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# Back to school in the future

A&M specialist envisions computer-guided learning system

By Victoria Larroca

Reporter

No more pencils and no more books in school. Sounds like a great idea, but it'll never happen, right? Wrong, according to a Texas A&M learn-

ing technology specialist.

Dr. Lynn Stevenson says the schools of the future will not have any pencils or books. Even though there will still be teachers, she says, they will be called educational engineers, and their purpose will not be to teach but to monitor the progress of students as they learn at their com-

Stevenson foresees the entire educational system revolving around computers and all the learners (students) being completely computer-

Schools of the future will focus on the concept that the end of learning is the end of life, Steven-

Although this school of the future may be years away, an instructional management program designed by Texas A&M educator Dr. Michael Burger is already being used by Stevenson.

"An instructional and administrative management system called HeadMaster has been de-

signed to assist educators in the planning and evaluation of instruction," Stevenson said. "The software provides teachers and administrators with a tool which will reduce papers." with a tool which will reduce paperwork yet in-crease their ability to monitor instructional information and improve the planning and evaluation of instruction and instructional programs.

The HeadMaster progam will free the instructional staff from technical time-consuming duties such as grading and lesson planning and allow them to interact more with the learners, Steven-

'Many people charge that such a system with so many computers could only be impersonal, but the result is just the opposite," she said. "The system is specifically designed to meet the needs of each individual student, and student profile information will help to continuously revise the programs to keep up with the current level of the

The physical aspects of the learning system will change as well, Stevenson said. An example facility would resemble the hub of a wheel with a bubble atrium encasing the center's instructional core, she said. Lush foliage in a cobblestone courtyard and plants suspended from the convex sides of the bubble would add a natura

sphere to the learning environment.
Inside the bubble, an engineer at them data base will monitor each student's act while a second engineer moves around pro assistance to the learners, said Stevenson computers will be able to tap into such res as chief executive officers and Fortune 50 panies through the use of teleconference

surrogate travel, she said. "Some learners will be receiving correct formation from consultants or educationa neers and will be revising projects," sh "Others will be involved in teleconference corporate contacts, information retrieval view, surrogate travel options or the opment of product or text."

Stevenson said the current system of educisis very inefficient because it advances at su

"A student's individual learning ability focated by the present structure," she sai dents progress on different levels. The of the school of the future would allow move at their own rate and finish their sch

## **Budget Board uses** execution authority to relieve prisons

AUSTIN (AP) - The Legislative nal employees and increased use of Budget Board, using the new budget execution authority for the first time, on Wednesday approved most of Gov. Bill Clements' emergency plan to help relieve prison and jail

crowding.

Included was approval of a \$9.2 million transfer for construction of five Texas Department of Corrections trusty camps that will each hold 200 inmates.

In a separate action, the board approved the transfer of \$31.7 million that the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation will use to meet standards set in the settlement of lawsuits challenging the way the agency runs its state schools and state hospitals.
All of the LBB actions came in re-

sponse to proposals made by Clements under the so-called budget execution authority approved by voters in November 1985 and imple-mented by the 1987 Legislature. Under the system, a governor can pro-pose spending changes when the Legislature is not in session. The proposals must be approved by the LBB, which includes five members transferred for the Bexar County from each chamber of the Legis-

prisons, comes from unexpended TDC appropriations. The new facilities should be ready before August 1989.

1989.

LBB members also approved Clements' proposals for increased funds for the Adult Probation Comcluding reviews of abandoned airmission and Board of Pardons and Paroles. The probation commission ships that had be will get \$2 million to use for additioland Islands war.

electronic monitoring of probationers. The money was transferred from funds appropriated for other probation purposes, but not spent.
The Board of Pardons and Pa-

roles was authorized to spend \$1.7 million to expand its programs. That money also came from unexpended funds previously allocated for the

The LBB balked at a Clements proposal in which the old Bexar County Jail, which was replaced in the spring by a new jail, would be used to house parole violators who otherwise would go back to TDC. The facility would be operated by a private company. private company.

Board members had a variety of questions about the plan. They voted to put \$3.3 million for the program on hold, and said they would reconsider it at their September meeting.

"There are a lot of ifs," said House Speaker Gib Lewis, an LBB member. "We're concerned about giving approval when there are so many unanswered questions."

proposal, including \$2 million from \$12 million emergency fund given The money for the trusty camps, to his office by the Legislature last which will be minimum-security year.

Sen. Bob Glasgow, D-Stephen-ville, rapped Clements for not spending the money sooner to help

ports, old radar facilities and British ships that had been used in the Falk-

### **Local Briefs**

### Oversupply of cotton spurs price drop

By Gina Rumore

Reporter

Texas cotton farmers are surviving the drought, but an overabundance of cotton is causing market prices to fall, a Texas Agricultural Extension Service econ-Carl Anderson said the dam-

age from the drought is located in the coastal bend and South Texas

regions.
"About 50 percent of the cotton grown in Texas is produced in Lubbock and the surrounding counties," Anderson said. They've been lucky with the rain this year and have produced favorable crops."

Anderson said cotton is suf ing because the cotton crop twice as large as normal, dema for domestic apparel dropped, and exports have creased.
"There has been a loss in a
port markets for 1988 because

China and Pakistan also hadgo crops for the year," Anders said. "They were able to der cotton to other nations for loprices than the U.S., at least cents less in some cases.'

Anderson said the market very unstable, and weather con tions over the next sever months will decide which w market prices move.

### It's just the fax for doctoral candidate

By Allison Seale

For a Texas A&M doctoral candidate working on his disser-tation in Saudi Arabia, College Station and graduation are only a few "fax" away.

Tom Heilman of Houston has been in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia since last September, working to upgrade the medical technology program at Abul-Aziz University while writing his dissertation. With the use of a facsimile ma-

chine, Heilman transmits his dissertation, "Predicting Academic Success in Medical Laboratory Technician Programs in Texas Public, Community and Junior Colleges," one chapter at a time to Dr. Gayle Schmidt, associate professor of health and physical education and Heilman's doctoral committee chairman.

the chapter by facsimile a wlater to Heilman.

"This method of commi tion is not foolproof," Schmisaid. "There are bugs in the tem. Schmidt said that one

Heilman did not realize that receiving machine had run ou paper and when she received chapter, it was missing se

pages.
Another disadvantage
Schmidt said, is Heilman's a
sence when she has a question making misinterpretation and possibility.

"It's a real test of written of munication when you can communicate face-to-face, Schmidt said. "You're forced depend the words and the wor

Heilman will return to Colle Schmidt reviews the pages, Station in August and should adds her comments and returns ceive his Ph.D. in December.

# Blind listeners like what they hear on station that broadcasts comics, books

than 2,000 area residents want to enjoy a good book after a long day, they settle into their favorite chairs, close their eyes and turn on the ra-

A special radio station in Dallas — donations, mainly from United Way with what may be the state's smallest but most faithful audience — delivers 13 hours of material from books, newspapers and magazines daily to the visually impaired.

"Our main goal is to give them information they can't get anywhere else," explained Dawn Filomena, station manager for the North Texas Radio Reading Service.

The station, which prefers to be known as NTRB (North Texas Radio for the Blind), is one of 101 similar reading services nationwide. The only other Texas station serves the Houston area.

annual budget of less than

Only those with a special receiver who live within about 80 miles of Dallas can hear the station, whose signal is broadcast piggyback alongside programming from KERA-FM. receivers are purchased with

'We figure it costs \$40 a year per receiver to run the station," mena said. "Once a year, we ask our listeners to make a donation. Some of them can only afford to give \$3 or

\$5. They give what they can. The service is critical, Filomena said. The 12-year-old station doesn't just rehash the day's news, something listeners could get elsewhere, but gives them information other-

sight, she said. Relying on a pool of 250 volunteers to develop and record its programming, the station has a minusular offerings is a one-hour Sunday ads and describes the day's comics from the Dallas Morning News, the

Dallas Times Herald and the Fort quests. That is why it begann Worth Star-Telegram. reviews of local plays, something the start of the

with the day's newspaper editorials, local columns and horoscope listings, a collection the station calls its Newspaper of the Air."

The station also has daily onehour readings from three different books selected from the New York Times best-seller list. And, possibly because more than

60 percent of the audience is elderly, one of the biggest attractions is a daily review of newspaper obituaries.

"I had one little old lady call me a couple of months ago and remind me how important they were," Filomena said. "She said, 'You know, I can't die until I know all my friends wise denied to them by their lack of have died.' And she was serious. When you're that age, it's embarrassing to try and call a friend and find out that way they are dead.

The station occasionally adds to its programming because of listener re- trouble getting it back.

Other readers provide listeners one had previously provided

visually impaired.
"People just assume blind don't go to plays and move watch TV," Filomena said. that's wrong, especially for the teners who were sighted before

Another highly valued featu 5 a.m. show on Saturday, in volunteer sifts through what appear to be junk mail. For blind listeners, who often shop others, it is the only chance t to become familiar with gro pharmaceutical prices and plan often-tight budgets.

The station's format appart might be popular with sighted ple as well. Station manager is ine Garrison used to have on problem: "Every time I loane one of our receivers so people see what we are doing, I would

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