

Lab helps apprehensive students to communicate

By Sharon Armstrong

Students who suffer from anxiety when faced with a possible communication situation can be helped, according to Speech Prof. William Seiler.

Seiler said students experiencing this anxiety find themselves wanting to avoid communication situations. This condition is known as communication apprehension.

A Systematic Desensitization Lab was set up at UNL last spring to help students with communication apprehension. Seiler said the lab is successful with about 80 per cent of the students who participate.

"Communication apprehension is not stage fright," Seiler said. "It appears when a person sees no rewards in the communication process." The negative aspects outweigh the positive, he said.

The lab consists of three one-hour sessions in which students listen to tapes about muscle relaxation.

Rest difficult

"Most Americans don't know how to relax," Seiler said. This is the first step in reducing the anxiety of communication apprehension.

Students in the labs, which are set up in Burnett Hall classrooms, relax in lounge chairs. However, outside noise sometimes detracts from the atmosphere, Seiler said.

"If we had more money, we could improve these conditions," he said. The lab was begun on a \$2,000 grant from the Teaching and Learning Center.

Seiler said that because there isn't enough money to hire aides, the labs are conducted by volunteers. Most of the labs are staffed by graduate students in communication.

"The communication lab is a service to help students," Seiler said. He said 20 per cent of the students tested during the first week of the semester in Speech 109 classes had high apprehension levels.

Fear measured

The apprehension levels are measured by a Personal Report of Communication Apprehension, a survey designed by James McCroskey, a West Virginia University speech professor.

In this test, students respond to 25 questions on a one to five scale. Seiler said that students ranking 93 or above are encouraged to participate in the lab. This year 52 out of 120 students labeled as highly apprehensive participated in the lab.

The test is available for anyone, Seiler said, and students whose tests show they are highly apprehensive may take part in the lab.

Seiler said communication apprehension affects class choice, class performance and job choice.

He said research has proven that people with high levels of communication apprehension choose certain kinds of jobs. For example, he said in the teaching profession, highly apprehensive people usually choose elementary education while people with low apprehension choose higher levels of education. He said many people who have high apprehension levels go into science

fields because they undergo a minimum of communication with other people.

Persons with high levels of communication apprehension also tend to take lecture-oriented classes rather than discussion classes, he said.

Because students with high rates of communication apprehension don't speak out in class, Seiler said, instructors often think they aren't capable of answering. He said it has nothing to do with the students' intelligence levels, but they are often penalized for it.



Photo by Kevin Higley

Sue Anderson, extension division visual arts coordinator, gets a swine flu injection from Dick Bernum, an employe with the State Health Dept. Many students say the process doesn't hurt, but Anderson seems to be bracing herself for pain.

Selection slowed; responses put off

The NU Board of Regents "did not really suspend" their search for a new NU president, but did not expect any further progress before Tuesday's elections, according to regent board chairman James Moylan of Omaha.

Moylan said some candidates for NU President D. B. Varner's position had been contacted, but no answers had been received.

"Anybody on the list certainly would not accept the position when so many of the regents were up for re-election," Moylan said.

"Candidates can look at regents' past records and have a good indication of what they (the candidate) could expect," Moylan said.

All four regent incumbents up for re-election were re-elected.

This might "positively affect a presidential candidate's decision," Moylan said, but there "are many more issues than that. I can't say what effect it will have."

The regents are hoping to have an answer and a new president within a month, or at least by the first of the year, Moylan said.

Flu vaccinations given to 1,800

About 1,800 persons have been vaccinated against swine flu on the UNL campus.

Gary Martin, University Health Center associate director, estimated that 300 persons have received the vaccine at Selleck residence hall, 290 at the East Campus Student Activities Bldg., 600 at Harper-Schramm-Smith residence halls and 440 persons at Abel-Sandoz residence halls.

In addition, 250 persons in the high-risk category have received the vaccine in the Nebraska Union.

Martin said he couldn't predict how many persons would receive the vaccine.

Each location is equipped to handle about 800 persons an hour, he said. Dr. Robert Fox, on duty at the Harper-Schramm-Smith location, said he expected a maximum of between 1,000 and 1,500 persons.

Most of the students interviewed at the clinics said they didn't want the shot, but agreed that they didn't want to take the risk of getting swine flu.

"It's always good to use precaution," said UNL junior Deb Dillon. Senior Rob Gadeken said he got the shot because he didn't have time to be down with the flu. The shot is better than taking the risk, he said.

Students also agreed that the shot didn't hurt. "I was scared to death, but it didn't hurt that much," senior Carol Neth said. She added that she thought the gun used to give the shots is better than a regular needle.

Dave Regier, a junior, was at the clinic with a friend. He said he didn't plan to get inoculated because he didn't think the shots were necessary for persons his age who are healthy.

The immunization clinics will continue on the UNL campus through Sunday. There are two types of clinics; one for high-risk people (those over 45 or with chronic illness) and another for the rest of the people.

The last clinic is from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Sunday in the Union and the East Campus Student Activities Bldg.

Sikyta: Transportation problems remain unsolved

Lincoln's transportation problems and promises to solve them have been the same for the last four years because "seven or eight departments are in direct conflict," according to City Councilman Bob Sikyta.

Sikyta and Councilman Steve Cook have promoted a single, separate transportation department to cut bureaucracy and solve city transportation problems.

Mayor Helen Boosalis, acting on a Council request, issued a report last week stating that she is opposed to a new department.

Boosalis suggested that any consolidation should be done within the City Public Works Dept.

Sikyta said he has been promoting the idea for more than a year, and has made visits and written to cities for information concerning transportation.

One director needed

"Having transportation under one head isn't an unusual approach," he said. "In Lincoln, the transit system is under the finance director, the Centrum is under urban development, parking meters are run by the police, and so on."

"We don't want to add new positions, but we want to take people who are currently working on these problems and have just one person direct them."

Sikyta said the Lincoln Transportation

System (LTS) is running on a deficit, but the firm managing LTS is not at fault.

"It's a lack of ridership, and that's not their fault," he said. "We're working on more parking spaces and more bus riders at the same time, and that doesn't make sense. The problem is with the overall system, not LTS."

Projects unfinished

Sikyta cited unfinished projects downtown, such as parking problems and no bus shelters, as examples of problems that have faced Lincolnites for the past four years.

"People lost confidence because we

didn't give them what they wanted, and I really can't blame them," he said.

"The only thing LTS has done is buy new buses. There are still no shelters, they still are changing routes, and yet there is no bus stop at Lincoln General (Hospital), or no bus traffic designed to take the peak industrial traffic."

Sikyta emphasized that additional jobs are not needed to solve the problems.

"We can keep paying consultants all we want, but we'll only solve the problems if the Council and the mayor can agree that adding people isn't the answer, simplifying the approach is," he said.