

A General Overview of Computer Classes at Manchester Elementary School

*** This year, all MES students visit the computer lab for at least 30 minutes each week ***

Kindergarten and first grade students visit the computer lab to learn new vocabulary and how to use and care for our equipment, including laptops and headphones. One focus skill for these students is using the laptop trackpad to click, drag and drop, although mouse control is still available as well. We use early learning internet sites and software programs to explore computer art, reading, math and phonic skills. We spend quite a bit of time on the Starfall website which can be accessed from home via our Portaportal (under K-1 Learn to Read).

Second grade students expand upon the first grade program. They learn the very basics of word processing and begin early keyboarding. We have a new networked Keyboarding program called Type to Learn Jr. We enjoy drawing using Tuxpaint, and will use this fun tool to illustrate mathematical models. (Tuxpaint is a free internet download for art and drawing if you would like to explore the program at home.) We also benefit our learning using many of the Portaportal linked sites.

Third grade students continue to further develop skills from above, and really begin to focus on home row typing abilities using a fun networked program called Type to Learn 4. Dance Mat Typing is another great (and free) program we use. As these skills improve, we introduce ways of using the computer for book reports, and importing graphics as well as writing narratives about our Tuxpaint drawings. We also introduce styles of graphing.

Fourth grade students also use the Type to Learn 4 program to further hone their keyboarding speed and accuracy. Additionally, they come to the lab bi-weekly in small groups to focus specifically on developing writing and word processing skills. Fourth graders also explore research techniques, including citing sources, presentation skills, digital camera use, computer graphing, internet safety and much more.

Fifth grade students become proficient typists and, throughout the year, further evolve their comfort level in computer technology using more advanced tables and spreadsheets, computer graphing, slide show creation, internet research skills, computer safety and digital citizenship. Many of these competencies come together during the learning activities associated with the fun and popular annual Fifth Grade Stock Market project late in the year.