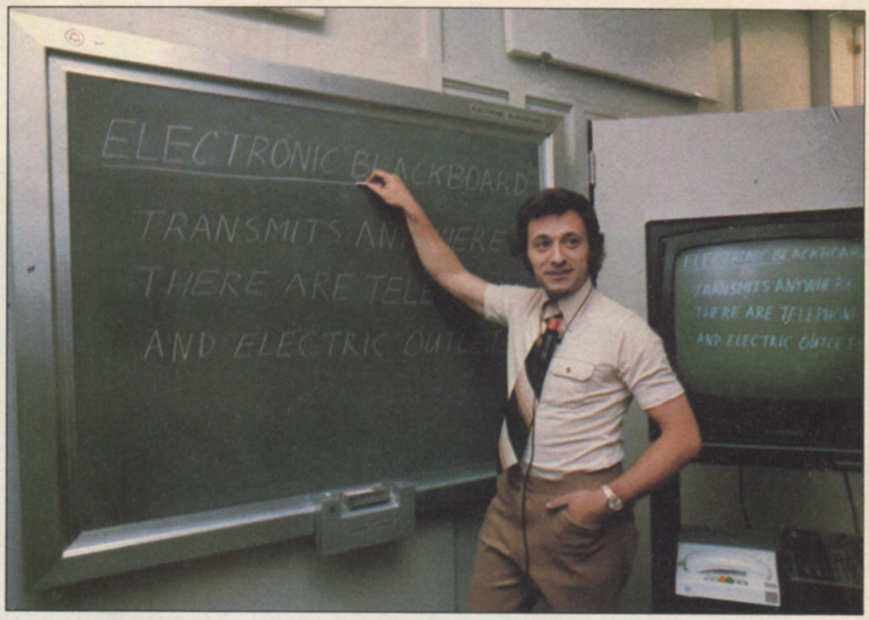
also afford to maintain a computer laboratory, Luerhmann says; the cost is about the same. He predicts that many schools will realize this and establish programs, especially at the junior-high level, in the next three or four years.

What should such programs cover? "It doesn't bother me that people don't know the difference between RAM and ROM, or between bit and byte," says Luerhmann. "I don't think most people ought to care about the hardware. It's like the automobile. People should know how to drive, even if they don't know what's going on under the hood. By driving a computer, I mean programing it, being in charge, communicating with it."

And he adds, "A typical programing language uses only 50 words. It's not like learning French. Most kids pick it up in a few hours. It's not a burden; it's fun. And if the course is good, the students don't just learn the language; they also turn it around to solve some interesting problems."

For adults who don't want their children or their employers to regard them as computer illiterates, Luehrmann recommends taking extension courses—with at least half the classroom time devoted to hands-on computer work. "An alternative," he says, "is to go out and buy a cheap computer, in the $500–$1200 range, and use the instruction manuals to learn how to run the machine. The computer won't provide $500 worth of services—at least not in the beginning—but it will certainly give you $500 worth of education." —*Michael O'Gara*



This electronic blackboard, developed by Bell Labs, allows instructor to write or draw on it, and have his words or drawing reappear instantaneously at another site. The image travels over standard telephone lines and appears on a video monitor; it is accompanied by two-way voice communication. Any number of outlets can be connected with the originating site.

GROUCHES, MONSTERS—AND LEARNING

Some of the children are swimming in a pool filled 3 feet deep with multicolored plastic tennis balls. Others are wading across a swamp of varied-density foam. Over yonder, youngsters are going wild over a variety of computer games and scientific experiments. Still others are devouring natural food they've just seen cooked behind glass-walled ovens. And a group of toddlers is exploring an imitation Sesame Street TV studio, complete with lights, cameras, and Oscar's trash can.

Wecome to Sesame Place! As Disney Studios spawned Disneyland (and World) so, in an intriguing experiment opening July 1 near Langhorne, Pennsylvania, the educational TV show Sesame Street is giving birth to Sesame Place. Of course, it's replete with representations of Oscar the Grouch, Big Bird, and the amiable Cookie Monster.

The point of the park, says project planner Marilyn Rothenberg, is for children "to learn through play," just as it is with the TV show. Enticed by all the fun, kids from 3 to 12 are supposed to make discoveries about the world they live in—about textures, materials, light, sound, and motion. No mind-bending thrills and chills in this amusement park. "The kids bring their own energy and creativity," says promotion director Robert Hatch. "They get out of the park what they put in."

Built by Busch Entertainment Corp. in conjunction with the Children's Television Workshop (CTW), creator of Sesame Street and the Electric Company, the park will consist of a large pavilion and a surrounding playground on 2½ acres next to a suburban shopping mall.

There will be room for 3,000 children and parents, at $4 apiece. The "ball crawl" mentioned above will be for toddlers. Stilt walking and rope climbing are for the bigger fry. Working-model science displays that kids can operate will demonstrate the basic principles of pullies and windmills. Sixty computer games will stress the interaction between child and machine: "They're much more sophisticated than arcade-style TV games," says Hatch.

If the venture is as successful as Busch Entertainment and CTW expect, the company will build a half-dozen more Sesame Places across the country by 1985. "Right now there's a scarcity of healthy, stimulating places to take young children," says CTW's Marilyn Rothenberg. "A few science museums have bits and pieces of the Sesame Place concept, but no place has the whole thing. We still dichotomize too much between work and play in our culture. With Sesame Place, we hope to inform parents that play can be delightfully worthwhile." —*John Sedgwick*

HOW'S YOUR URDU, OR MAY WE SPEAK HAUSA?

America is crippled, linguistically, and this shortcoming threatens to get worse—and to impair our overseas relations—in the years ahead. A Modern Language Association (MLA) task force reports that the "less commonly taught languages" account for "only 1 percent of the nation's secondary school foreign language enrollments and 10.2 percent of the post-secondary enrollments. Yet these are the languages spoken by more than 80 percent of the world's population." (The languages include everything but English, French, German, Italian, Latin, and Spanish.)

Last year's report by the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies pointed out that our linguistic shortsightedness—and chauvinism—are severely handicapping the United States in the world market free-for-all. Sen. S.I. Hayakawa, a semantics expert, has observed that there are 10,000 Japanese salesmen on the beat in America, all of