

## guest opinion

Editor's note: Beth Sorenson is a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences majoring in art.

by Beth Sorenson

The education process should be a *joie de vie*. Yet, we discover today at UNL it is a way of 'getting by'. To take 16 hours of a foreign language is a royal pain. This semester makes my third time around for French 11. My first two efforts expired when I realized my teachers didn't know what they were talking about. One teaching assistant had never been to France, and the other one made the country sound like the DB&G of Europe.

Having lived in Europe and attended school with French children, these classes became frustrating. This time around I have a teaching assistant of French extraction and has spoken the language since birth. For those in our class who have never left Nebraska, her insight and understanding has given the feeling of accessibility beyond Nebraska. Even if this semester is followed by an inadequate teacher, I doubt that my excitement can be taken away.

I feel the foreign language and English composition requirements should not be

dropped. People who state they represent the arts and sciences majors certainly did not poll our French class. We voted unanimously to maintain the language requirement. The requirement should be revised to be applicable to the needs of the students. To lay the head on the chopping-block for five hours a semester of non-major credit is totally unrealistic. The present group requirement structure does not relate the cultural, political or economic background of the language studied.

A proposal before the faculty of the College of Arts & Sciences would strike freshman composition from requirements and make languages a voluntary category under humanities. Do this, and within the year some science or math major might be upset about the hours required in humanities. Or some art major is quietly conjuring some diabolical means by which to 'get-out' of the math or science requirement. To limit knowledge is to close the door on the world.

Language is a discipline—it's memory work. To write in any language, grammatical structure and correct spelling must be learned. There is no escape. It's one of those little realities of life which establishes communication between

people. Isn't the purpose of college to gain some inkling of knowledge even if there's a multitude of trash to wade through on the way to our major courses—so that we can better communicate and adapt to this rapidly changing life?

A solution would be to face reality. Tools of both oral and written communication are necessary. Not even Nebraskans can fantasize that way. Therefore, it is necessary to construct the most creative, alive and applicable means by which to teach the subject. This is not solely the responsibility of the faculty—students are equally responsible. When we pay tuition, we assume our right as an employer, not as a slave. As an employer, we must demand the highest quality education each professor is capable of producing.

He cannot produce this quality by wasting his time in committee meetings. Students cannot waste their time wearing their britches out on the Chancellor's carpet. Disciplines cannot be dodged but they can be made interesting.

I feel it would be better to demand a concerned language department and keep the doors of the world open, rather than retreat to the belief that "there is no place like Nebraska."

## arthur hoppe innocent bystander

Dear President: I, Joe Sikspak, American, take pen in hand to let you know I paid my taxes to keep this great land of ours strong and free and you can have it.

It takes me three nights running to figure out all those loopy forms you got. And no matter how I figure it, I still paid you \$1,213.04 to run the country in 1971.

Well, I'm teed off, naturally. So I go down to Paddy's Place for a 7-Up high or three. And I lay it to him.

"Paddy," I says, "I'm fed up to about here with sweating my you-know-what off to support a bunch of do-nothing welfare bums who loll around on the \$1213.04 the President takes out of my paycheck."

Now Paddy's one smark cookie. He's been to college and he's got plenty of time to read, business not being too good lately.

"The trouble with you, Joe," he says, "is you work."

"That's right," says I. "And these spongers don't. The President ought to make them."

"Which ones?" says he. "The rich or the poor?"

Well, he's kind of got me there. So I ask if he's gone bats. He reaches under the bar and pulls out this story from the *New York Times*. And it says how a millionaire gets \$720,000 a year from the government while a poor snook making \$3,000 gets 30 cents a week.

I tell him he better explain it to me. Slowly.

"Okay," he says. "The guy who makes a million a year would owe the government \$720,000 if he got it in wages like you. Only he doesn't. He gets it in tax-free municipal bonds, oil wells that deplete, real estate ventures that depreciate and the like. If he's smart, he doesn't pay a nickel."

"I should be so smart," says I.

"So, thanks to this government welfare plan," says Paddy, "He's \$720,000 richer. The government's \$720,000 poorer. And you got to make up the difference."

"It's going to take me a long time," says I. "Give me another 7-Up high."

"Now your poor snook at the other end of the scale," says Paddy, "about all he can deduct is the chiropractor bill for his aching back. And he's lucky if that makes him \$16 richer."

"Easy on the 7-Up," says I.



"It says here," says Paddy, putting on his specs, "that these two smart cats at the Brookings Institute figured up that the government gives away \$77 billion in these tax handouts. The six million poorest families got only \$92 million of that. And the 3,000 richest families got \$2.2 billion -- or 24 times as much."

"What do you call that?" says I.

"It's called the graduated income tax," says Paddy.

"What's it all mean, Paddy?" says I.

"It means, Joe," says he, taking off his specs, "that if you want the privilege of paying taxes in this great land of ours, you got to work for it."

So now I'm really teed off, President. I'm not against this graduated income tax thing, mind you. But you got to start graduating it the other way.

Mostwise, you got to make these welfare bums work for a buck like me. Rich and poor alike. I sure as hell don't deary love seeing my \$1,213.04 going to some deadbeat on the dole. But these millionaires is more than I can afford.

Truly yours,  
Joe Sikspak, American

Copyright Chronicle Publishing Co. 1972