

Policy on use of calculators in class varies by department

By Jody Beem
Staff Reporter

Since the first calculators hit the market in the early 1970s, attitudes of students and professors about use of them in class has changed, some UNL professors say.

However, even today policy dictating whether calculators can be used by students in class varies from department to department.

"We have never allowed calculators in any exam," said Walter Mientka, statistics and mathematics professor. "We are much more interested in the process than the results."

Mientka said he lets students use calculators with homework assignments. However, he said that is his personal decision not the entire math department's.

Student use of calculators is accepted in engineering classes, said Dennis Alexander, associate professor of mechanical engineering.

"We're engineers. It's an absolute necessity" because of the complexity of problems, Alexander said.

In the College of Business Administration, each professor decides whether to allow calculators in class, said Robert Raymond, accounting professor. Raymond allows students to use calculators because they're more efficient, he said. However, he only allows students to use calculators with basic functions because people with programmable calculators might not learn basic accounting skills.

Students need to know basic accounting even if they don't have a calculator with them, Raymond said.

Calculators originally weren't allowed in math classes, Mientka said, because they were expensive and students who couldn't afford one were at a disadvantage. Even today, he said, exams are designed to be taken without the help of calculators.

The business college also did not allow calculators to be used on exams when calculators first appeared on the market, Raymond said.

In 1970, a large pocket-sized calculator cost about \$395, said Bob Gobber, owner of Nebraska Business Electronics.

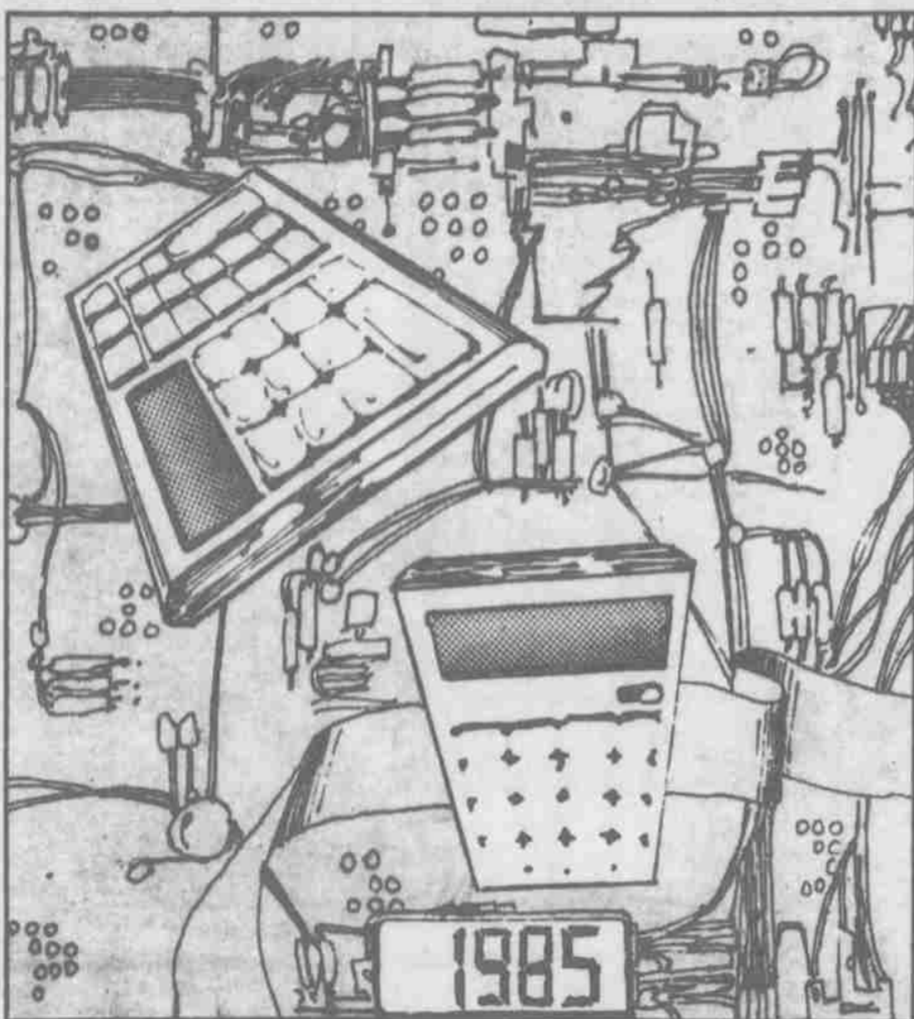
In 1975, a small pocket-sized calculator could be bought for \$85. Now a good solar calculator costs about \$7, he said.

"Today you can get many more functions for a lot less money," Gobber said.

"Programmed calculators that display words or bar graphs, interface to a printer and have memory also are now available, Gobber said. A calculator loaded with engineering and calculus programs costs between \$125 and \$175, he said.

"You have a computer, almost," Gobber said. "The manual is thicker than the calculator."

Now some people are starting to throw their calculators away because it costs more to buy new batteries for their calculator than to buy a new calculator, Gobber said. Calculators have become a necessity in our society, and always will be a need for calculators, he said.



Tom Lauder/Daily Nebraskan

Health guides expanded

By Deb Hlooker
Staff Reporter

The University Health Center's new student guides aren't plain-labeled anymore.

A new cover design and 44 pages of additional information have been added to the handbooks.

The old student handbooks were 10 pages long, and described the health center's services. The new handbook contains all of this information in the first seven pages. The rest of the 44 pages are dedicated to basic health care.

Fleischli said he thought that if the health care section was included, students would be less likely to

throw out the books and more likely to keep them for reference.

But the added quality and content brought added production expenses. Fleischli said the new handbooks cost more than double what the old ones did. To compensate for the increase, the health center will not send handbooks to all students as they have in the past, he said. Instead, only new undergraduates, dentistry and law graduate students, health aides, student assistants and various university organizations will receive the new handbooks.

People who want a handbook can get one at the health center after Nov. 15, Fleischli said.

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