

UN-L offers 3 English classes to foreign students

BY JOANNE YOUNG

When any of the approximately 1,000 foreign students attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln need help improving their English, they can get it through the English Department's English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

UN-L offers three classes in ESL to foreign students who are able to speak English, but may not feel they can compete academically because of language barriers, said Dr. Hassan Sharifi, associate professor of English at UN-L.

During the summer sessions, the ESL program is offering an intensive English course for foreign students who need to improve their English before they can be admitted to UN-L.

The intensive course, which begins June 20, lasts eight weeks and meets Monday through Friday, five hours a day. Teaching Assistant Mike Chu said students spend an hour each day on grammar, writing, reading, listening and speech. There is a different instructor for each topic. In addition, Chu said, students spend about an hour in lab listening to tapes.

When students finish the intensive

course, they should be ready to begin the regular ESL courses, Chu said.

Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, John Benson, said the students who take the non-credit course pay a flat fee and thus directly support the funding for the course.

"The intention is to make the course self-supporting," Benson said.

Chu said students taking the intensive course either are students who have been in the country only a short time or are Nebraska high school students who speak another language as their primary language.

Benson said the ESL program is offered because there are many benefits to having foreign students on the UN-L campus.

"The biggest benefit," he said, "is for American students who interact with these foreign students. There is a lot of learning going on outside the classroom with students learning about other countries and customs.

These are valuable contacts we would lose if we didn't have these students here," Benson said.

Sharifi agreed.

"By having international students among us," Sharifi said, "we bring the world to this university."

UN-L doesn't offer remedial English classes for American students. But Benson said there is help available for students who have deficiencies if they seek it out.

"I don't look at the ESL program as remedial," Benson said. "These students are learning a foreign language the hard way... in the middle of a new environment."

He said the university is looking at ways to help the underprepared American student, too, by having the state's high schools better prepare the students, and the university provide supplement and enhancement programs.

In addition to teaching students English, the ESL program holds a workshop to teach instructors to teach English to people who speak other languages. Sharifi is teaching the workshop this summer and said he has 16 students from varied backgrounds who are learning to teach ESL here and abroad.

"We have instructors from various colleges and school systems in Nebraska, a man who teaches English in Korea and people who want to teach English in Europe, Africa and Japan," Sharifi said.

Because of this course, he said, instructors know better what they are teaching and can learn about methods that have been

used in the past — what works and what doesn't. Sharifi said he knows all the available texts and can help each instructor pick the best one for his purposes.

"You don't need to talk their language to teach English," Sharifi said. "The beginning course is easy. It becomes more difficult as they progress."

"If you're a good teacher, you see the result of your work and get feedback," he said. "It makes you feel so good. You see people are learning and you try harder."

Sharifi said the foreign students are eager to learn.

"They pay for it and they want what they pay for," he said.

Fred Link, Chairman of the English Department, said the ESL program recently received \$30,000 to redo the language lab.

"The present lab is useless, totally obsolete," he said. "We needed a better set-up and were able to convince the vice-chancellor's office it was important."

Benson said the money for the lab remodeling came from "set-aside" money from energy savings ear-marked for use for educational materials and equipment.

The regular ESL program is funded through the English department and the vice-chancellor's office.

Work and study can induce stress

BY BILL CONRADT

Working and going to school at the same time can be stress inducing, said Gary Gollner, a psychiatric social worker with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Mental Health Center.

Talking to students who do both is one way to understand this stress.

Pam Siudzinski, a senior in the College of Business Administration, said that working and going to school is stress inducing. Miss Siudzinski takes 13 to 14 hours of class each semester and works 30 hours a week for the Department of Educational Psychology.

The pressure and responsibility of her job interferes with her studies, she said, but if it came down to either studying or working, she would rather work because of a strong commitment to her job.

Before she started working Miss Siudzinski was an "A" student, now she is a "C" student, she said.

But studies weren't the only thing affected by Miss Siudzinski's full load.

"I'm just going through the motions," she said. "I'm not enjoying what I'm doing. I used to be friend-oriented." Now she sees most of her friends only at school or on Saturday nights.

Why sacrifice both friends and school for work?

Miss Siudzinski said she works 30 hours a week because it is experience she can use for her degree.

Mike Eash, a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences, goes to school full time and works about 30 hours a week supervising paper carriers for the Journal-Star Printing Co. He is married and has a young daughter.

The work load got to be too much for Eash last semester, and he ended up dropping to nine hours of school.

"It was really eating me up," he said.

Eash said one of the problems with doing both was that he was also expected to fulfill responsibilities at home. The less expected, the better, he said.

It is not always the number of hours you spend at something that determines stress, Gollner said. The main problem for most students is the use of time.

The important thing for students if they're feeling stress, Gollner said, is to identify the parts of the day when they are most effective at studying and working.

If you study best in the morning, then study in the morning. If you work best at night, then you should work at night. Choose to do something when you are most productive at it, he said.

The way students spend their time away from school and work is also critical. Gollner said it's important to work out some time to "put your brain in the bag, let it recharge."

Recreation is important also, he said. "People tend to forget that they do need to recreate," he said.

Gollner said that if a student is having a problem being objective, then that student should ask a friend to do the evaluating for them.

"I rarely recommend changing what they (students) do with school and work," Gollner said.

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Photo by Larry Toof

Crowds waiting to see Wargames at the Douglas III Theaters, dwarf the line for Stuart Theater's Return of the Jedi Saturday. Stuart manager Edward Sell said the movie has not sold out once.

Pay squeeze affecting faculty morale

BY LARRY SPARKS

Better communication will help offset the psychological effects of faculty members' lack of a pay increase next year, according to Herbert Howe, chairman of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln psychology department.

Howe said it is important for the administration to improve communication with the faculty so morale remains high.

"Our society associates good performance with more money," he said, "and UN-L administrators need to make a distinction between the two."

"They need to say 'you're doing well, you deserve an increase in salary, but the financial conditions of the state just don't allow it at this time,'" Howe said.

"Faculty members need to know that the lack of a salary increase is not an indication of what the university thinks of their performance," he said.

Howe said administrators also need to keep the staff informed about decisions,

especially those pertaining to the budget.

Even with these precautions, UN-L officials could have a tough time keeping faculty morale up, according to Tom Mayes, an instructor in the College of Business Administration.

Mayes, who teaches a course in organizational behavior, said budget cuts have created shortages in almost every area of instruction. That, he said, makes it hard for some instructors to remain dedicated to UN-L.

"Pay is only part of the academic reward," Mayes said. "Things like more resources and more graduate assistants would be helpful, but we don't have the money for that, either. We don't even have enough paper for the office Xerox machine."

Craig McPhee, chairman of the economics department, said these restraints have made it difficult to maintain staff morale in his department.

"We've had to cut back on everything from paper to pens and pencils, so there's not much we can do," McPhee said.

Jack Siegman, chairman of the sociology department, said the lack of pay increases is "debilitating" to UN-L and its faculty.

Morale has remained high so far, Siegman said, but it might be difficult to maintain, now that faculty members face a year with no pay increase.

He said he will try to make working conditions "as pleasant as possible" to maintain morale in his department.

The quality of instruction probably will not decline, Siegman said, because the faculty is loyal to the students regardless of what the administration pays them.

"There's a commitment to the students here and there always will be," he said, "but the feeling toward the governor and the Legislature is very negative."

Mayes agreed, saying that dedication to the students doesn't necessarily mean faculty members are loyal to UN-L or the state.

"They are loyal to the profession," Mayes said, "and a lot of them would go somewhere else if given the opportunity."