Harold Byrd, *Project Coordinator for the FunReader project*

FunReader Software Proves Exciting

(From page 2)

response it has generated so far.

"It's exciting to work on software that is so readily accepted by children. They have been very enthusiastic about using FunReader."

FunReader is a quite a jump from the "Dick and Jane" primers that helped most of us learn to read. It should prove much more effective. If such a program could be purchased, it would cost HISD more than a million dollars to provide elementary schools with just the software, not to mention the cost of hardware. By developing and producing it through the DOT, schools will be supplied with the programs at a fraction of the cost. Not only that, it has been developed for the Apple II hardware already in use throughout the district.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of FunReader is that HISD will have the distinction not only of developing the program but of being one of the first districts in the country to adopt a comprehensive computer-aided reading program that uses digitized speech. That should make it a lot easier to say good-bye to Dick and Jane.

Tech Fair

(From page 1)

week for three special groups: counselors, deans of instruction, and librarians. Counselors will come to the DOT on Tuesday, April 22, in two shifts, at 9:00 a.m. and l:00 p.m. They will hear Dr. Patricia Smith of the University of Texas at Austin. She will speak on "Computer-Assisted Instruction and Its Effect on Achievement."

On Wednesday, April 23, deans of instruction will be invited to the DOT to hear Gary Bitter of Arizona State University at 2:00 p.m. Dr. Bitter is a nationally known computer educator and computer literacy textbook author. He will speak on "Integrating Technology into the Curriculum."

On Thursday, April 24, librarians are invited to the DOT to hear Dr. Chris Dede from the University of Houston at Clear Lake. The morning session at 9:00 is designed for elementary librarians; the afternoon session at l:l0 is designed for secondary librarians. Dr. Dede, a futurist, will speak on "Technology and its Impact on School Librarians."

On Friday, April 25, special-education personnel are invited to view a demonstration of a new software program now under development at the Department of Technology. "DOT-CAR," as it is called, is a computer-assisted assessment program that automates the maintenance of data files on special-education students. It also generates required reports.

The Technology Fair itself will be held on Saturday, April 26, l0:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at the HISD Administration Building. Technology Trivia Playoffs will begin at l0:00 a.m. Student, school, family, and vendor exhibits will be displayed in the building halls, atrium, and cafeteria all day.

This year, the first place winner of the family contest will receive a free weekend at the Astrodome Marriott Hotel. Second and third place winners will receive Sunday brunch certificates at the Galleria Marriott.

Commercial exhibitors from such companies as Apple, SRA, and Mindscape will be showing off their latest products. At l:00 p.m. is a synthesizer concert.

Other on-going activities include the Techmobile, a state-of-the-art mobile TV production van, Macintosh graphics demonstrations, a robot from the Houston Police Department, and computerized astronomy demonstrations.

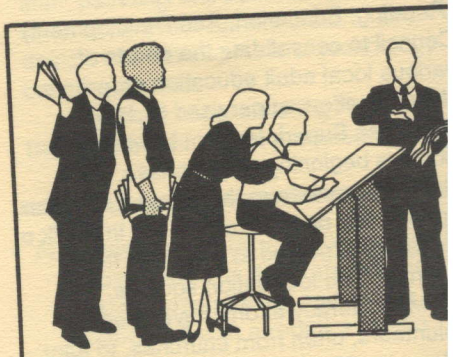
The Awards Ceremony begins at 3:00 p.m. Saturday. A special guest this year is David Huang, a l0-year-old from Sugarland who is a sophomore pre-med student at the University of St. Thomas. If he were an ordinary lad, David would be in the 5th grade. Instead, the extraordinarily gifted youngster is racing through a full load of college courses. His favorites are organic chemistry, math, and computer science.

In spite of his genius-level I.Q., those who know David insist that he is "just a kid who loves Scooby Doo." He is looking forward to mixing at the Tech Fair with kids his own age, and his description of how he has used computers in his unusual academic career definitely should be worth hearing.

School winners in several categories will receive Apple IIe computer systems.

(See page 5.)

Teachers may want to inspire their students for this year's fair by letting them watch last year's keynote speech by Rawson "Vid Kid" Stovall. His talk on "Is There Life after Joysticks?" is being broadcast regularly on HISD's cable network, which is available to all schools.



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to the editor.

Rainbow Edition

FunReader FunWriter

Starter Lab

PRESCRIPTION LEARNING

THE INTERACTIVE PROGRAM CAN BE A SOLUTION FOR TEACHERS . . .

. . . especially those who need access to multisensory materials that utilize a systematic approach. The FUNREADER•FUNWRITER Program offers teachers instructional support because it has been designed to supplement basal programs already being used in school.

All of the materials are modular in format, allowing them to be handled easily in both classroom, laboratory or resource room situations. While students are involved in the reading and writing instructional strands, special enrichment activities encourage students to develop related verbal and handwriting skills. The teacher's materials include optional activities which can be used to customize instruction for selected students or classes having special needs.

ON-COMPUTER ACTIVITIES . . .

1. Instructional Units

FUNREADER provides a variety of voiced skill-specific units to deliver direct instruction in *phonics, sight vocabulary, word meaning* and *comprehension.* The content within each unit revolves around a particularly selected children's story that encompasses all necessary phonetic and sight vocabulary for the accompanying lessons. QUEST Reading and PASS PLUS Programs lend additional reinforcement, creating a complete reading and language arts skills continuum at each level.

2. Skill Builders

In addition to the key instructional lessons, students also have the opportunity to practice skills that are presented in creative game formats. "Sound Blocks" and "Word Web," voiced computer games, help students assimilate phoneme recognition and sight vocabulary. The programs also provide an entertaining way to give students with retention problems another avenue to strengthen memory skills.

3. Word Processing

FUNWRITER, a primary-level word processor with large type face, serves as the vehicle making the transition between reading and writing. Students learn rudimentary *keyboarding* skills and then readily begin to express their own thoughts and ideas with colorful pictures and words. An accompanying "Talking Dictionary" gives students access to over 100 phonetically irregular sight vocabulary words. Two additional word processors, including a talking word processor, help a wide range of students develop higher level thinking and problem-solving skills.

4. Story Starters

The FUNWRITER component also includes simple prewriting word processing "shells" which give students a place from which to begin to write their own stories. The "Story Starters" are correlated with the content of the FUNREADER stories to give children a readymade conceptual base. Another program, "Idea Spinner" helps generate story ideas in the form of files from which youngsters can select appealing characters, plots and settings to use in composing their stories.

5. Enrichment Courseware

Rounding out the curriculum are a number of other enriching courseware programs that deliver a further extended range of learning opportunities. From practicing the alphabet to writing poetry, the programs give students a veritable rainbow of enjoyable activities intended to enhance their creative thinking and problem solving experiences.

OFF COMPUTER ACTIVITIES . . .

1. Blackline Masters and Student Workbooks

The computer instructional lessons are accompanied by coordinated 16-page booklets in blackline master format which contain printed copies of the lessons' stories and related reading and writing activities such as *penmanship, hand-eye coordination tasks* and *spelling.* QUEST Reading workbooks gives youngsters even more skill-specific written practice.

2. Teacher Materials

"Activity Cards" for reading and writing give the teacher access to specific program objectives, focus scenarios, resource information and suggestions for enrichment activities.

A clearly written "Teacher's Guide" provides comprehensive user information for each of the courseware lessons and includes an extensive content overview for the entire program. Lesson plans incorporate methods for student introduction to each lesson as well as ways to prepare students to work with the materials independently.

Testing and Management

Prescription Learning offers both placement and criterion-referenced testing, including laser testing, for placing students into appropriate levels and monitoring their progress. A computer-based management system enables the teacher to maintain a wide variety of student records and allows immediate access to student information. A number of related printouts, such as the "Student Prescription," keep youngsters on track within their learning plan.

Service and Support

Prescription Learning provides educational and technical support services which include hardware installation, technical maintenance of equipment, and on site inservice with follow-up training delivered by an educational consultant. These special services assure that the instructional program is fully operational at all times, generating a learning environment that is positive and meaningful for all students.

I. Design and Development Products

Program	Status	Actions items
Instructional		
1. Winning With TEAMS (TEAMS tutorials G3-11)	G11 Language Arts done being assessed in schools	Development/ Assessment to be completed
2. Take Command (Language Arts Remediation; G6-Adult)	Six units complete	Development/ Assessment to be completed
3. FunReader/Writer (HISD Primary Reading Courseware)	development complete used in HISD schools	negotiate contract
4. Harmony (ESL)	development complete used in HISD schools marketed nationwide	renegotiate contract
5. FunWriter (Echo version) (Primary Word Processor)	development complete	negotiate contract
6. DOT Writer (Word Processor G3-12)	development complete used in HISD schools	provide technical support
Administrative		
1. Student Attendance Tracking	development complete used in HISD schools	provide technical support
2. Fixed Assests Inventory	development complete used by DOT offices	
3. Activity Funds Accountant	development complete	
4. DOT Filer	development stopped	
5. Fail Safe	development complete	

II. Developer Status

Registered and Certified Developer: Apple Computer
Registered and Certified Developer: IBM

III. Developmental Tools

Utilities	Function
1. Speech	create speech files for Ufonic and Echo speech systems
2. Graphics	Create graphics for Apple, Macintosh IBM computers and DOT developed authoring systems
3. Programming Language Utilities in C, Basic, Assembly, Turbo Pascal	Modules increase programming efficiency, decrease production time
4. Design Helper	Assist in preparation of text based screens for nonprogrammers
5. Bar Code Reader	Allows bar code data to be input into programs

IV. Authoring Systems

1. Test Authoring System	Will accept tests for any content area with data that conforms to program parameters (including speech)
2. Tutorial Authoring System	Will accept tutorials for any content area where content can be structured according to program parameters
3. Literacy Authoring System	Will accept language arts lessons (including phonics, sight vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading comprehension) for students and adults lacking literacy skills
4. Primary Language Arts Authoring System	Create language arts lessons (with phonics, sight vocabulary, comprehension, reading) for students and adults lacking literacy skills
5. Game generator a. Sound Blocks b. Word Web c. Word Maze d. Computer Bug e. Word Race f. Grammer Arcade	Create drill and practice activities for any content area matching program parameters

V. Potential uses of programs, authoring tools and utilities in HCC

Program	Areas of potential use
Software	
1. FunReader/Writer (Levels 0-2 and up)	Adults lacking literacy skills, especially for those with children using program in schools
2. Take Command (Levels 0-5 and up)	Adults, dropouts lacking literacy skills
3. Winning With TEAMS (Levels 3-11)	Adults and students seeking GED
4. Harmony (ESL) (LEP level 1)	Adults and students with poor English skills
5. Administrative programs	Source/reference materials for programming courses Use in areas of administrative need
Authoring Systems	
1. Test System	Create tests for academic/training purposes
2. Tutorial System	Create tutorials for content areas of need
3. Literacy lesson System	Create speech based customized lessons for students lacking literacy skills. Revise program for HCC/academic purpose
4. Primary language arts lesson system	Create language arts lessons for students students lacking literacy skills. Revise program for HCC/academic or commercialpurposes.
5. Game generator a. Sound Blocks b. Word Web c. Word Maze d. Computer Bug e. Word Race	Create games for HCC use and commercial sale
Utilities	
1. 1. Speech	Create speech files on Ufonic or Echo speech systems for HCC developed programs. Sell speech generating services comercially
2. Graphics	Create professional graphics HCC developed software, administrative support, for sale commercially, or to support desktop publishing program
3. Programming Language Utilities	Use as reference/source materials for academic program or for develpmental purposes
4. Design Helper	Use for develpmental or academic purposes