

String on finger technique gives way to memory class



By LAUREN LATOURETTE
Of the Emerald

If the scarecrow had been a University student, he wouldn't have needed Oz.

Such is the claim for the Memory Techniques course offered by the Learning Resources Center, which boasts an average 13 per cent memory increase for its fall term students.

Lee Wach, creator and instructor of the program, got the idea while working with high school students who were having problems remembering their texts and lectures. He is an undergraduate senior in business, and claims to be "no professional."

"We treat the brain as a muscle," he said. "Like any other muscle, it needs to be exercised."

Wach said he uses "very little theory" in his course, preferring applied techniques in the

form of word association games, exercises in grouping and classifying facts, and even the tried and true repetition method.

Wach stressed the amount of individual attention given to fit each student's personality and situation.

Before the mental gymnastics begins, Wach has each student participate in a simple experiment he devised to determine how the student thinks in a problem situation.

The game involves a problem with an unlimited amount of solutions to it. "I observe how the student goes about trying to solve the problem," he said. "Many students give up right away and say 'It can't be done.' Others work a long time at it."

Wach then discusses with the students their feelings on studying and solving the problem, and together they plan a program of memory exercises to "train" the student's mind to retain the information it needs.

These class "games" are designed to teach students how to group and classify their course material, noting the similarities and disparities of the material. Word association techniques are used for vocabulary memorization, and repetition drills are sometimes employed.

"The course is fun and interesting," Wach said. "In a way, it's a game. But, then again, it's not. It works."

In order to gauge the students' overall memory improvement, Wach conducts two identical experiments, one each at the beginning and the conclusion of the four-week course.

The first day of class, Wach shows students 12 items on a tray for one minute and then asks them to recall the items. The last day of class, the students are given the same test and show marked improvement.

Anyone can take the course, which is offered twice a term and costs \$7.50. Students can sign up at the Learning Resource Center, Room 268, Condon Hall.

Diverse 407 classes fail as requirements

By KATHY KRAFT
Of the Emerald

Introduction to Gothic. Victorian Prose. Nationalism and Imperialism. Sex Role Socialization. What could such obviously diverse classes possibly have in common?

One thing — their course numbers. These courses, along with dozens of others at the University, are designated as 407, or seminar, courses. As such, they fail to satisfy University group requirements, which all students must satisfy in order to graduate.

Many students complain that this stipulation is unfair — that it reflects a prejudice on the part of the University against some of the most innovative and interesting courses offered on campus.

Not so, claims Cliff Lewis of the Office of Academic Advising. Although he admits that 407 courses are often very "experimental and non-traditional," he maintains this isn't the reason they cannot be used to satisfy group requirements.

He explains, "407 courses are usually very specific. The purpose of group requirements is to insure that all students at the University attain a certain breadth in their studies." Introductory and survey courses generally serve this purpose best, in Lewis' opinion, and leave students the option to concentrate on more specific studies later.

Lewis also points out that 407 courses are often difficult to transfer to other institutions.

"The courses that can be used to satisfy group requirements will transfer to almost any college or university in the country," he explains.

According to Clarethel Kahananui, State Board of Higher Education assistant in curriculum planning, the 407 course designation is used to indicate seminar courses at state colleges and universities throughout Oregon. "407 courses don't satisfy general requirements at any of the state institutions — they're just too specific in most cases. Group requirements exist to see that students obtain a broad, basic education." Kahananui adds that, in general, the University "accepts a much broader range of courses to satisfy group requirements than do other state colleges and universities."

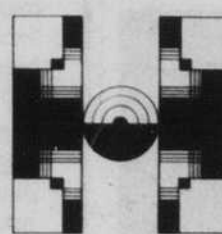
In addition to 407 courses, a number of other 400-level courses don't satisfy group requirements — those designated 401 (research), 403 (thesis), 405 (reading and conference), 408 (workshops), 409 (practicum) and 410 (experimental courses). In addition to these courses, those numbered 199, 200, below 100, and above 499 also fail to satisfy group requirements at the University.

Footnotes

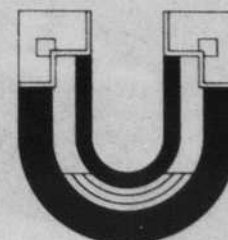
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