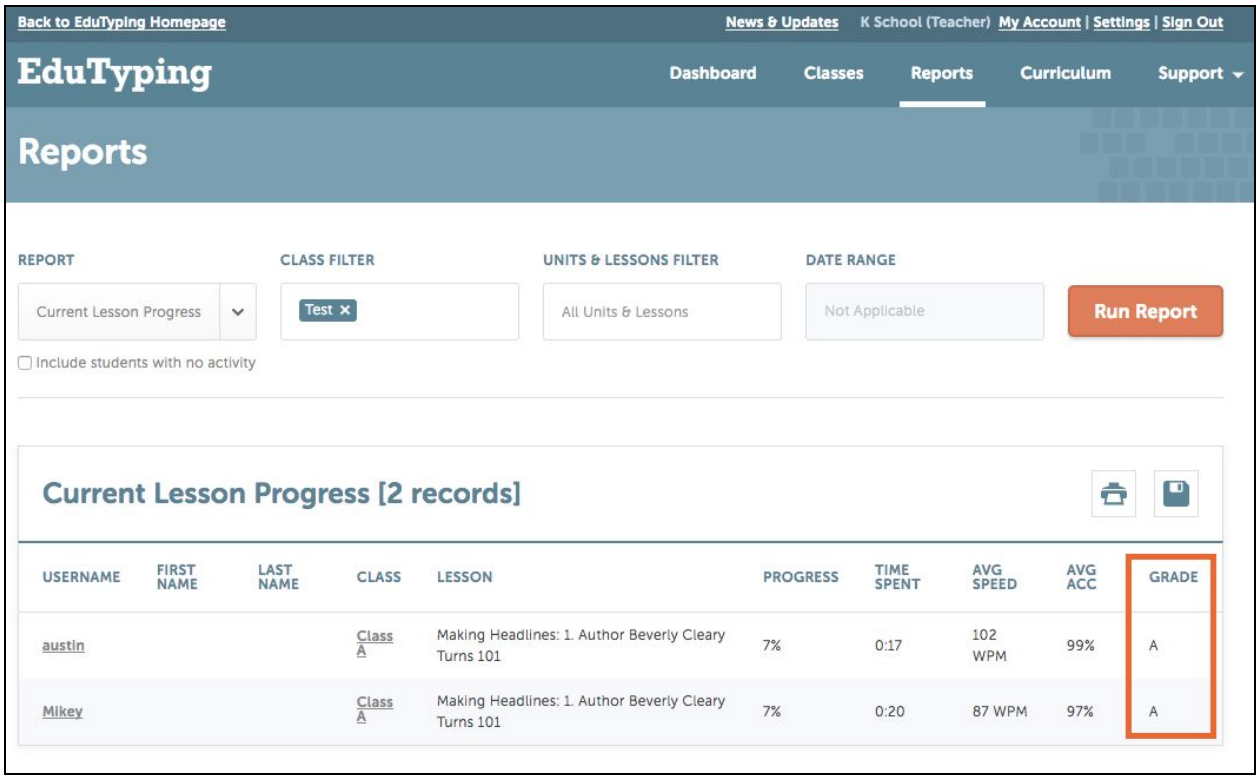

All the information you need—**WPM, accuracy, lessons completed, grades**—is all right there. Perfect for sharing with parents and administrators.

From there you can choose to either print the report or save it as a .csv file.

Voilá! With just a few clicks, you've completed your grading for the term.

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Completion Certificates

To reward students for their hard work and to keep them motivated, we've found that nothing does better than a Certificate of Completion!

As great as digital stars and badges can be, there's something about printed certificates that make things feel so much more real! And it's great for them to show off to their parents and friends.

Through the EduTyping platform you can create custom Certificates with ease.

From your class list select which students you want to create certificates for and press **Print Certificate**.

Make sure to have their First and Last Names listed so that it auto-populates the certificates.

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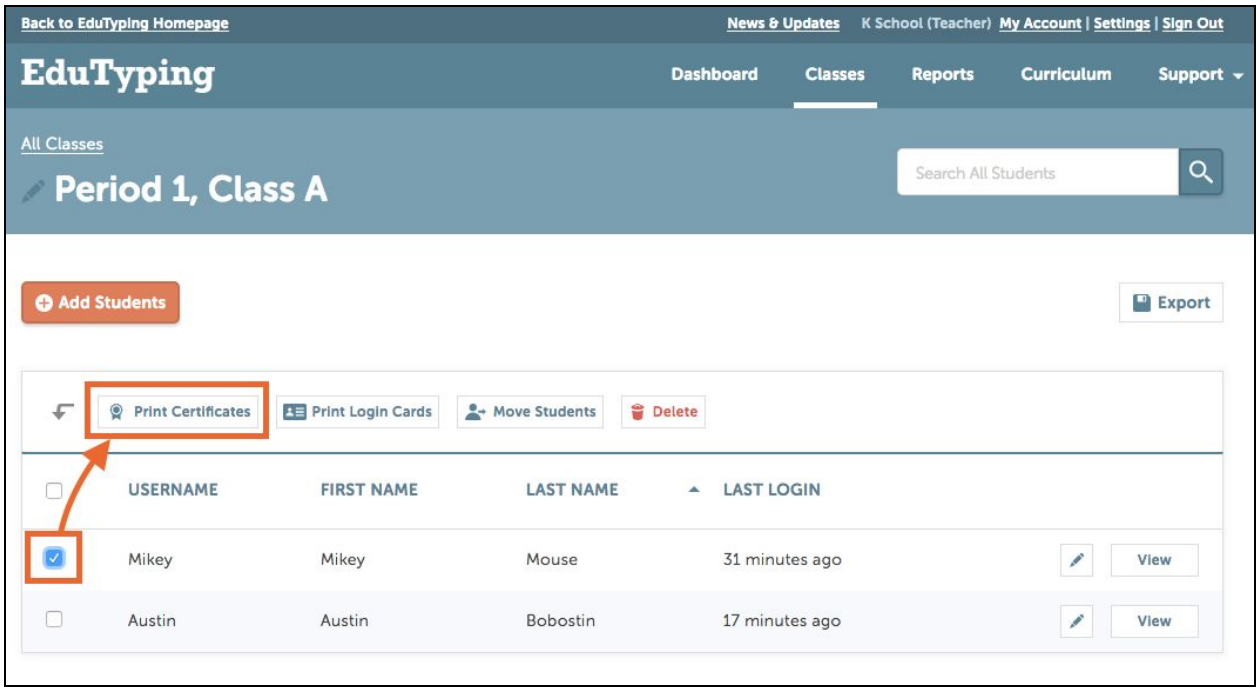

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Conclusion

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As mentioned at the start of this guide, there are a number of elements that are required to help students to thoroughly develop their typing skills.

Through years of study, we've developed this combination of EduTyping lessons, Relevant content, Cross-curricular lessons, Problem key practice, and Games to not only teach students the necessary habits, but to also keep them engaged, tackle their bad habits, and to help boost their speed.

We hope that this guide is helpful to you as you brave your way into teaching this new subject! If you have any questions or issues, you can always contact support here.

For more useful teaching tips and strategies, don't miss the EduTyping blog, where we post fresh Typing Activities each week to give your students more variety and hands-on practice in typing.

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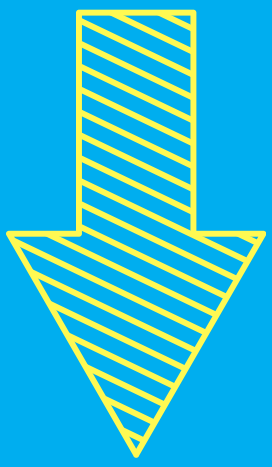
If you're not using the EduTyping platform yet, sign up for a FREE 90-day Trial!

See for yourself how EduTyping can make this your easiest school year yet!



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