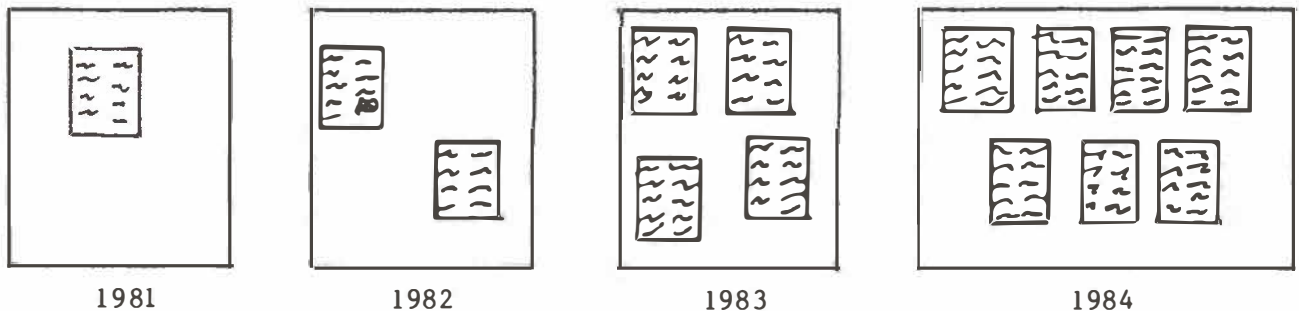# Microcomputer Corner

by W. George Cathcart

Editor's Note: *This is the first in a series of short articles dealing with computer education and applications. The "Computer Corner" is intended to provide practical suggestions for teaching computer literacy primarily at the elementary and junior high school levels. Feedback in the form of comments, criticism, suggestions, and so on is welcome. Correspondence should be addressed to the author at the Department of Elementary Education, University of Alberta, Edmonton T6G 2G5.*

"Gauge the Impact of Computers Using the Telephone Directory"

In the *Elementary Computer Literacy Curriculum Guide* (Alberta Education, 1983), the stated goal for topic 5, how computers affect society, is "to have students assess the current and potential impact of computers on society" (p. 17). To help achieve this goal you might have students collect copies of the yellow pages of the telephone directory for the past several years. Because a major impact of computers on society is indicated by the rapidly increasing number of firms in the computer field, students could: (1) Count the number of pages of computer-related ads for each year. (2) Count the number of firms offering computer sales and services for each year. (3) Compare these statistics on a graph. (4) Use a sharp blade to remove the pages with computer ads, and mount these as a bulletin-board display. Two copies of each directory are needed for this activity.

| 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 |

Your students may also analyze the ads in the yellow pages to determine for each year the number of new firms advertising and the number of firms that went out of business (that is, they advertised last year, but not this year). Your class might speculate on why some computer firms went out of business. These and other ideas for teaching computer literacy can be found in *Learning About Computers* by Gloria M. Cathcart and W. George Cathcart, recently published by Gage.