

Computer Literacy for Parents

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It has been my responsibility, privilege, and delight to provide a computer literacy program for the Grade 5 pupils in Lansdowne Elementary School. I meet with this class for three one-half-hour periods each week. There are 24 pupils in the class and we have only one computer, but that does not prevent us from becoming computer literates or beginning programmers.

Very shortly after launching the program, we became aware that parents were not only curious about our program but were also interested in becoming involved.

One of the early objectives of our course was to become more aware of the impact of the computer on our society. Parental assistance contributed toward the attainment of this objective. To make students aware of the impact of computers, I organized a computer scavenger hunt. Pupils were encouraged to enlist the assistance of their families. Older brothers and sisters as well as parents responded. Students produced delightful collections of computer-related articles such as advertisements, computer-printed documents, computer parts, and other material.

Arrangements were made to show the film "Now the Chips Are Down" to our upper elementary pupils. We extended an invitation to the parents. Approximately 35 parents were able to join us for the afternoon showing of this very informative film.

More recently, we held a Parents' Computer Night which was attended by 40 to 45 parents. At this session the computer program was explained. The school's objectives, activities, and aspirations with regard to computer literacy were presented. The position of Alberta Education as outlined in its news release of October 23, 1981 was also presented. Pupil charts, scrapbooks, card sets, and notebooks as well as a variety of books were on display. Following the introductory presentation, the parents were invited to participate in a hands-on computer experience. Thanks to the Edmonton Public School Board and a neighboring school, we were able to obtain six Apple II Plus microcomputers for this evening. A variety of computer programs was available for tryout. Of great interest and delight to the parents were the programs written by their Grade 5 children. During this brief two and one-half month exposure to one computer, several of these pupils have completed three programs. (This same computer is also used extensively for computer-assisted instruction for other pupils in the school.)

Before leaving the school and on several occasions since the Parents' Computer Night, many parents have expressed their appreciation for our efforts. The one regret appears to be that, due to limited hardware, we have not been able to extend our program to all the pupils on a regular basis.