LISD students learn coding skills

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Close to 400 Laredo ISD students got their first taste of coding this summer.

Local elementary school students in Gifted and Talented programs participated in the Discovery Challenge Academy, a three-week summer course focused on the world of computer science and coding.

Students learned the basics of coding via the Code.org curriculum that is structured from the most basic coding skills to the most advanced. Lessons are composed of both plugged (online activities) and unplugged (paper-based activities) which allow students to see how coding is a translation of basic real world functions that can be transformed from paper to computer.

Each week students were introduced to a different course level. The program started with basic content in Course 1, which began the first week of summer school.

LISD / Courtesy

Pictured is a C.L. Milton Elementary school teacher and fifth-grade student Ulises Torres at the LISD Discovery Challenge Academy.

learning they encounter in their academic careers."

The three-week summer course includes five lessons per day for a total of four courses to be completed by each student at the end of the program. Students begin the day with a journal entry where they are

es of computer science," said Vanessa Palumbo, teacher at C.L. Milton Elementary School. "I am very proud of the work these students have done and fortunate that our students are being allowed to explore innovative ways that inspire them to keep learning."

Ulises Torres, a fifth-

Course 1 taught students how to input basic computer instructions for a particular action. The content increased in difficulty and skills in courses 2-4. By the end of the program and the last week of summer school, students learned how to build their own games and interactive stories.

"The most important skill the students are obtaining is persistence," said Elizabeth Sandoval, director of instructional technology. "Oftentimes, some of the lessons include puzzles that can be challenging to solve, but students are learning the necessary skills to work together, to collaborate and network to find a solution and complete the task. We feel confident our students will take many of these skills and apply them to any new

asked to reflect and learn a new vocabulary concept that pertains to computer technology. Terminology such as digital citizenship, URL, debugger and algorithm are a few of the concepts the students have learned and applied to the drawing and games they created during each lesson.

This is the first year the coding curriculum has been introduced to elementary school students in third to fifth grade Gifted and Talented programs at their respective campuses.

"This is a great way for students to learn to use their imagination and to learn to build on new concepts as they create their very own drawings and games. We are creating students who are literate and proficient in the concepts and practic-

grade student at C.L. Milton Elementary School, signed up for the coding program.

"My summer has been off to a great start, and I have enjoyed attending the Discovery Challenge Academy because each new day I learned a new concept and look forward to creating games where I get to see my characters move simply by applying the codes we create in the classroom," Torres said.

Code.org is a nonprofit organization led by Hadi Partovi that aims to encourage people, particularly school students in the United States, to learn computer science. The curriculum includes coding lessons, and the initiative also targets schools in an attempt to encourage them to include more computer science classes in their curricula.