ED 281 210   CS 210 430

AUTHOR   Batey, Anne; Ricketts, Dick
TITLE   Product Descriptions; Word Processors and Writing
                Activities for the Elementary Grades. A MicroSIFT
                Quarterly Report.
INSTITUTION   Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland,
                Oreg.
SPONS AGENCY   Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED),
                Washington, DC.
PUB DATE   Feb 87
CONTRACT   400-86-0006
NOTE   31p.; For a companion report, see CS 210 431.
PUB TYPE   Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Guides -
                Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   Computer Assisted Instruction; *Computer Software;
                Computer Software Reviews; Courseware; Elementary
                Education; Learning Activities; Program Evaluation;
                Spelling Instruction; *Word Processing; *Writing
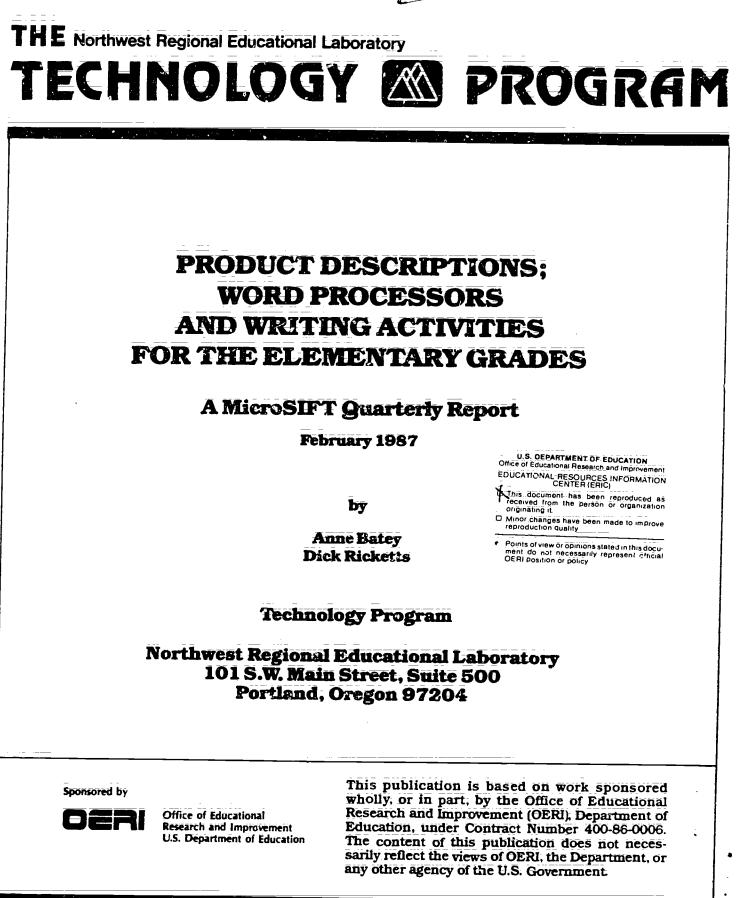   Exercises; *Writing Instruction

ABSTRACT
                Intended to help educators choose the most
appropriate word processing products for elementary school writing
instruction, this report provides extensive information on 12 word
processor and 13 writing activity software products. A list of
components, general descriptions, comments and evaluations are
included for each product. The products described are as follows: (1)
Bank Street Writer III (Activity Files, volumes 1 and 2); (2) Bard's
"Pro-Am" Writing System; (3) "FrEdWriter" (with FrEd lessons); (4)
"HomeWord Plus"; (5) LogoWriter; (6) "Magic Slate," (I Can Write! Be
a Writer! and Write with Me!); (7) MasterType's Writer; (8) MECC
Writer (Ghost Writer, MECC Speller, and MECC Write Start); (9)
Milliken Word Processor, (Prewriting, Postwriting and Writing
Workshop Activity Files; (10) SchoolWriter; (11) Snoopy Writer; and
(12) The Writer's Assistant (Interactive Writing Tools). Producer
information is included with each description and listed again at the
end of the report. (JD)

THE Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

TECHNOLOGY ⚠ PROGRAM

PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS; WORD PROCESSORS AND WRITING ACTIVITIES FOR THE ELEMENTARY GRADES

A MicroSIFT Quarterly Report

February 1987

by

Anne Batey
Dick Ricketts

Technology Program

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BANK STREET WRITER III

Producer: Scholastic, Inc.   Copyright: 1986
Type: word processor   Grade Level: 2-1?
Price: 79.95 (AP), 99.95 (IB)   Hardware: AP, IB
Lab Packs: 129.95/5 copies

Components: Double-sided program disk for the 40- and 80-column
version with tutorial and backup, double-sided program disk for 20-column
version with tutorial and backup, double-sided dictionary disk and
backup, reference guide for teachers, student guide, set of 14 writing
process activities, supplementary set of 21 brief composition exercises.

Description: This enhanced version of the earlier Bank Street Writer
versions contains all the features most teachers and students need while
remaining easy to learn and use. It now includes a choice of 20-, 40- or
80-column display, a fully integrated 60,000-word spelling checker, an
on-line thesaurus with a 50,000-word dictionary, a calculator and an
option for the teacher to create frozen writing prompts which students
cannot write over. The expanded teacher utilities include chain
printing, programmable function keys (macros), print-to-disk and
print-to-screen features. The 20-column version is on a separate disk
from the 40- and 80-column version; both program disks contain a tutorial
introduction.

When using the thesaurus or spelling checker, the questionable word in
the document can be automatically replaced with a suggested word.
Individual words can be checked as you compose or the whole document
checked once it's completed. Additional words can be added to both
dictionaries. Users can create up to twenty "macros" which enables two
keystrokes to do the work of several. The frozen text feature allows
teachers to create on-screen lessons, quizzes or guided student writing.

Comments:

● This newest version is loaded with useful features but is not
  overwhelming. It looks and acts like the earlier BSW versions
  (original and BSW II) and new features are accessible when one is
  ready for them. The earlier versions are still available.

● Some features are not available in the 20-column version: spelling
  checker, thesaurus, mouse, frozen text and macros.

● A good word processor for serious work yet easy to learn and use.

● The spelling checker is also available separately as Bank Street
  Speller. It is compatible with both the original version and Bank
  Street Writer II. It costs $64.95.

4

Evaluation:

Note: There are numerous favorable reviews of prior versions of Bank Street Writer.

1. Excellent. Features are now easier to perform and new advanced features add a tremendous amount of power. _Electronic Learning_, January 1987, p. 30.

ACTIVITY FILES FOR THE BANK STREET WRITER: VOLUME 1

Producer: Scholastic, Inc.   Copyright: 1984
Type: writing activities   Grade Level: 6-8
Price: 59.95   Hardware: AP IB CO AT
Lab Packs: 89.95/5 copies

Components: 130-page teacher's manual, three copies of the program
disk.

Description: These activities are based on the process approach to
writing and focus on prewriting, composing, revising and publishing while
using Bank Street Writer. Each activity emphasizes a language arts
objective as well as mastery of a Bank Street Writer feature.

In general, activities include a file of on-screen prompts asking
students to think, write, revise, etc. Most activities present an
individual challenge (try to change a passage from first to third person
in a minimum number of steps), but many activities require a partner
(react to another student's writing).

Evaluation:

1. Highly recommended. Intriguing prewriting activities will fire the
    imaginations of students. Program leads naturally to peer
    collaboration. Curriculum Review, May/June 1986, p. 36.

2. Desirable. Creative, open-ended activities encourage students to use
    problem-solving skills. Technology in Curriculum--Language Arts,
    California Department of Education. 1986.

3. Highly recommended. Interesting and creative methods are used to
    teach word processing skills. MicroSIFT. Northwest Regional
    Educational Laboratory, January 1987.

ACTIVITY FILES FOR THE BANK STREET WRITER: VOLUME 2

Producer: Scholastic, Inc.   Copyright: 1984
Type: writing activities   Grade Level: 4-6
Price: 89.95   Hardware: AP IB CO AT
Lab Packs: 89.95/5 copies

Components: 96-page teacher's handbook, three copies of the program
disk.

Description: This collection of 40 prepared lessons of 3-5 activities
each explores different forms of writing (narrative, descriptive,
expository, etc.) by focusing on specific writing skills (explain a
process, write sequential directions, describe actions, etc.). In each
activity, on-screen prompts direct students either to think about
something and then write, or to read, write or revise a passage. The
backside of the program disk contains an item bank of all obj ctives and
activities used in the lessons. The item bank can be used tu build
custom lessons for individual students.

Evaluation:

1. Desirable. Activities serve as motivators to write, proofread, and
    edit. Documentation is extensive. Technology in Curriculum--Language
    Arts. California Department of Education, 1986.

2. Highly recommended. Objectives are clearly stated in the item skills
    bank. When designing new lessons, the database matches specific
    goals with item numbers (activities). MicroSIFT. Northwest Regional
    Educaticnal Laboratory, January 1987.

7

BARD'S "PRO-AM" WRITING SYSTEM

Producer: Writing Software International
Copyright: 1985
Type: word processor   Grade Level: 3-12
Price: 69.95   Hardware: AP
Lab Packs: 259.00/10 copies

Components: Three double-sided disks containing the starter and
experienced level word processors, a tutorial, a work disk, 40- and
80-column versions of the professional level word processors and spelling
dictionary, 47-page user's manual.

Description: This system provides three separate word processors of
different levels of sophistication. The lower levels, Starter and
Experienced, have fewer features and are primarily menu driven. For
example, the starter level supports basic text entry (40-column), editing
and printing without block operations or search and replace. An
integrated spelling checker can be used with the upper two levels. The
highest level is command driven (with help screens) and includes a quick
insert feature that allows you to create "macros" or a set of commonly
used phrases that are instantly inserted with a couple of keystrokes.
On-screen help is just an ESC key away. A tutorial for beginners is
provided on the backside of one disk.

This is a very straightforward word processor with a lot of useful
features for the classroom including a spelling checker that provides
correction options once questionable words are identified. There are
choices for type size (40- and 80-column), easy access to help and a
reasonable price. The 50,000-word spelling corrector is quickly
accessible (requires switching to the dictionary disk), identifies
alternative spellings and will replace misspelled words in the document.
The quick insert feature is also very easy to use.

Comments:

●   This is a very well-designed word processor--easy to use and grow
    with.

●   A full-featured package for the price.

Evaluation:

1. Excellent. Easy for the beginner yet appealing to the frequent
    user. Region X Software Consortium. May 1986.

8

FREDWRITER

Producer: Steele Publishing
Type: word processor
Price: 40.00 with lesson set
Lab Packs: Unlimited copying

Copyright: 1985
Grade Level: 3-12
Hardware: AP

Components: Five double-sided disks containing the main program, FrEd Tips, Frilless FrEd, seven lesssons. (All documentation is on disk and must be printed.)

Description: This word processor has the customary set of features for entering, revising and printing text but is a standout because of its price. Educators are free to make copies and distribute to students. Features that make it a useful school product include help screens that list all commands and then describe the operation of each; 40- or 80-column display options; frozen prompts that can be inserted in files to give guided writing instructions to students. The package includes a set of Writing Lesson disks created by educators and a FrEdWriter Tips disks of useful, advanced information. The package contains complete documentation on disk ready to be printed out.

Considering price and quality, FrEdWriter is impressive. It is friendly and has a full set of file management features and printer controls. Menus make it easy to jump from one activity tc another, e.g., format a new disk before saving a file.

Comments:

● Once past the opening menu, all word processor functions are performed by commands and while on-screen help is readily available, teachers will need to provide a lot of support until ccmmands are mastered.

Evaluations:

1. Desirable. Excellent and comprehensive support materials including tests, sample lessons and suggestions for adapting the lessons. Technology in Curriculum--Language Arts. California Department of Education, 1986.

2. Excellent. Has all the basic features students will ever need and is relatively easy to use. Electronic Learning, January 1987, p. 30.

9

FREDLESSONS

Producer: Steel Publishing
System: FrEdWriter   Copyright: 1986
Type: writing activities   Grade Level: 3-12
Price: $40.00 (comes with FrEdWriter)   Hardware: AP
Lab Pack: Unlimited copying

Description: The FrEdWriter package includes FrEdLessons which are
eight complete lesson plans and files of prompted writing. Since the
lessons were created by teachers, they have been classroom tested and
perfected. Each lesson is structured around a popular piece of
children's literature and incorporates the concepts of the National
Writing Project. Four of the eight lessons are designed for elementary
students in grades 3-6. The lesson descriptions are very detailed and
include offline as well as FrEdWriter activities. The teacher's guide
for each lesson is in FrEdWriter documents that must be printed.
Handouts and instruction sheets are also on disk.

Comments:

● The lessons are remarkably detailed; this makes modification easy
  because the original lesson is so carefully spelled out.

10

HOMEWORD PLUS

Producer: Sierra-On Line   Copyright: 1985
Type: word processor   Grade Level: 3-12
Price: 69.95   Hardware: AP
Lab Packs: additional copies $10.00/each

Components: Double-sided program disk, spelling disk, 122-page user's
guide.

Description: This word processor features icons for identifying and
selecting functions. As students become familiar with the program,
command codes using the open Apple keys can be used. The type size can
be 40- or 80-column. The spelling checker only identifies and underlines
suspected misspellings (those not found in the 30,000-word dictionary).
Students must return to the document and correct the marked words. Some
additional features are options for automatic backups, file merging, file
linking when printing, a typewriter mode for printing as keys are
pressed, on-screen format of document layout and automatic point headers
for outline indents.

Comments:

●   This program is a little clumsy in operation, but it has a full
    complement of features including advanced layout options such as
    automatic point headers and indents for outlines.

●   The spelling checker is a little disappointing in that suggested
    correct spellings are not displayed once misspellings are
    identified--this is not a spelling corrector. A 30,000-word
    dictionary is pretty small for advanced students' vocabulary level.
    While words can be added to a special file. this requires some extra
    manipulation beyond what the menu supports.

●   The earlier version, Homeword, was marketed in a school edition and
    included a special Teacher's Manual. This version is no longer
    available.

LOGOWRITER

Producer: Logo Computer Systems, Inc.   Copyright: 1986
Type: word processing   Grade Level: 3-8
Price: 450.00   Hardware: AP CO IB
Lab Packs: cost includes site license

Components: One copyable double-sided disk, 112-page teacher's manual,
reference guide, six student workbooklets, six sets of 10 or more student
activity cards, posters, keyboard stickers.

Description: LogoWriter combines word processing with the Logo
programming environment. Students can work with text, graphics,
animation and sound. Using a project approach, LogoWriter provides a
large sequence of interdisciplinary activities so that students learn
LogoWriter by doing and experimenting. Students can create illustrated
cards, branching stories, animated puns or interactive stories while
learning Logo, LogoWriter and other content skills.

LogoWriter is sold as a site-licensed kit; the purchaser is free to make
copies for the classrooms at the site. For an additional $150, schools
may make copies for students to take home.

Comments:

● As a word processor alone, it is not suitable for doing extended
  written work even though more elaborate word processing commands can
  be constructed using Logo procedures. Nevertheless, "By changing
  their word processor [elementary students] gain the sense of control
  over the computer tha lies at the heart of the Logo philosophy. It
  is anti-educational to give children software tools as 'black boxes.'
  They cannot understand change." (Seymour Papert, Classroom Computer
  Learning, April 1986, p. 40)

● For teachers who are excited by and comfortable with the Logo
  environment, LogoWriter has wonderful possiblities.

● The booklet actitivities are interdisciplinary and have application
  in areas other than language arts or math/programming.

Evaluation:

1. Overall Rating A-. Program is easily used by young students and
    fully utilizes the computer's capabilities. The accompanying
    materials offer a comprehensive curriculum with ideas for integration
    into many subject areas. Educational Software Reports/Electronic
    Learning, October 1986, p. 2.

MAGIC SLATE

Producer: Sunburst
Type: word processor
Price: 99.95
Lab Packs: $299.85/10 copies

Copyright: 1985
Grade Level: 2-12
Hardware: AP

Components: 20/40-column program disk and backup, 80-column program disk and backup, Magic Slate Handbook (a self-teaching tutorial on paper for teachers and students), two sets of activities for primary and intermediate grades, reproducible student workbook, teaching guide.

Description: The first word processor to "grow with you," Magic Slate provides a 20-column version with large letters for primary students, a 40-column version for intermediate students, and a full-featured 80-column version for more advanced students. The three versions use icons and share common commands, so switching to another version is easy. Comprehensive support materials include teaching ideas for several grade levels and reproducible activity pages.

All three versions provide a choice of type styles which are displayed as you enter them. Switching typestyles requires only a Control key command to get to a menu of typestyles. In 20- and 40-column format, screen display shows the typestyle as it actually will appear when printed.

Comments:

● One of the easiest to get familiar with--very user friendly. Performing the block operations (copy and move blocks of text) is a little awkward.

● Typestyles include superscripts and subscripts which are not common word processing options to see on screen. This might be of use in math (powers of ten) and science (chemical formulas) activities using word processing. Additional typestyles are available in Magic Slate Typestyles from Sunburst ($49).

● Large text from the 20-column version can be used to make quick transparencies.

Evaluation:

1. Highly Recommended. Three versions make it an extremely flexible tool. Printing documents that take full advantage of the fancy printing features can be tricky without a more common printer and card. Electronic Learning, January 1985, p. 4.

2. Recommended. The sequential development of word processing skills and needs has been well thought out. Evaluations: Microware. Provincial Educational Media Centre, British Columbia, October 1985, v.4, n.4.

13

3. Favorably reviewed. An economical word processor with enough powerful features to make it an attractive choice for use in many situations. Educational Technology, October 1985, p. 52.

4. Exemplary. A wonderful, easy, versatile word processor which can be used effectively by all levels, primary to adult. Technology in Curriculum--Language Arts. California Department of Education, 1986.

5. Excellent. Easy for a novice to begin writing with and to learn the more sophisticated features later. Electronic Learning, January 1987, p. 30.

I CAN WRITE!

Producer: Sunburst   Copyright: 1986
Type: writing activities   Grade Level: 2
Price: 40.00   Hardware: AP
Lab Packs: copy a classroom set

Components: Program disk and backup, 126-page teacher's guide.

Description: This collection of 25 language arts activities introduces
grade two writing objectives and the basic word processing features of
Magic Slate. Using the 20-column version of Magic Slate, students work
with nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs as they develop proper sentence
patterns and explore different styles of writing. Each lesson results in
a printed page that students add to their I Can Write! book. Each
student works with his or her own copy of the I Can Write! disk.

Comments:

●   Teachers can modify the pages to personalize and individualize the
    book even further.

●   Second grade students will need some prior keyboarding instruction to
    make these activities effective. Some lessons involve learning the
    keyboard as well as a writing skill.

●   Teacher's manual is extremely comprehensive. A quick reference card
    or planning sheet would help give a "big picture" to the sequence of
    activities.

Evaluation:

1. Recommended. The page templates make it fun and easy for a child to
    end up with a personal book. MicroSIFT. Northwest Regional
    Educational Laboratory, January 1987.

15

BE A WRITER:

Producer: Sunburst   Copyright: 1986
Type: writing activities   Grade Level: 3
Price: 40.00   Hardware: AP
Lab Packs: copy a classroom set

Components: Program disk and backup, 128-page teacher's guide.

Description: This collection of 25 language arts activities introduces
grade three writing objectives and the basic word processing features of
Magic Slate (20-column version). Students work with imaginary
characters--Ruby Robot, Giant George, and others--while they develop
skills with word order, punctuation, complete sentences, combining
sentences and various writing styles. Each lesson results in a printed
page that students add to their Be a Writer! book. Each student works
with his or her own copy of the Be a Writer! disk.

Comments:

●   This can be a starting package or used as a continuation of I Can
    Write! skills.

●   Very comprehensive teacher's manual but it lacks a general outline or
    overview for planning purposes.

●   After initial help students could work independently with the
    sequence of activities.

Evaluation:

1. Recommended. Third graders should find it really fun and rewarding
    to create a personalized book. MicroSIFT. Northwest Regional
    Educational Laboratory, January 1987.

16

WRITE WITH ME!

Producer: Sunburst   Copyright: 1986
Type: writing activities   Grade Level: 4
Price: 59.00   Hardware: AP
Lab Packs: 177.00/10 disks

Components: Program disk and backup, 167-page teacher's guide.

Description: This collection of 25 language arts activities introduces
and develops language arts skills and the word processing features of
Magic Slate (40-column version) while creating a complete story. Each
lesson results in a chapter for a story called "Journey to the
Thunderbird." An element of story writing is explored in each lesson:
character and setting description, use of dialogue, use of similes
(comparisons), use of conflict (good and evil), introduction of
unexpected events and challenges, character motivation and so forth.
Grammatical structures are introduced as well: Distinguish between
subject and predicate pronouns, connecting words and compound sentences,
use of adverbs to expand the action of a verb, noun phrases, etc.

While there is a basic storyline to follow, each student creates her or
his own version. The entire sequence of lessons becomes a long-term
writing project possibly lasting a whole school year. Each student works
with her or his own copy of a Write With Me! disk.

Comments:

● Student creativity may be slightly restricted in cases where specific
  examples are given and student is asked to replace them.

● Fantasy/Adventure storyline may not appeal to both sexes or different
  personality types.

Evaluation:

1. Recommended. Could be used to create a classroom book as well as
   individual books for each classroom member. MicroSIFT. Northwest
   Regional Educational Laboratory, January 1987.

MASTERTYPE'S WRITER

Producer: D.C.Heath   Copyright: 1986
Type: word processor   Grade Level: 1-12
Price: 90.00   Hardware: AP CO
Lab Packs: 360.00/10 copies

Components: Two program disks, one tutorial disk, 53-page teacher's
guide.

Description: This word processor has the usual set of basic features
for text entry, revision, saving and printing. It also has several
unusual features including color highlighting, dual writing windows,
macros, typeface editing, sorting of lists within a document.

Color is used to highlight text for visual distinction on the screen,
indicating text that can be temporarily hidden from view, not printed or
for special treatment when printed (underlined or boldface). There are
two adjustable writing windows available, each functioning independently
from the other. Up to 20 different "macros" can be created to perform
sets of keystrokes within a single document. There are seven typeface
options and new ones can be designed. The typeface options include
animals and very large text, which may appeal to younger students. The
sorting tool is useful for organizing lists of words, numbers or
phrases. For example, students can number their notes when reviewing
them and then use the sort feature to rearrange them in the numbered
sequence. The teacher's guide includes eight teaching units which
introduce and develop skills with the special features discussed above.

Comments:

● This word processor has a lot of powerful features, especially for
  on-screen work. It is fun to use in that it encourages
  experimentation.

● Wide selection of type sizes and styles is interesting and unique
  among word processors.

● Other than extra steps when moving blocks of text, the program
  operation is straightforward and logical.

● While it does not have "frozen text" for teachers to create prompted
  writing activities, color highlighting and filtering can be used to
  accomplish the same effect.

Evaluation:

1. Favorably reviewed. For teachers looking for ways to further assist
    their students in improving their organizing, thinking and writing
    skills, examine the special features of MasterType's Writer.
    The Computing Teacher, April 1986, p. 51.

2. Very good. Outstanding features are windows, macros, color
    highlighting and ability to sort text. Electronic Learning,
    January 1987, p. 30.

MECC WRITER

Producer: MECC   Copyright: 1985
Type: word processor   Grade Level: 6-12
Price: 49.00   Hardware: AP
Lab Packs: 269.00/10 copies

Components: Program disk and backup, 31-page manual.

Description: This is a straightforward, no-frills word processor with
the basic features of easy cursor control, deleting and retrieving text,
and saving, loading and printing files. It is easy to learn and use with
the help from an on-screen "getting started" tutorial and help screens.
It provides only 80-column format and formats text on screen exactly as
it will print. Commands use the Control key and a single mnemonic key.

Manual includes sections for introducing students to the basic commands
and procedures in a tutorial format.

MECC Writer is part of a series of composing tools from MECC. Other
tools in the series included in this report are MECC Speller, Ghost
Writer and MECC Write Start.

Comments:

* A somewhat limited but clean word processor in that it does basic
  things neatly and efficiently but lacks fancy features.

* Blocks of text can be moved but not copied. Places a merged file
  only in front of the existing file.

Evaluation:

1. Desirable. Students need to learn a minimum of commands and features
    to use this word processor. The documentation is clear and concise.
    Technology in Curriculum--Language Arts. California Department of
    Education, 1986.

2. Strongly recommended. A "first" word processing program for teachers
    and students. Media & Methods, Sept/Oct 1986, p. 58.

3. Grade B-. Help screens make the program easy to learn. Software
    Reports. Trade Service Publications, Inc., Fall 1986.

GHOST WRITER

Producer: MECC
System: MECC Writer   Copyright: 1986
Type: revising   Grade Level: 6-12
Price: 39.00   Hardware: AP
Lab Packs: 314.00/10 copies

Components: Double-sided disk program disk and backup, 32-page user's
manual.

Description: Ghost Writer checks written passages for readability,
sentence length, paragraph outline, homonym use, clarity (prepositions,
passive voice and conjunctions) and vocabulary (frequency of each word).
It can read files created with several different word processors
including MECC Writer, Apple Writer II, Bank Street Writer, Writing
Workshop Magic Window II, PIE Writer, Appleworks, Magic Slate 80,
FrEdWriter.

The program does not allow students to make changes in the document so
students must have a paper version of the file in hand. Suggestions are
very general and superficial, but good for a preliminary look at style
and mechanics. Readability score is based on paragraphs which are
identified by a carriage return. Headers and titles are considered a
paragraph and will change a readability score.

Comments:

o   Results are all based on strict counts and context is not factored
    into an analysis. Hence, there is a certain degree of inaccuracy
    from too much generalization.

Evaluation:

1. Favorably reviewed. A quick, uncluttered and valuable guide for
    revision; it gives students useful feedback. The Computing Teacher,
    November 1986, p. 39.

MECC SPELLER

Producer: MECC   Copyright: 1985
Type: spelling checker   Grade Level: 6-10
Price: 39.00   Hardware: AP
Lab Packs: 264.00/10 copies

Components: Double-sided program disk and backup, 37-page manual

Description: This spelling checker identifies words not found in the
main 10,000-word dictionary or the supplementary dictionary of 100 added
words. It will check MECC Writer and AppleWriter II files. The program
identifies instances of words typed twice in a row--a common
typographical error. It also prompts students with words that are
potentially confusing because they look similar (desert, dessert) or they
sound alike (die, dye). The teacher can add a glossary of 100 "flag
words" or words that include brief comments such as definitions or
spelling hints.

Corrections cannot be made as file is checked; results are shown on a
marked printout of the file. Students must use find and replace feature
of the word processor to make corrections. If results are displayed on
the screen instead of printed, the words are identified but not in
context--not a recommended method for proofreading.

Comments:

●   If a word is repeatedly misspelled, it will be identified each time.

●   Documents under five pages are manageable during a class period;
    longer documents may need to be divided into smaller sections for
    proofreading.

MECC WRITE START

Producer: MECC
Type: writing activities
Price: 39.00
Lab Packs: 89.00/5 copies

Copyright: 1985
Grade Level: 6-10
Hardware: AP

Components: Program disk and backup, 52-page manual.

Description: This collection of ten activities uses a built-in version of MECC Writer--the word processor. Five of the activities involve sharing written work with other students, e.g., a class journal for brainstorming, a browsing library of favorite quotes, personal insights, song lyrics, etc., or story starters for cooperative stories. The remaining five activities involve experimenting with language, e.g., stream of consciousness writing, expanding descriptive sentences, creating word pictures and writing formula poetry. All student work can be saved on disk or printed.

Comments:

o   Because the activities encourage students to write cooperatively, it provides a large number of opportunities for interaction among students in a class or several classes.

o   Once the program is introduced and students know the basics of MECC Writer, students can use it independently.

Evaluation:

1. Desirable. This effective program generates creative ideas and a wide variety of student responses. Technology in Curriculum-- Language Arts. California Department of Education, 1986.

2. Highly recommended. Well-structured with opportunities for creative interaction over time. Good alternative to class journal writing. MicroSIFT. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, January 1987.

MILLIKEN WORD PROCESSOR

Producer: Milliken Publishing   Copyright: 1984
Type: word processor   Grade Level: 1-12
Price: 70.00   Hardware: AP IB
Lab Packs: 75.00/5 additional copies

Components: Two program disks, one backup, 20-page manual, 20
reproducible student activities with teacher's guide.

Description: This word processor has basic word processing features
for text entry and revision including block delete and move (but not
copy) and find. The use of graphics and very simple words to describe
processes makes this an appealing choice for young writers. For example,
all file handling is done at a File Cabinet shown on the screen, so
students Get Files or Throw Away Files instead of loading or deleting
them. The writing area, called the "paper," is outlined to separate the
help prompts from a student's text. The program disk includes an
on-screen tutorial that introduces the four utility components: Help
Manual (the on-screen tutorial), Writing Tools (the word processor), File
Cabinet (the file load and save utility) and Typewriter (the print
utility). Text can be displayed in 40- or 80-column format.

The Milliken Word Processor is part of collection called The Writing
Workshop. The other modules, Prewriting and Postwriting, are also
described in this report.

Comments:

● Nice at the beginning, but heavy dependency on menus gets irritating
   and too time-consuming after a while.

● Program lacks some of the conveniences that users are growing
   accustomed to, e.g., file names have to be typed in instead of
   highlighted to load.

● Nice, clear, easy-to-follow screens and menus.

● Student activities follow the National Writing Project model of
   process writing. These activities have to be typed in to a file if
   they will be completed using the word processor.

Evaluation:

1. Excellent. The screen display makes this program the easiest for
    young children to read and write from. Does not leave room for
    sophisticated word processing features. Electronic Learning,
    October 1984, p. 61.

2. Desirable. With fewer functions than a professional word processor,
    it is easier for children to learn. Technology in Curriculum--
    Language Arts. California Department of Education, 1986.

3. Favorable Review. An excellent word processor for first-time users.
    Curriculum Review, Jan/Feb 1985, p. 44.

PREWRITING

Producer: Milliken Publishing   Copyright: 1985
Type: writing activities   Grade Level: 3-10
Price: 195.00   Hardware: AP IB
Lab Packs: 75.00/5 additional copies

Components: Three different program disks with backups, 16-page
manual, 22 reproducible student activities with teacher's guide.

Description: This package includes three unique prewriting units each
on a separate disk: "Brainstorming," "Nutshelling" and "Branching."
Brainstorming has students free associate up to 24 words or phrases on a
topic. The list of words is then organized into groups with a name.
Branching has students specify four ideas and then list up to six words
or phrases that hint at details related to the main topic. In
Nutshelling, students select one of five types of writing (explanation,
persuasion, description, short story, letter) and complete several
sentences that prompt students to think about the proposed written
piece. The sentences are related to the type of proposed writing (I will
explain..., I will end by saying..., etc.).

Each activity results in a set of guiding notes that are saved for later
expansion with the Milliken Word Processor. Documentation is very
thorough and well laid-out; it includes 22 additional prewriting
activities which can be entered into a file and completed using Milliken
Word Processor (designed for grades 6-10).

Comments:

●   Rather expensive for three good (but not great) activities.

●   Moving between the activities requires rebooting; there is no
    convenient main menu which might also check if previous work had been
    saved.

●   Restrictions on word list size and length might be limiting to
    creative, expressive students.

Evaluation:

1. Recommended with reservations. A convenience to students who are
    already able to do prewriting tasks but want structure and ability to
    transfer to a word processor. Curriculum Review, May/June 1985,
    p. 35.

2. Desirable. Well-designed, easy to use. Technology in Curriculum--
    Language Arts. California Department of Education, 1986.

POSTWRITING

Producer: Milliken Publishing   Copyright: 1985
Type: revising   Grade Level: 3-10
Price: 225.00   Hardware: AP IB
Lab Packs: 75.00/5 additional copies

Components: Six program disks, five backups, The Writing Workshop
handbook, 20 student activities, teacher's guide.

Description: Postwriting includes three different programs to help in
the revision process: a spelling checker, a mechanics checker and a
proofreader. The spelling checker compares each word in a document
against a 41,000-word dictionary. Potential misspellings are highlighted
and can be edited or replaced with the correct word from a list of
suggested spellings. The mechanics checker identifies "tired" words
(overused), "tricky" words (homophones), trivial typing errors (no
period, comma or capital letters), pronoun case and sentence fragments.
The proofreader guides the student to think carefully about each sentence
using a set of leading questions for each reading.

Comments:

●   Each of the programs requires quitting and rebooting the next
     revision task and then reloading the document. This seems
     unnecessarily tedious.

WRITING WORKSHOP: ACTIVITY FILES

Producer: Milliken Publishing   Copyright: 1986
Type: writing activities   Grade Level: 3-10
Price: 100.00   Hardware: AP IB
Lab Packs: 75.00/5 additional copies

Components: Ten activity disks (six beginner, two intermediate, two
advanced), 56-page manual.

Description: This set of disks contains 100 ready-to-use writing
activities divided into three skill levels (primary, intermediate, and
advanced). (The skill levels do not necessarily correlate with age or
grade level.) Each disk includes editing, proofreading, brainstorming,
creative writing and guided writing activities. Students first load the
Milliken Word Processor, and then select activity files from these
disks. Teachers can modify the activities or use the index of topics to
mix and match activities for a particular lesson.

Comments:

●   Lessons can be printed; for some activities paper and pencil is more
    appropriate because they do not really require word processing.

●   Prompts are not excluded from printouts, so final product is more a
    worksheet than a personal composition.

●   Two typos were found on two different primary disks.

●   Teacher's guide is rather bare bones.

SCHOOLWRITER

Producer: SRA   Copyright: 1985
Type: Word Processor   Grade Level: 4-8
Price: 79.95   Hardware: AP
Lab Packs:

Components: Program disk and backup, activity files disk, 96-page
teacher's manual, 56-page student workbook.

Description: This is an 80-column word processor designed to contain
only those functions most frequently needed by students. A streamlined
menu and single keystroke operation make it easy to learn and use. All
formatting is shown on-screen. Ten student lessons teach and practice
word processsing features. A student workbook includes extra
activities. (From publisher's description.)

Comments:

●   Distribution rights for SchoolWriter have just changed hands and a
    review copy was unavailable at the time this report was prepared.

SNOOPY WRITER

Producer: Random House   Copyright: 1985
Type: word processor   Grade Level: 1-6
Price: 39.95   Hardware: AP CO
Lab Packs:

Components: Double-sided program disk, 16-page user's guide.

Description: This is a very simple word processor supporting only text
entry, delete, insert and printing. There are no block operations or
find and replace features. The program includes a unique story starter
feature which has students choose one of four pictures each with a couple
of sentences to lead them into writing a story.

Comments:

●   Might be motivating to reluctant writers.

THE WRITER'S ASSISTANT

Producer: Encyclopaedia Britannica   Copyright: 1984
Type: word processor   Grade Level: 4-12
Price: 59.95   Hardware: AP
Lab Packs:

Components: Program disk, 64-page user's guide with teachers'
suggestions. (This word processor is provided in the collection called
Interactive Writing Tools, featured in this report.)

Description: This word processor provides most of the basic functions
but uses nonstandard approaches in several instances. For example,
pressing the delete key causes a character to disappear, but a control
key command is necessary to make the deletion permanent. Otherwise, all
the deleted characters reappear. Functions such as find and replace
require first going to a menu.

There are three experience level options: Novice, Intermediate, and
Expert. The lower levels have fewer commands and menus available. There
is a spelling checker which is based on a very small word list (which can
be expanded). Words can include one-line definitions to help with
context and potentially confusing words.

Comments:

●   This word processor is difficult to learn and to move from function
    to function in.

●   This word processor is available separately from Interlearn, Inc., PO
    Box 342, Cardiff, CA 92007, 619/481-4676.

Evaluation:

1. Desirable. The screens are effective in providing help. Young
    students will need teacher assistance to learn how to use.
    Technology in Curriculum--Language Arts. California Department of
    Education, 1986.

INTERACTIVE WRITING TOOLS

Producer: Encylopaedia Britannica
System: Writer's Assistant, The   Copyright: 1986
Type: writing activities   Grade Level: 3-9
Price: 279.00/lesson disks   Hardware: AP
Lab Packs: 558.00/copies

Components: Word processing program disk and manual, six lesson disks,
40-page manual.

Description: Six lesson disks focus on a different writing topic:
Narrative writing, Expository writing, Poetry, Business Letter writing,
Friendly Letter writing and News writing. Each lesson has four levels of
"dynamic support" which vary the extent of prompting as a student
writes: at level one, students select already written sentences; at
level two, they fill in blanks to complete sentences; at level three,
they complete paragraphs following a prompted topic sentence; at level
four, they complete an assigned writing task. Each lesson produces a
file which can be revised and printed using the word processor--The
Writer's Assistant.

Comments:

● While the prompted writing activities are nicely done, the word
  processor is so obscure that the usefulness of the entire package is
  questionable. The authors intended the system for upper elementary
  through middle school, but younger students will have a lot of
  difficulty with the program without considerable teacher involvement.

Evaluation:

1. Recommended. Shows a great deal of carryover to future writing.
   Sample written pieces and the prompts are quite good. Revision
   process is rather complex for elementary students. MicroSIFT.
   Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, January 1987.

D.C.Heath Software
125 Spring Street
Lexington, MA   02173
   800/225-1149

Encyclopaedia Britannica
425 North Michigan Avenue
10th Floor
Chicago, IL   60611
   800/621-3900

Logo Computer Systems
555 West 57th Street
Suite 1236
New York, NY   10019
   800/34LOGIC

Minnesota Educational Computing
   Corporation (MECC)
3490 Lexington Avenue North
St. Paul, MN   55126
   612/481-3500

Milliken Publishing
1100 Research Blvd.
PO Box 21579
St. Louis, MO   63132
   314/991-4220

Random House
201 East 50th Street
New York, NY   10022
   212/572-2616

Scholastic Inc.
2931 East McCarty Street
P.O. Box 5702
Jefferson City, MO   65102

Sierra On-Line
Sierra On-Line Building
Coarsegold, CA   93614
   209/683-6853

SRA/SCI Research Associates
155 North Wacker Drive
Chicago, IL   60606
   800/621-0476

Steele Publishing
PO Box 5493
Concord, CA   94524
   415/685-7265

Sunburst Communications
39 Washington Avenue
Pleasantville, NY   10570-9971
   800/431-1934

Writing Software Internationa
110 East Broadway
Suite 600
Missoula, MT   59802
   406/543-3141

0966C

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Dr. Robert R. Rath, Executive Director
Dr. Ethel Simon-McWilliams, Associate Director

MISSION The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) is an independent, nonprofit research and development institution established in 1966 to assist education, government, community agencies, business and labor in improving quality and equality in educational programs and processes by:

● Developing and disseminating effective educational products and procedures
● Conducting research on educational needs and problems
● Providing technical assistance in educational problem solving
● Evaluating effectiveness of educational programs and projects
● Providing training in educational planning, management, evaluation and instruction
● Serving as an information resource on effective educational programs and processes including networking among educational agencies, institutions and individuals in the region

Programs	Literacy and Language	Technology
Center for Professional Development John Mahaffy, Director	**Literacy and Language** Steve Reder, Director	**Technology** Don Holznagel, Director
Desegregation Assistance Centers Bonnie Feddis, Al Aragon, Ethel Simon-McWilliams, Directors	**Multifunctional Resource Centers** Jose Licano-Palma, Lola Fiaui, Directors	**Program Support**
Education and Work Larry McClure, Director	**Pacific Region Education Program** John Kofel, Director	**School Improvement Coordination** Rex Hagans, Director
Evaluation and Assessment Gary Estes, Director	**R&D for Indian Education** Joe Coburn, Director	**Institutional Development and Communica** Jerry Kirkpatrick, Director
	School Improvement Bob Blum, Director	**Finance and Administrative Services** Joe Jones, Director

Board of Directors

Ed Argenbright
Montana Superintendent of
  Public Instruction

Robert D. Barr
Dean, School of Education
Oregon State University
Western Oregon State College

Jacob Block (Secretary-Treasurer)
Superintendent
Missoula Elementary District (Montana)

Riana J. Bohanek
Teacher
Coeur d'Alene School District (Idaho)

Frank B. Brouillet
Washington Superintendent of Public
  Instruction

E. E. (Gene) Davis
Superintendent
Anchorage School District (Alaska)

Jean M. Dobashi
Teacher
Kauai High Intermediate School (Hawaii)

Verne A. Duncan
Oregon Superintendent of Public
  Instruction

Jerry L. Evans
Idaho Superintendent of Public
  Instruction

Joseph Haggerty
Principal
Blanchet High School
Seattle, Washington

James E. Harris
Beaverton School Board (Oregon)

Richard L. Hart
Dean, College of Education
Boise State University

Ted Hazelbaker
Southern Montana Abstract Company
Dillon, Montana

Jerry Jacobson
Superintendent
Idaho Falls School District

John Kohl
Dean, College of Education
Montana State University

Dale Lambert
Teacher
Eastmont School District (Washington)

Jennine Lane
Teacher
Anchorage School District (Alaska)

Marshall Lind
Alaska Commissioner of Education

Joe McCracken
Superintendent
Lockwood Elementary District (Montana)

Richard McCullough
Superintendent
La Grande School District (Oregon)

Zola McMurray
Businesswoman
Lewiston, Idaho

David S. Mesirow
Teacher
Portland Night School (Oregon)

G. Angela Nagengast
Teacher
Great Falls High School (Montana)

Gloria B. Nelson
Director of Education
Guam Department of Education

Stephen Nielsen
Manager, Education Relations
Pacific Northwest Bell, Seattle

Edie Orner
Teacher
Corvallis School District (Oregon)

Barney C. Parker (Chairman)
Superintendent
Independent District of Boise (Idaho)

Fred Pomeroy
Superintendent
Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools (Ala

Matthew W. Prophet, Jr
Superintendent
Portland School District (Oregon)

Dennis Ray
Superintendent
Walla Walla School District (Washingto

Doris Ray
Vice Chair
Fairbanks School Board (Alaska)

Henry Sablan
Superintendent of Education
Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Is

Tauese Sunia
Director of Education
Government of American Samoa

Charles Toguchi
Superintendent
Hawaii Department of Education

Daro Weital
Chief, Division of Education
Federated States of Micronesia

Doyle E. Winter (Vice Chairman)
Superintendent
Educational Service District 121
Seattle, Washington

Alaska Offices:
Goldstein Building, Room 506
130 Seward Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 586-4952

650 W. International Airport Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99502
(907) 563-3174

NWREL Headquarters
101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 275-9500
SOURCE STL058

Pacific Region Office:
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 140
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
(808) 533-1748

Rocky Mountain Office
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 32(
Denver, Colorado 80295
(303) 830-3675

BEST COPY AVAILABLE