

# Apples help open doors to learning

By PHYLLIS DEWAR

"Mrs. Lowe, come look at this!" called Hugh Davis of Murfreesboro just after he had produced a Logo design which needed nothing more than admiration.

Can students who have just finished grades three through five begin to learn computer programming?

"Emphatically yes!" say Peggy Lowe and Phyllis Dewar.

During the regular school year, Peggy teaches fifth grade at Riverview Graded School in Murfreesboro and Phyllis is a member of college's Science Department. These two ladies taught a class during the summer using Apple Logo, a programming language which involves moving a "turtle" around the monitor's screen. One of the many benefits of Logo is that the students gain a strong feel for the size of an angle and other concepts of geometry, although the word "geometry" is not used. They also begin to see how smaller programs can be woven into more complex ones. All of this can be done with a minimum of keystrokes, an advantage for those less familiar with a computer's keyboard.

## Word Processing

The students were also introduced to AppleWorks for word processing, using the computer as a typewriter. They wrote about themselves, camp, dreams and pets.

AppleWorks is an integrated program which includes word



**TEAMWORK**—Jessie Pulley of Murfreesboro, and Jennifer Baker of Ahoskie, two of the 40 students enrolled in the class, enjoy working together on a project.

processing, data base and spreadsheet. Mrs. Dewar said, "I am not aware of AppleWorks being used for students at this level. However, they manipulated the software with surprising ease. One benefit of using a program of this caliber is that students don't outgrow it. An analogy which seems appropriate is that very young students can perform classical music at a grand piano. However, they are not required to begin by playing an entire Beethoven Sonata."

## Eager to Learn

The students seemed eager to come to the class. Many arrived early to get some extra time at the keyboard. Younger siblings, parents and grandparents stood in

**"Computers are neater than basketball!"**

—Rob Burke  
Murfreesboro

the doorway to watch; some ventured inside.

Teachers of courses such as this hear lots of interesting comments. Mrs. M. P. Futrell of Woodland, herself a teacher in the Woodland-Olney Elementary School said, "What are you doing to these boys? I can't keep them at home." Mrs. Futrell provided transportation for her grandsons, Maurice and Darrin Futrell of Rich Square.

The ultimate compliment must have come from Jonathan Rose of Seaboard as Phyllis Dewar helped him edit one of his programs. Said he, "Gosh, you type as good as my Mamma!" Jonathan's mother, Sue Rose, is a college secretary.

"Neat" seems to be the most popular word for this age group. When students were asked what do you think of computers or what do you think of the project you have just done with the AppleWorks word processor or what did your parents think of your design, the response was always the same.

Neat!

In fact, when Rob Burke of Murfreesboro was asked how computers compare to basketball he replied, "They're neater than basketball!" Apparently Rob believes that, too, because he enjoyed coming back to the classroom to practice after the other students had gone home.

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**EXCITING EXPERIENCES**—Jonathan Rose, left, of Seaboard and Picott Harrington, Lewiston, receive instruction from Phyllis

Dewar while Tashadda Eason of Murfreesboro, observes the procedures in the computer class for youngsters.

Rob's father, Bob Burke, is head basketball coach at Chowan.

## Long Trips to Class

Mrs. Beverly Harrington drove from Lewiston each day so that her son, Picott, could be involved in the course. This mother said to her son, "I just don't have time to drive to Murfreesboro on Friday." Then she admitted that Picott looked so disappointed she conceded.

Brent Mann and Jason Barnes, neighbors from Pendleton, were the last to leave after class in the afternoon. As they waited patiently for a printer to make copies of their turtle graphics, Jason commented, "Brent and I have decided that we will go into business together. We both want to be engineers so we'll need to know a lot about computers."

Then after the printing had finished and a mother was waiting, Brent said, in his own quiet, deliberate manner, "Do you have something planned for us to do with the computers next summer?"

These prospective engineers just might decide to use AppleWorks as a business tool.

In summary, the Apple Class for Grades 3-5 did not follow national trends. Much has been written and said recently about the small number of females who feel comfortable with computers and the need to encourage them to move in this direction. However, more than half of the students in this course were girls.

As Reba Dacus of Ahoskie admired the printout of one of her original Logo designs, she commented, "It looks like a broken down house just after a party!" Perhaps at this age, girls haven't yet learned that it's not appropriate for them to enjoy computers. Hopefully they will NEVER learn that. May the party continue!

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June 27, 1986

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