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## Exxon Foundation gives money to encourage abstract thought

The Exxon Educational Foundation has granted UNL \$97,200 for a project to help freshmen adjust to the abstract thinking methods of college work, according to Melvin C. Thornton, professor of mathematics and project staff members.

ADAPT (Accent on Development of Abstract Processes of Thought) is based on Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget's theory of mental development, according to Thornton. He said Piaget maintains that the fourth stage of mental development is the ability to think abstractly.

In a recent study, it was discovered that 50 per cent of the college students at age 18 or 19 have not developed this mental ability. This presents a problem because college courses use abstract thinking processes, Thornton said.

If the average freshman has not developed this ability it does not mean he is stupid, just that he hasn't been trained properly, he said. Eighty students will be recruited for the freshman program—40 to take part in the project, and 40 to serve as a control group, Thornton said.

Staff members will teach the classes, she said. At the end of the freshman year, freshmen can have up to 30 hours of their group requirements fulfilled by the program, Thornton said.

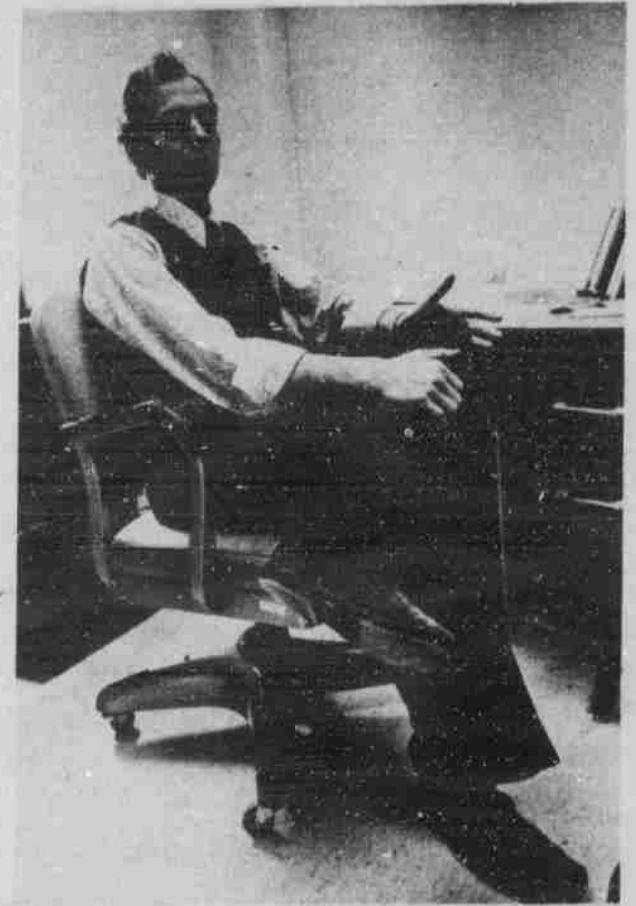
An advantage in this program is that only 40 students are in each class and all the instructors will know one another, he said.

An example of abstract thinking, Thornton said, is a billiard table problem. Given the dimensions of the table, the student would try to predict the ball's path when shot at a 45 degree angle from one corner, consider variables that would affect the path and thereby exercise abstract thinking, Thornton said.

Total cost of the project will be more than \$170,000, which will be used mainly for salaries, he said. The program will begin in the fall 1975, he said.

The staff includes the project director Robert

G. Fuller, physics dept., Melvin C. Thornton, mathematics dept.; Leslie C. Duly, history dept.; Robert D. Narveson, English dept.; Martin Q. Peterson, anthropology dept.; Jerry L. Petr, economics dept.; Carol A. Thornton, department of educational psychology and measurements; and Vernon G. Williams, Counseling Center and department of educational psychology and measurements.



Melvin C. Thornton, professor of mathematics, is a staff member of a new project to develop abstract thought.

## UNL receives \$65,000 grant

By Lisa Brown

Between \$65,000 and \$70,000 has been granted to UNL by the federal government to be used in a program to prepare leaders in graduate level vocational and technical education.

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) is financing the program under a part of the Education Professions Development Act (EPDA) for the first time for the fiscal year 1975.

Eight Fellows have been granted stipends through the program to be full-time graduate students, working on either their masters or doctorate degrees, said Hazel Crain, UNL vocation education coordinator and director of the EPDA program.

The grant is made directly to the college where it is kept in two separate business accounts. About \$28,000 is paid directly to UNL to establish the program, purchase resources and pay each of the Fellows' tuition and fees, Crain said.

From a separate account, each of the Fellows receives \$4,200 for himself and an extra \$500 for each of his dependents, she said. A specific amount is not granted by HEW to the institution because the total depends on several variants including the number of credit hours they complete, she said.

### Students assisted

"Students are encouraged and assisted in designing unique individual programs taking into account their backgrounds, competencies and career goals," Crain said.

Individual research and an internship are part of the program. She said the three-month internships offer the student an opportunity to determine his area of specialization. Several of the Fellows, Crain said, are interning under the State Department of Education.

EPDA Fellows constitute about one-half of the doctoral students in vocational education and

about one-fourth of the masters students.

The funds given to UNL for the program are used to provide resource materials and seminars reporting constitutional changes in vocational education. The money also pays for bringing speakers to UNL and sending EPDA students to hear speakers and talk with faculty members and students of other schools.

### Others may attend

Graduate students not funded by EPDA, but interested in the subject, may also attend the seminars, use the resource materials and hear the speakers brought to UNL. Crain said in this way the department may broaden and develop its program for the benefit of other graduate students.

Funding for the program will end following the 1975 summer session. Several of the students should be finished by then, she said, and those that haven't will complete the program on their own.

Students participating in the EPDA program and working toward their doctorate degrees are: Larry D. Bonner, C. LeRoy Michaelis, Jack C. Reed of Cedar Falls, Iowa, and Nick E. Teig.

Those working for their masters degrees are Richard G. Campbell of Seward; Richard K. Lake, John J. Vickery, and James W. White.

Reed, Teig and Lake applied for the funds through the state of Iowa's proposal and attend UNL because it has been approved for the program by HEW.

HEW chooses which applicants will receive money on the basis of their applications on which they explain their personal vocational goals.

UNL is one of 28 institutions chosen to receive federal funds. Other midwestern institutions to receive money are the University of Minnesota, the University of Missouri, Oklahoma State University and Colorado State University.

## calendar

### Thursday

- 7:30 a.m.—Chancellor Zumberge—Nebraska Union 203
- 10:30 a.m.—Union Program Council—Professor McNally "The Tactics of Terror"—Union Auditorium
- 12:30 p.m.—Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship—Union 337
- 5 p.m.—Council on Student Life Housing Policy Committee—Union 203
- 5:15 p.m.—Fees Allocation Board—Union 216
- 5:30 p.m.—Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia—Union Harvest Room C
- 5:30 p.m.—Council of American Indian Students—Union 232
- 6 p.m.—Nebraska Union Board—Union 243
- 6 p.m.—Fees Allocation Board—Minority Concerns—Union 216
- 6 p.m.—Fees Allocation Board—Services—Union 225 P
- 6 p.m.—Fees Allocation Board—Sports and Recreation—Union 225 Q
- 6 p.m.—Fees Allocation Board—Miscellaneous—Union 225 R
- 7 p.m. and 9:15 p.m.—"The Fire Within"—Sheldon Art Gallery
- 8 p.m.—Young Republicans "Regent Schwartzkopf"—Union 242