

Foreign students advised on writing

The UNL Writing center, which opened this fall at Andrews 309, isn't for the English major or aspiring student novelist. In fact, it's not even for Americans. Instead, it serves the foreign student unfamiliar with the English language.

It aims to help these students improve their writing skills, in anything from simple grammar to writing technical lab reports.

It was started by UNL assistant linguistics professor Dr. Hassan Sharifi, a native of Iran, and is staffed by two graduate linguistics students.

It was funded by a special English teaching council grant. From each student, Sharifi takes a writing sample and prescribes an individual study course depending on ability.

Students may register pass/fail under English 399 to receive one to three independent study credit hours, or they can drop in at the Center during free time. Twelve students are registered this fall for credit.

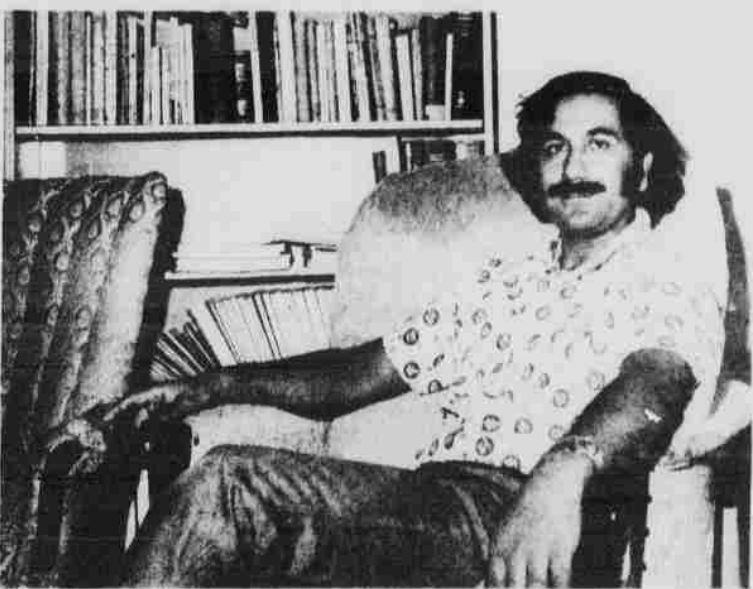
Sharifi said he believes the program is the only one of its kind at an American university.

"Most foreign students are a couple of levels above American kids," he explained. "The reason they aren't making it the way they ought to is because their English is a handicap."

He said most of UNL's 500 foreign students had only high school English, making technical scientific or math terminology as foreign as the U.S. itself.

Sharifi said the center seems successful.

"It is important for them (foreign students) to understand us," he said, "and it is important for us to understand them. They can't communicate if they don't know the language."



Hassan Sharifi develops writing center.

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Mike Hallmark, SWTS

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Chris Dinwiddle, UCSD

"I increased my reading speed 30% in the free study lesson and have been studying faster ever since."

Steve Tracy, SAC

"This course is probably the best course I've ever taken. It's really made my life at college much easier."

Tracy Dean, HCJC

"My grades have jumped more than a letter grade I spend about a third less time, too. I'd recommend this course to any student."

Michael David, UCLA

"I didn't believe that this course could do what you said it would. But it has done much, much more. Thank you."

Rita Wittwer, U of A

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