Keystrokes to Literacy: Using the Computer as a Learning Tool for Adult Beginning Readers

A Book Review by Kimberly S. McCoy

Are you a teacher, administrator, volunteer or tutor interested in how computers can assist you with teaching your adult learn r how to read and write? If your answer is yes, then I have the book for you. *KEYSTROKES TO LITERACY: Using the Computer as a Learning Tool for Adult Beginning Readers* is the tool you are missing.

KEYSTROKES TO LITERAC covers four of the major computer applications: word processing, database managing, spreadsheets, and graphic applications. Antonia Stone, author of *KEYSTROKES TO LITERACY*, states that the purpose of this text is to provide an opportunity within the classroom for adult learners to feels comfortable and to be knowledgeable of some of the most popular business applications in the workforce. One of the major plusses of this boo k is that the topics have been taken from literacy curriculum. This book does an excellent job incorporating basic computer skills with lessons that were created by tutors that you can use in your classroom. Some of these lessons include: erasing words that don't belong in a short-vowel sound activity, editing sentences that contain extra letters or spaces, learning how to eliminate words that don't belong in a certain category, inserting letters, weekdays and number that are out of sequence, and vowels that are missing from a particular activity. There are no lit racy prerequisites, which means that *KEYSTROKES TO LITERACY* can be tailored to fit your students' personal needs.

KEYSTROKES TO LITERACY starts by outlining the general approach, how to use it, guiding principles, and using activities. Before jumping straight into word processing activities, which is Part 2 of the book, Part 1 deals with Computer Comfort. for someone who has never used a computer, the first time can be very intimidating. The author suggests that you allow th learner to first play with the computer by entering inserting

characters, saving, deleting, backspacing and printing. Allowing the learner sufficient time to actually play with the computer functions will provide the learner with a certain comfort level with using the keyboard and mouse. Stone also suggested using reinforcement activities a well as follo -up activities so that the learner will feels comfortable with the skill that has just been covered. in Part 1, the follow-up activities are divided into three levels: very beginning readers, those who can read a little, and for the relatively proficient. Providing an opportunity for the learner to complete reinforcement and follo -up activities also lets the learner feel secure with one application or concept before beginning the next lesson.

As the saying goes, the best way to learn is by doing, and *KEYSTROKES TO LITERACY* is promoting that philosophy. It doesn't matter if you have a PC, Macintosh, old or new, you can put *KEYSTROKES TO LITERACY* to work in your classroom. If you have the will, *KEYSTROKES TO LITERACY* is a way.

Stone, Antonia. (1996). *KEYSTROKES TO LITERACY: Using the Computer as a Learning Tool for Adult Beginning Readers* (Part 1, computer comfort). Chicago, Illinois: National Textbook Company, a division of NTC Publishing Group.195 pages. ISBN 0-8442-0679-2.

Unfortunately, this book is out of print and can't be be ordered from the publishing company. However, it can be ordered from Amazon on-line bookstore located at www.amazon.com, Barnes and Nobles bookstore on-line at www.barnesandnoble.com or Borders bookstore on-line at www.borders.com for $23.95. It can also be borrowed from the Ohio Literacy Resource Center by completing the request form found on page 10.

Used Computers
for Educational Programs

The Computers for Education progrm of Ohio places donated computers in schools throughout Ohio. The program is a collaborative effort of business, government, and non-profit groups designed to improve access to computer technology at a low cost to schoo s and communities.

Businesses donate used computer equipment. Ohio prison inmates refurbish the equipment whil learning computer skills. Needy schoo ls receive the equipment as it becomes available. The program participation fe for each computer is $89. Dot matrix printers are available for $29, ink jet printers are $49, and laser printers are $149. Monitors and CPUs are warranted for one year. The y currently have 486 computers available. The computerscome preloaded with *New Deal* (similar to Windows). the computers are no t equipped with CD ROM drives, so if you want to load software from a CD ROM disk, you will need to have a portable CD ROM drive. Equipment must be picked up a warehouses located in Cleveland, Columbus, or Trumbull County.

Some ABLE sites in Ohio have acquired equipment through this program. A note of caution - if you are considering purchasing a used computer, make a list of your technology requirements first to make sure the computer will suit your needs. (e.g. How much RAM do I need to go on the Internet? What are the minimum system requirements for the software I want to run?) If you're not sure what your technology requirements are, call technical support at the OLRC at (800) 756-2897 ext. 23 and they can offer advice on helping you determine your technology needs.

For more information, you can visit the Computers for Education Program of Ohio Web site at http://www.benedict.org/home.htm . An application form can be downloaded from their site, or you may request an application through their toll free phone number (888) 642-9003.

Whether you have a computer or not, there are

Y2K Checklist
For the Non-Techie

some issues that you need to consider before January 1, 2000. Y2K has the potential to interrupt every area of your electronic life from your personal computer to you bank account. The three things that Y2K could affect are the hardware, software, and files on a computer. Y2 stands for Year 2 K=1000 (as in kilobytes). Programmers (Individuals who write the code for software applications) used two digit numbers when coding instead of four. To illustrate, programmers used 79 in the code that represented 1979, 98 for 1998 and 99 for 1999. The problem is that computer systems or software might not recognize that 00 should represent 2000 and not 1900. If computer systems or software thinks 00 represent 1900 it could cause major problems at banks, gas stations or utility companies, just to name a few. No need to panic, you still have plenty of time to prepare for th unexpected.

Computer checklist

One common misconception is that if a computer was purchased between 1998 and 1999, the system i compliant. There is a very good chance that the system is okay; nevertheless, I would still recommend double-checking the entire system. For example, even if the operating system is compliant the software may not be. In order to determine if a computer, at home or at work, is complia t some research must be conducted. Start by contacting the manufacturer of the computer, the operating systems and software companies. Many companies have already tested their systems and are providing free patches via the Internet that can be downloaded and installed to fix problems (Patches: a piece of software that fixes a problem or adds features). There are also several inexpensive software packages that you can purchase that will test the computer system fo you.

For Macintosh users the manufacturer of the computer and operating systems will be the same, fo more information see www.apple.com/about year2000/y2ksw.html>. However, if you are using an IBM compatible computer, more than likely you are using one of the Microsoft operating systems (Windows 3.1, 95, 98 or NT) and the manufacturer of the computer could be Gateway, IBM, Packard Bell, Dell, or Compaq, just to name a few. To obtain Y2K information about Microsoft operating system, please visit their Y2K Website at www. microsoft.com/y2k. Microsoft and Macintosh both have complete and detailed information regarding Y2K and how to check your system to determine if it is Y2 compliant. Contact information about the manufacturers of various computer systems and software companies are located on page 3 of this Tech Talk.

Tech Talk

Household checklist

Now that the computer is Y2K compliant, it is time to consider the household issues. Some items the OLR tech team recommends addressing include:

✓ Keeping a complete and detailed paper trail of your important documents such as bank statements, credit card accounts, credit reports, investment accounts, loans, utilities, etc. Compare your last three or fou months statements (Sept -December) with your 2000 statements to make sure everything adds up
✓ Making sure you have a full tank of gas before 12:00 a.m. on December 31, 1999
✓ Buying a portable radio (that doesn't re quire electricity)
✓ Having a flashlight with extra batteries (avoid using candles)
✓ Stocking the cabinets with non-perishable foods, enough to last 2 full weeks
✓ Having plenty of water available (store distilled or spring water in sealed, unbreakable containers)
✓ Withdrawing extra crash (ATM's and credit cards may not work properly
✓ If you are taking medication, ask your doctor to provide you with a month's supply.

(For a complete checklist on Y2K, please go to th American Red Cross web page located at www.redcross.org/safety/Y2K.html

The truth of the matter is, no one really knows what's going to happen, but it's better to be safe than sorry when the clock strikes 12:01A.M. on January 1, 2000!

MAJOR SOFTWAR COMPANIES

Contact Information: Computer Manufacturers, Software & Hardware Companies

- **Corel** (WordPerfect, Quattro, Paradox, etc.) www.corel.com
- **Intuit** (Quicken, Quickbooks, Turbo Tax, Macin Tax, etc.) www.intuit.com (Click on year 2000 and "Find your Product")

- **Lotus** (Lotus Notes, cc: Mail, 1-2-3, Approach, etc.) www.lotus.com/home.nsf/welcome/ newsviews (Click on News and Views)
- **Microsoft** (Word, Excel, Access, Explorer, etc.) www.microsoft.com/y2k
- **Netscape** www.home.netscape.com/products/year2000/
- **Symantec** (Norton Antivirus, Norton Utilities, etc.) www.symantec.com/y2k/y2k.html

MAJOR COMPUTER MANUFACTURERS
- **Acer** www.acer.com.tw/service/y2k
- **Compaq** www.compaq.com/year2OOO
- **Dell** www.dell.com/year2OOO
- **Gateway** www.gateway.com (click on Year 2000)
- **Micron** support.micronpc.com/year2000/
- **NEC** www.nectech.com/y2k
- **Toshiba** www.toshiba.com/hidden.html (Click on Year 2000)
- **IBM** www.ibm.com (Click on Year 2000 solutions)
- **Packard Bell** www.packardbell.com (Click on Year 2000)

GENERIC HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE FIXES
For hardware (BIOS/CLOCKS) download any of the following from c/net's www.y2k.com
- **BUG FIX YEAR 2000 SOLUTION**
  Cost: Free
  Platorm (s): Windows 3.x/95/98
  Checks: PC clocks, systems, BIOS
- **ONMARK 2000 SIOS TEST AND FI**
  Cost: Free
  Platform(s): Windows 3.x/95/98
  Checks: PC clocks, systems, BIOS
- **ONTRACK Y2K ADVISO**
  Cost: Free
  Platform(s): Windows 3.x/95/98/NT
  Checks: PC clocks, systems, BIOS
- **Y2K RTC DIAGNOSTIC**
  Cost: Free
  Platform(s): Windows 95/98
  Checks: PC real-time clocks

- **Y2K TEST**
  Cost: Free
  Platform(s): Windows 3.x/95/98
  Checks: PC clocks, systems, BIOS

COMPREHENSIVE SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE
- **CHECK 2000 PC DELUX**
  www.imaginetech.net/c2k_deluxe.htm
  Cost: $43.00 Platform(s): Windows 95/98/NT
  Checks: BIOS, 05, software, data
- **NORTON 2000**
  www.symantec.com/region/fr/product
  n2000/n2000tiv-fr.html
  Cost: $38.00Platform(s): Windows 95/98/NT
  Checks: BIOS, OS, software, data

MORE Y2K RESOURCES
- Y2K handbook specifically for non-profit organization
  www.compumentor.org/y2k/
- US Department of Education (Y2K Assistance for th Education Community)
  www.ed.gov/y2k/
- The Year 2000 Information Center/Millennium Bug
  www.year2000.com/
- Y2K News Network: Magazine, Internet, Radio, Media Service
  www.y2knews.com/
- Y2K Information on year 2000 compliance and the millennium bug
  www.y2kinfo.com/
- Year 2000 Conversio
  y2k.gov/

Web Site Redesign

The Ohio Literacy Resource Center web site will soon be going through some major design changes. If you haven't yet seen the new Midwest LINCS (and of course the

the National LINCS) redesign, please take a look (Midwest LINCS at: http://literacy.kent.edu/Midwest and National LINCS at: http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/).

This new redesign will be very different from what you are used to seeing when you visit our site. Some of the sections will be available in different areas and there will be many links to information to the regional LINCS and National LINCS. This is a very exciting change for our sites. The new design will tie together all of the regional LINCS and the National LINCS resources so you can find more in formation quickly and easily. some of the new additions to these sites will be the new search capabilities which will allow you to search for information throughout the national and all four regional LINCS sites and a chance to set up your own preferences in site layout.

Many of these new options are still under construction, but be sure to check back often. The OLRC's site will also follow these new guidelines for the site redesign project. This will be a wonderful opportunity for our site visitors to find more resources on the subjects they are looking for. We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions as we make these changes!

GTE Mini-Grants Provide Technology-Based Resources

1999 GTE Mini-Grants were made possible by the generosity of GTE. Each project was created by the collaborative effort of the National Institute for Literacy, the Ohio Literacy Resource Center, the State Resource Centers from 10 states, and of course the teachers and students from each of the programs who dedicated their time and energy. The primary goals for these projects were to integrate technology into the classroom experience and to expand resources for the adult literacy community.

Each program selected their own topic based on their unique student population. Every effort was made to include the full spectrum of adult basic education students from GED to ABE, urban to rural and other special populations. Each program was encouraged to expand upon their current use of technology or to venture into unexplored territory. We think these projects provide excellent examples of how adult basic education programs can use technology and how we can all share our experience and expertise with our colleagues.

Descriptions about each project, as well as link to project materials are provided at: http://literacy.kent.edu/gte2/. Hope you find something of use to you and your students writing this projects