

The Resource Center

By MARGARET MORABITO

RUN's technical manager Margaret Morabito has extensive experience in the educational field, having taught college and high school English and writing, as well as Basic programming. She has also been involved in curriculum development and has written educational software for use on the C-64.

Although millions of people use their C-64s at home, credit is not often given to Commodore computers as being tools for serious applications. If you ask anyone who doesn't own a Commodore to describe one, you will invariably get the reply, "Oh, that's the inexpensive game computer."

A Gap in Our Education

One area that has been covered only vaguely in computer magazines is that of serious educational applications. Most coverage of education in Commodore-specific magazines has been limited to spot reviews of unrelated educational software and program listings of math and word games. Furthermore, if you read educational journals, you will find scant coverage of Commodore computers. (Commodore Business Machines is helping to overcome this to a limited extent by placing C-128 advertisements in major educational journals.)

Many educators are looking specifically for information on how to use computers (any computers) in their school systems, from administrative work to classroom teaching to home reinforcement. Community leaders and school board members are constantly being bombarded with the request to get computers into the schools, but they don't have anywhere to turn for advice on what equipment to buy, what software works best, or

One of the best-kept secrets in the U.S. is that Commodore computers are ideal for educational applications. So, let's start spreading the word. Through this column, we'll share ideas, methods, success or failure stories and suggestions on how to make the most of your Commodore inside and outside the classroom.

even how to implement computer usage throughout the various disciplines within the school.

People in these positions would be well advised to take a look at the ability of Commodore computers to meet their needs. Unfortunately, there has been no concerted effort to let these people know that the Commodore computer is an excellent choice for educators, and that its capabilities reach far beyond that of just home entertainment. There also has been no effort to teach Commodore owners how to use their equipment and software for practical and directed educational applications, at home or in school.

Those of you who own a C-64 or C-128 already realize the power, versatility and cost-effectiveness of your computer system. Commodore computers are the predominant choice for

the home because of these factors. What is amazing is that in the U.S., where C-64s and VIC-20s have been top sellers for four years, Commodore computers are not more prevalent at all levels of education.

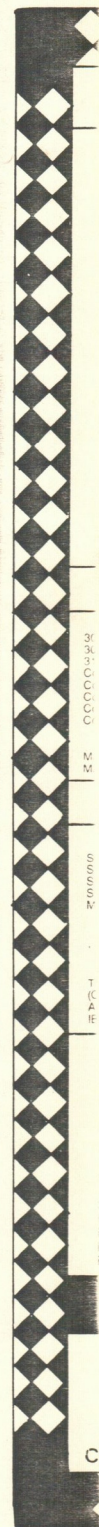
If you own a Commodore, then you know that this computer surpasses others in the areas schools need to consider: the price of hardware and software, the availability of both, the versatility of the system and the presence of Commodores in the homes of many students. What you may not know is exactly how the computer can be a useful and productive tool in the educational process.

An Education Column

This month, *RUN* is beginning ongoing coverage of Commodore computers for educational purposes, with the hope of helping to fill this void for all concerned.

In this column, a serious effort will be made to let parents, teachers, administrators and students know exactly how Commodore computers are being used throughout the U.S. and Canada for teaching, learning and administrative projects. The goal is to share information among all interested groups and to help home users and professional educators apply educational teaching and learning concepts through the medium of the computer, particularly Commodore computers. This information will come from those of you who are already using your Commodores for educational purposes; actual case studies will be presented from the information gathered.

All age groups of learners will be addressed, from pre-schoolers through college level, including adults in con-



tinuing education coursework. Furthermore, all disciplines will be covered. Personal computers are obviously used for teaching computer programming, but there are a myriad of other non-computer subjects, such as writing, history, geometry, foreign language study, art, design and music—to name just a few—that can be enhanced with the use of a computer.

Specific peripherals and related hardware combinations will be addressed. Types of software (such as drill and practice, simulations, grade-book managers, etc.) will be mentioned, as well as specific software products that have been tested in real learning and teaching settings. Recommendations from those of you who are using particular hardware, peripherals and software combinations will be shared in this column. Also, whenever possible, summaries of recommended teaching plans will be included.

We would also like to share your experiences in acquiring your equipment. How does a school system with limited money get a computer program started?

Have you been able to measure an improvement in academic perfor-

mance that has resulted from the use of the computer in your home or school? A big question on educators' minds is whether the computer is actually a boon to the teaching and learning process.

If you have been able to measure a change in a child's learning ability that was a direct result of his or her interaction with computers, please let us know. It would be useful to be able to share information that reveals computers as being a positive force and to specify in what areas they are most effective.

Is your school office using computers to keep track of administrative chores? All aspects of the educational realm will be covered in The Resource Center. The end goal is to provide many hints and tips on the combinations of equipment, software, subject matter and lesson plans that work most effectively. When a particular combination doesn't work, we would like to mention that, too.

A Call for Help

If you are using a Commodore VIC-20, C-64, Plus/4, C-16 or C-128 at home or in a school—college, continuing education, high school, ele-

mentary or preschool—send me a letter outlining the equipment you are using, the subject area or areas in which you are teaching or learning, and any other details that you would like to share with our readers. Let me know of your successes and the problems that you have encountered. (Canadians have been in the forefront of using Commodore computers for education, so I am especially interested in letters from those readers.)

I will contact you individually for further details, and if your situation is chosen for this column, I will include your information and (if you don't mind) your name and address, so that others can ask you questions.

Next month, we will take a look at how one school system is using multi-user networking to link together a classroom of C-64s and VIC-20s and how that school initially got started with computers. R

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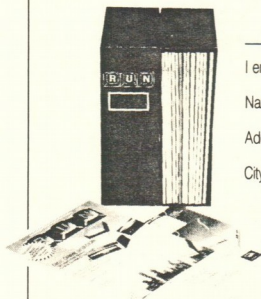
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