

New camp, classes offer computer help

Back in the "good ol'days" summer camp activities were centered around a swimming hole, a campfire and lots of fresh air.

Move over nostalgic memories and make way for technology — the University's first computer camp will be here Aug. 7-20.

The camp was designed for children ages nine to 15 and offers something for those who've never touched a computer — as well as those with some experience. It is only one of many computer-oriented courses the University Continuation Center is offering this summer.

The classes and camp are the result of a "tremendous need" to educate and familiarize the public about computers, says Nina Katz of the Continuation Center.

About 100 budding scientists will get extensive "hands-on" experience with more than three hours daily in formal computer instruction by teachers skilled in both computers and children.

As computers become more common in schools, computer expertise will be a must. "This is the future," Katz says. One woman who registered her son for the camp told Katz the child "doesn't go anywhere without his Atari."

Eventually, learning to use computers will be as important as learning to drive a car, says Tim Riordon, a local computer consultant who helped design one of the summer

computer classes.

Computer campers will learn the relatively simple LOGO computer language, which was developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology specifically for children. LOGO is only one of many different computer languages.

"LOGO is our language of choice because it allows students to quickly learn to write programs that create graphics and interactive games. These highly motivating projects foster a tremendous amount of problem solving on the part of our student programmers," states a continuation center brochure.

Not surprisingly, the first thing most kids want to do with a computer is make video games. With their new language, they can create rudimentary designs — but nothing that would out sell Pac Man, Riordon says.

Children tend to learn this "foreign" language easier than adults do, possibly because of their young age. "They say the time to teach a language is when you're a kid. They (children) don't have any fears or preconceptions about technology as adults often do," Riordon says.

Although the camp's Apple computers will be the center of attraction, traditional summer camp activities will also abound. The young programmers will take a rafting trip, travel to Oregon's coast, have barbecues and watch movies, as well as participate

in organized sports activities.

Registrations will be accepted until the camp's first day or until capacity is reached. Program cost is \$425. A non-refundable deposit must be included with the registration form for each child.

"Children" of all ages will participate in a related seminar called "Computer Graphics For Kids." The word "kid" is in the title to imply the class's exploratory nature, Riordon says.

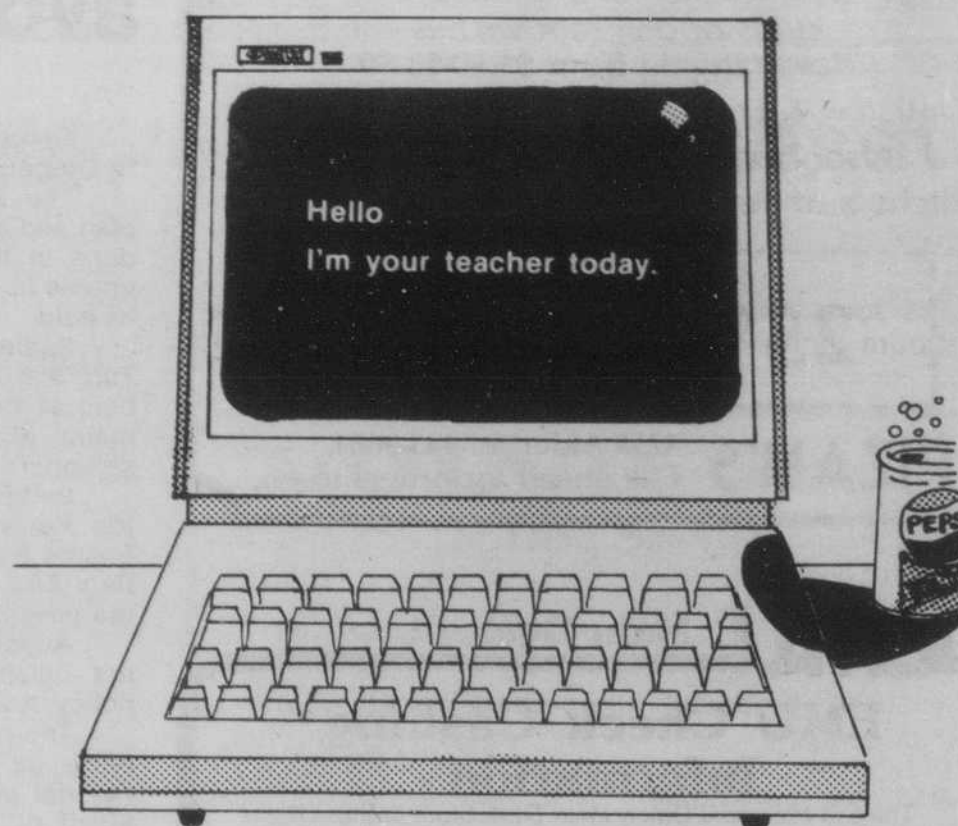
Unlike the computer camp, participants won't learn how to program computers, but they will make computer graphics and animations. Using a special digitizing camera, students can take any photograph and turn it into a computer image that they can experiment with on the screen.

A technological graphics tool called a "light pen" is hooked to the computer and draws lines when touched to the screen. These "drawings" can be filled in with colors and used in computer art presentations.

The class was designed by Riordon and Ken O'Connell, chairman of the fine arts department, and will meet two hours daily for two weeks. Several sessions are available: June 27-July 8, 12:30-2:30 or 3-5 p.m.; July 26-Aug. 5, 12:30-2:30 or 3-5 p.m. Enrollment is limited to 20 students. The cost for either week is \$65.

A more technical graphics class called "Microcomputer Graphics Workshop" (CI 408G) will give students "hands-on" experience in microcomputer graphics hardware and software. Familiarity with microcomputers is recommended. O'Connell will also teach this class which runs July 11-15, 9-12 a.m. and 1-4 p.m. The class costs \$250 and is worth three credit hours.

Courses are also available for elementary education teachers.



Graphic by Shawn Bird



Emerald photo

The University will offer computer courses for kids this summer.

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