2,000 See Computers At School

By ART BRANSCOMBE
Denver Post Education Writer

The look of the Computer Age — teachers and principals learning to run computers side-by-side with students and a teen-ager doing the teaching in another — was everywhere last week at Highland Hills High School.

It was a three-day "Colorado Computers in Education Seminar" and more than 2,000 turned out for just one day, overflowing the parking lot, flowing through the halls of the school and creating standing-room-only jams in some classrooms.
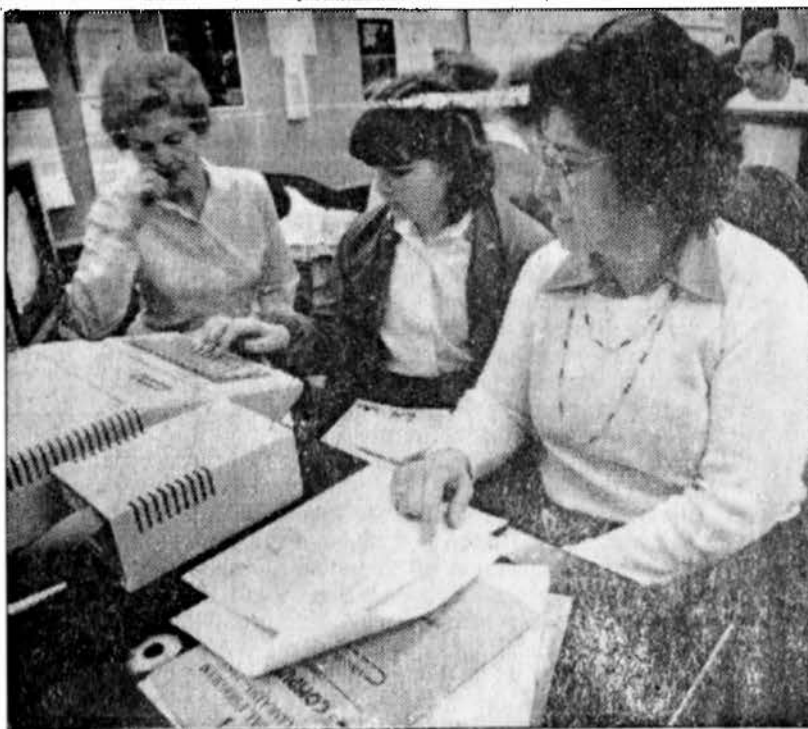
In one small science room, 40 persons crowded around 15 Apple microprocessors. The attraction, besides the computers, was that Jan Bybee, resource specialist for computer technology in the Jefferson County Public Schools, was teaching "Logo," the computer language designed for elementary-age children in grades kindergarten through six.

Staring with puzzlement at what was on one computer screen were Marie Torres, a fourth-grade teacher at Bertha Heid Elementary School in Thornton; Colette Rouse, who teaches the fourth grade at Dennison Fundamental School in Jefferson County; and sandwiched in between them, Beth Goode, a sixth-grader at Sacred Heart School in Boulder.

"We need help; it's not obeying our orders!" Mrs. Rouse called, beckoning to Bybee.

A message on the screen said patiently, "There's no procedure named LT 90."

A visitor asked Mrs. Torres if

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From left, Colette Rouse, Dennison Elementary teacher, Lakewood; Beth Goode, a student at Sacred Heart; Marie Torres, teacher at Bertha Heid Elementary.

she really needed to learn that stuff.

"We're going to (need to)," she replied, somewhat grimly. And Mrs. Rouse added that her school, like all Jefferson County public schools, is going to have 15 computers by next fall, maybe as early as this spring. (The Jefferson County school board recently voted to spend $2.9 million to lease-purchase nearly 1,700 computers.)

Around the corner and down the hall, in another workshop, Bonnie Scudder, of the Denver Public Schools bilingual office, was showing off a multilingual computer program called "LIRIC" (for Language Instruction for Recent Immigrants Through Computer Technology). It teaches English to students who speak Spanish, Vietnamese, Laotian or Hmong.

As the teachers who had caught her presentation filed out, Scudder

mentioned that she had to cram intensely for the last two weeks to be well enough versed on the program to describe it. Next time, she added, she is going to call more on the guy who created the complex, five-language program.

Who is that?

She introduced Timothy J. Huckabay, 17, a junior in Dr. Irwin Hoffman's nationally famed computer lab at George Washington High School.

He showed a couple of screens of his program. One diagram broke down a simple English sentence into subject and verb. If those words are new to a Laotian student, Scudder said, all the student has to do is hit a key marked "Escape" and the computer brings up a screen saying the same thing in Laotian — a language with an alphabet entirely different from English.