

MTA's New Learning Resource Center Makes Education a High-Tech Experience



Learning Resource Center staffers Wayne Nguyen and Marlene Love show study materials to Nicky Astilla of the Mail Room.

By Bill Heard, Editor

(October 25) Readin', 'riting and 'rithmetic got a whole new look at the MTA with the opening, today, of the Learning Resource Center - a computer "laboratory" where employees can learn subjects ranging from basic math and spelling to PowerPoint.



Jackie Davidson of Quality Assurance tries out the computer program tutorial at the Learning Resource Center.

Located on the fourth floor at Headquarters, the lab will be open from 7:30 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday to any employee who wants to enroll in the scores of courses provided by Human Resources

Development and Training. Some computer courses, available on CD Rom, may be checked out for home study.

"The Learning Resource Center is for use by all employees, contract and non-contract, to enhance professional skills or for personal development," says Deborah Bishop, senior training coordinator. "With the computers available here, employees can practice with the software or complete the math, reading or writing tutorials."

Computer software program tutorials include Windows 95, Microsoft Word 97, Access 97, Excel 97, Outlook 97 and PowerPoint 97. A student can learn a program with prompts from the CD Rom or can watch an instructional video on a screen placed next to the computer.

The Center, which features eight computer-equipped study carrels, also provides a tutorial in typing and a program called, Simuweb, an Internet simulator. Simuweb teaches the basic concepts of the world wide web, plus use of browsers and home page design.

Perhaps the most extensive computer-based tutorials are provided by the Lifetime Learning Series of 111 "books" covering basic to advanced levels of math, writing and reading. Each book includes a lesson and exam.

Although most lessons take about an hour or so, a student can proceed through a book at his or her own pace. The system permits students to keep track of the lessons they've completed and their scores on each exam.

The 57-book math series covers such topics as fractions and decimals, geometry, graphs and data usage, becoming progressively more difficult as they proceed into algebra I and II. The writing series of 10 books covers spelling, nouns and verbs, sentence structure and style. The 44-book reading series proceeds through practical and general to literature, science and history.

"These courses would provide an excellent review and background if you were preparing to take a college placement exam," says Susan Robles, a trainer and analyst. "You'd be way ahead of the game."

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