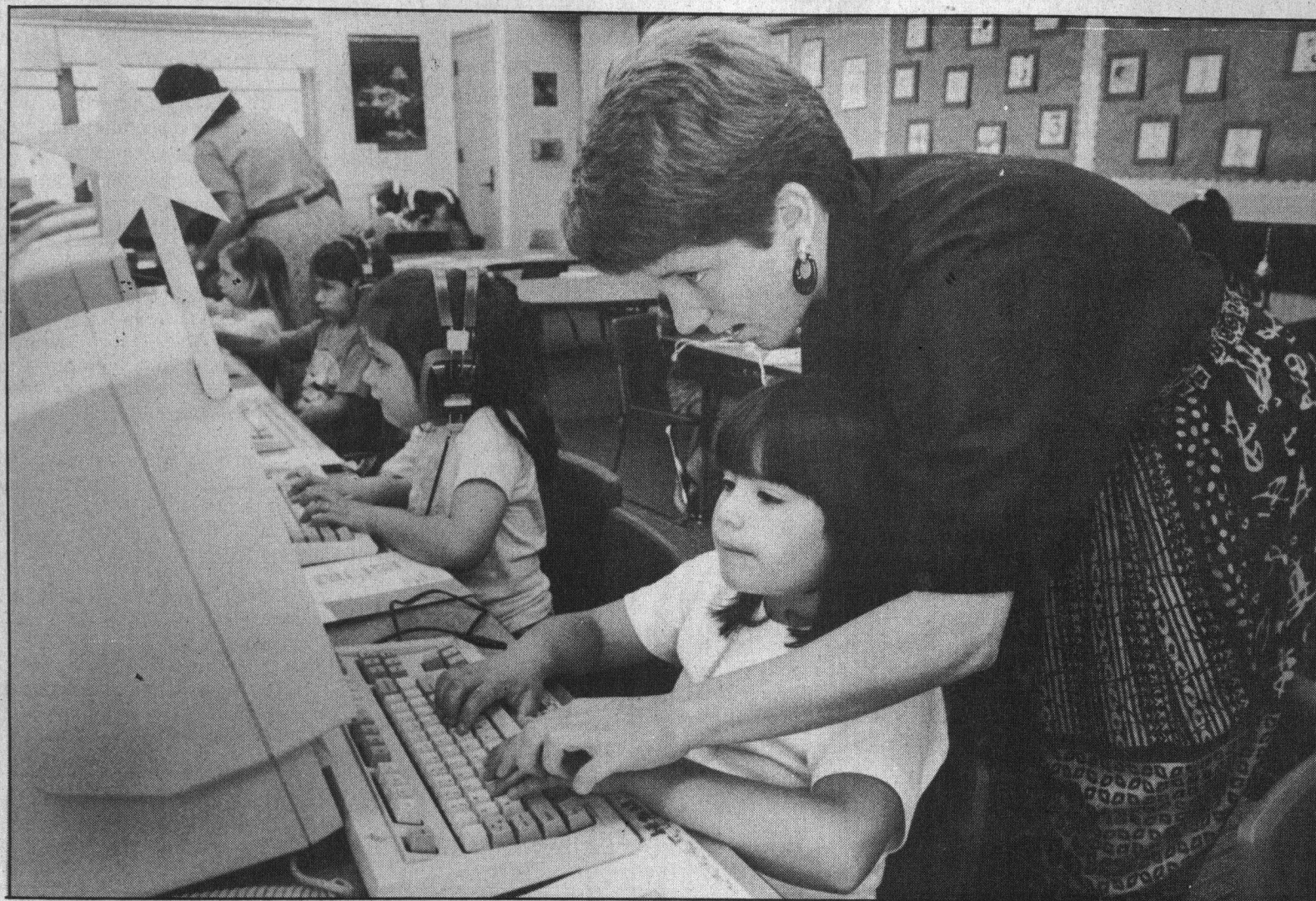


Education in the high-tech age



Kurt Ellison

First-grade teacher Erin Haley helps Dora Martinez learn how to use computer keyboard.

By EMILIO ALVARADO
STAFF WRITER

A few years ago, American educators were fond of saying that for students to be competitive in the workplace of the future they needed to know at least two languages — Spanish and computer.

Well, the future is here and doing well at Starlight Elementary School, where students are not only taught by bilingual teachers but they also have more than 100 computers they

ing everything from teaching them to read by using sound to helping them find a library book.

While learning on computers is an integral part of the students' daily work, the teacher remains the focus in the classroom, said Bonnie Wolf, the school's technical coordinator.

"It takes a little while to realize we are not losing something — we are gaining some new technology," Wolf said.

"A computer is only as smart as we make it," she said. "We

that leads children to learn material more effectively.

"Kids are going to be much more computer proficient," Haley said. "They are attracted to the computers."

Along with having the computers in the classroom, students also attend reading and writing and math computer labs several times a week. Reading and writing programs use a phonetic alphabet that helps students put words together. Students can move along at

encyclopedia has replaced the traditional set of books. Students can use the system to research hundreds of subjects and call up any photos and graphics that accompany the topic. Once students have the text on the screen, they can add their notes if they want and have a copy of the material printed out.

In the spring, the school expects to get several lap-top computers that students and their parents can use at home. The programs will include reading,