

Kids, computers compatible, researcher says

United Press International
Children and computers don't mix. At least that's what Margaret Ragosta, research psychologist at Educational Testing Service in Princeton, N.J., said she used to believe.

But she has changed her mind. "Computers are the way to go, especially for ... students or others having problems," she said. "The drill is effective in helping students practice their skills, and I would recommend computer-assisted instruction."

Why did she change her mind? It was primarily because she became involved in a four-year study of Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI), she said.

Because of a study Ragosta did on the results of various combinations of CAI in math, reading and language arts at four schools in the Los Angeles

Unified School District. The initial acceptance of the CAI program by teachers was less than wholehearted, Ragosta said.

But by the time the study ended, most teachers supported the program, she said. Students also enjoyed the program, Ragosta said.

The study began in January

1977. For the next three years, at least half the students in each of the four participating schools received regular drill-and-practice instruction in one of the four CAI curricula: mathematics, reading, language arts and reading for comprehension.

The study focused on how CAI drill-and-practice — reinforcing class work — helped

weaker students learn basic skills. The curricula were leased from Computer Curriculum Corp., in Palo Alto, Calif.

Students were tested on multiple-choice or open-ended questions that popped up one at a time on the computer terminal. Students then typed in responses.

At the end of each 10-minute

session, the computer students' scores, giving the number of items attempted, number and percent of items.

The results of using math were the most impressive. Researchers found improvement in reading and arts was not as impressive.

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Adults toting lunches, too

United Press International
A market researcher says school children have become a minority among brown bag lunch carriers, even though more of them take their mid-day meal to school than ever before. Adults now represent the majority, said David G. Lyon, founder of the Brown Bag Institute.

"In the first quarter of this year, on any given day, 47 percent of all households contained at least one brown bagger," Lyon said. Those households represent almost 60 percent of U.S. population, he said.

In families with school children, the tendency increases that the male or female head of

household also will carry lunch to work, Lyon said.

Although the sexual revolution has affected a lot of household tasks, females still pack most of the lunches, he said.

"There are men and teenagers who pack for themselves," he said. "But it is almost unheard of for men to pack their children's lunches."

Lyon said he suspects "it's a matter of traffic control — there's only room for one packer in the kitchen."

Lyon, a new products consultant for most of his working life, said he established the institute after he had two heart attacks and retired from his job in an advertising agency.

Brown-bag brigade growing

It is hard to tell what brown-bagging school children eat at lunch, he said. "Even their mothers don't know," he said. "She knows what she packs but she doesn't know if what she packs is used for eating, trading or throwing."

Sandwiches are still the No. 1 choice for brown bag lunches, he said.

Children under 12 usually want the same type of sandwich every day. After that, they want variety, he said.

A lot of fresh fruit also gets packed for school lunch carriers, Lyon said. And, typically, a sweet snack and "to a substantial degree, a salty snack." Specifically, these may be

snack cake or homemade cake or cookies or pie to a lesser degree or cupcakes. Salty snacks may be a chip product or nuts, pretzels or crackers.

Salads are popular with both children and adults, men as well as women, he said.

Hot dishes such as soup and stew aren't carried as much as you would expect, he said.

"Number one, nobody in the business (the food industry) has suggested that kind of usage would be appropriate."

"Number two, the problem of washing up the Thermos at the end of the day is not particularly attractive."

But "mothers love the idea of giving kids hot lunches. I hear it

over and over again in groups."

Focus groups are small of consumers many organizations use to find out how people are coping with new marketing plans and other business concerns involving consumer goods and services.

What lunch is carried represents "almost a rite of passage," Lyon said. "The characteristic carry some kind of box," he said. "Teenagers wouldn't be dead with it. They litter brown bags."

Lyon said he expects a technological innovation to be insulated carriers more able to older kids.

Pigs used in cancer research

United Press International
Researchers are gazing into the eyes of miniature pigs to learn more about a cure for skin cancer. Bred to a diminutive size especially for medical research, these pigs actually cure themselves of skin cancer they de-

veloped as a side effect of being bred so small.

But in the process of curing their own cancer, the pigs appear to lose their eyesight.

University of Missouri researchers have found that as the pigs cure themselves of skin can-

cer, their eyes mysteriously turn white, blood vessels that feed the outer retina are damaged and vision is impaired. By examining this disorder, scientists hope to unravel the pigs' curative powers.

The symptoms observed in

the pigs' eyes are similar to those of humans. Researchers are trying

to understand the mechanism of the pigs' immunization as the first step in learning how the animals fight cancer.

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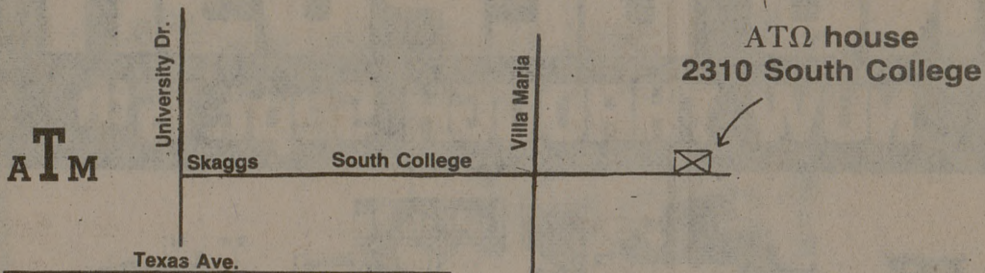
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Today's almanac

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On this date in history:
In 1783, the signing of the Treaty of Paris officially ended the seven-year Revolutionary War. The newly formed United States of America had won its independence from Great Britain.

In 1916, the Allies turned

back the Germans in World I's Battle of Verdun.

In 1939, Great Britain declared war on Germany. It followed six hours later, joined by Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada.

In 1979, Hurricane Gilbert, one of the strongest storms of the century, hit the U.S. Eastern Seaboard, sweeping through the beach, where it left more than 1,000 dead and caused billions of dollars in damages.

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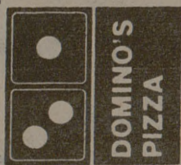
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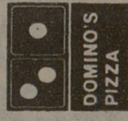
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