

Teens market JA success

It's a rare opportunity for youngsters to learn what the business world is really all about.

For students from the Redford, Livonia and Farmington areas, their venture into the world of management, planning, marketing and production began early last year when they sat down in their first executive session.

At that time, they discussed ideas—ideas that would vault them into an experience which benefited their growth as young adults.

The Junior Achievement Program is what offers them this adventure.

It provides youngsters with an opportunity to experiment with the makings of a large corporation.

With the assistance and backing of interested and involved parents, businessmen and civic leaders, students formed their own companies, worked together as a group in developing and producing their own products, and marketing these items for a profit.

They witnessed the elements that rank vital in the success and failure of big business. They played the roles of corporation presidents, production

managers, sales representatives and line personnel.

In Redford, there's a gathering place for these young business persons. It's the Junior Achievement Center on Grand River near the boundaries of the three communities it serves.

AT ITS OPEN house during JA Week last Thursday, these young executives showed area residents what they can do given the necessary encouragement, support and expertise. Thursday's open house proved that the hundreds of young business persons affiliated with the Redford Center are eager to learn, ready to challenge the future and willing to suffer the consequences of failure.

There is also another valuable lesson involved in the JA program. According to one student destined for the ranks of top management, it's "knowing that there's more to life and learning than just sitting in a classroom."

The JA center welcomes all interested students and businessmen to stop by the center and find out what the program has to offer.



Ford Motor Co. sponsored Ron Broquet and David Koscielniak company's venture into the business world of clown making. (Staff photo)

Reading is more than a word list

By LYNN ORR

Reading always involves meaning, or that should be the goal, according to W. Dorsey Hammond.

"One of the things I'm preaching against these days is the procedure where we try to teach words in isolation," Hammond told his audience in the Farmington Hills Library last week. An Oakland University professor who believes every child can learn to read, Hammond's talk was sponsored by the Farmington chapter of Michigan Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (MACLD).

The 1960s and '70s represent a revolution in what reading is all about," said Hammond. "Most kids come to school with talking and listening skills, an average 8,000-10,000 word vocabulary."

"The richer language environment you provide a child, the better language he's going to have, and if a child can learn to talk, he or she can learn to read. There isn't any evidence to the contrary."

Hammond believes children should be allowed to experiment more with reading the way they do with language.

'If we send kids to the well too often and don't answer their questions, they're going to quit going to the well.'

—Dorsey Hammond

"When one-year-old children say 'wawa,' parents are going to give them water, not make them wait for the water until they say the word correctly."

"THE WAY to be right is to be wrong and experiment. Where did we get this idea that we must teach reading for mastery?"

Children get bored and don't think they're learning to read if the material is broken down too far, he said. And he emphasized that children need all the cues possible to develop reading skills.

Semantics, syntax and phonics are important cues in reading, he explained, and phonics is the least important. "We need to supply kids with all the cues," he said. "About half of the children I see, who have reading problems, have all the phonics teaching they'll ever need. It's possible to over-phonics a child."

"We say, 'Look, this child is having trouble with reading,' and we think the way to solve it is to simplify by breaking things down. A combination of words is language, but letters by themselves do not constitute language."

"We want to surround kids with all the richness of the language when they're learning to talk. If we broke talking down the way we break reading down, we'd have a lot of remedial talkers."

Hammond believes language is like music. It has rhythm and pattern, and children can often figure out a word in a story by figuring out what word would make sense, the placement of the word in a sentence, and by sounding it out.

"THE EASIEST WORDS for children are words that are concrete or emotionally loaded," he said. "Kids can learn 'Yamaha' or 'Kawasaki' easier than 'was' or 'the.' It's a myth that little words are easier than big words."

Hammond warns against breaking down the reading process, and prefers a more harmonious approach, especially by using the experience story in teaching reading.

The teacher writes a story the child dictates and then reads it with the child, making sure the child follows along while reading aloud.

Hammond is convinced a more consolidated approach avoids the problems of putting children on the spot and making the situation a win-lose proposition.

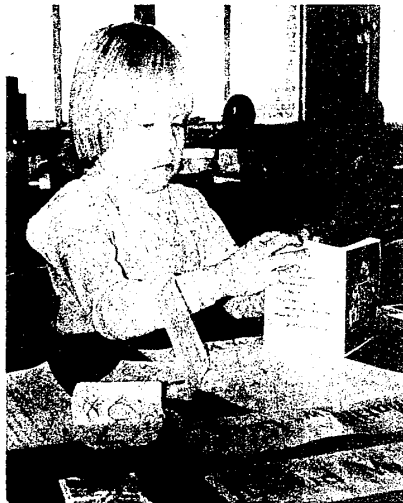
Some visual information is more important than others, and Hammond believes an overemphasis on vowels can be detrimental. "Visually, vowels are very much alike, and kids with perceptual problems have trouble distinguishing them. You can take all the vowels out and still read a sentence," he said, explaining that he advocates not spending a lot of time with vowels.

Reading should make sense to children and answer their questions, he emphasized.

"If we send kids to the well too often and don't answer their questions, they're going to quit going to the well."



Keith Weber (left), Ray Bloink and Steve Ulrich add tags to the memo boards they constructed under the sponsorship of AAA. (Staff photo)



Using a letter card, Matthew Lee looks for Mr. M, Miss A and Mr. P to spell out map.

Letter persons help students to learn

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according to Ms. Simanek. "They come in as straight sight readers, and then unknown words crop up. They learn how to figure them out."

The Alpha series even has an answer for those words that are rules unto themselves—they're called "run-ways."

"Mr. M's unhappy because the words didn't go through the word machine, but we still need them, so we learn them," she said. Words like "the" get a bad reputation for life.

"The whole idea is that it's a little something extra. Dick and Spot can be very interesting but not as a steady diet," she said.

The students can tell you that Mr. Q is silent unless Miss U stands next to him to help him out, and Mr. F's

funny feet precipitated a chorus of giggles from the energetic kids.

PARENTS CAN reinforce the lessons of the letter people by talking about their sounds and helping to fill bags for the letter people. Children fill a bag for each letter person with pictures or objects that begin with the letter sound of the personality—Mr. M's bag might contain marbles, mustard and marshmallows.

Although other reading programs are taught in Farmington schools, the Alpha One series seems to be one of the winners, according to Ms. Simanek.

"There are many good phonics programs, but I don't think they are as colorful or as interesting as this one. It compares with Sesame Street and Electric Company."



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