

# UNIVERSITY

## Teachers learn art of verbal exams

By Lisa Millegan  
Emerald Associate Editor

Eleven teachers wait in EMU Century Room C for the student to enter. When she finally arrives, the teachers immediately pull out pads, pencils and tape recorders.

One teacher invites the student to sit by her and answer a few questions in Spanish. Translated to English, the questions go like this:

"How many people are in your family?"

"Where do you live?"

"What are you studying?"

The student is nervous but after pondering each question for a moment, she responds with short, polite remarks. The other teachers sit forward in their chairs and write careful notes.

The teacher sitting by the student asks her to pretend that the teacher is a friend's grandmother and to make conversation accordingly. The student agrees and speaks to "her friend's grandmother" for a few minutes.

Situations just like this one will happen all day today through Saturday at the EMU as Spanish, French and Japanese instructors from around the country gather at the University to learn how to give better oral exams.

University student volunteers are the guinea pigs; most receive some extra credit in their language classes for participating in the conference.

"Most students do find it a fun and valuable experience," said Jay Siskin, a University associate professor in French who helped organize the conference. "Usually students leave with a sense of satisfaction that they've actually carried on a conversation."

But not all students agree. "I wanted to cry," said Eric Main, a first-year French student. "No matter what I said the teacher never said one single English word even though I said I didn't understand some things. It was humiliating. I would never do it again."

Siskin said Main was an exception to the rule. He said the teachers did not mean to make Main feel uncomfortable and attributed Main's discomfort to his lack of confidence and experience with speaking a foreign language.

Sponsored by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the conference began Wednesday and is designed to familiarize the 33 participants with techniques of oral testing.

Some instructors will begin learning to be ACTFL-certified oral proficiency interviewers during the conference. Such instructors can rate students' ability based on national standards.

ACTFL requires extensive testing before certifying instructors to give such tests.

National standardized testing provides a useful way for pinpointing students' ability, said Hiroko Kataoka, a University

Japanese associate professor who attended the conference.

"When employers ask us, 'How good is Sara's Japanese?' and we say, 'She's very good,' it really doesn't mean a thing (without national standards)," Kataoka said.

Conference participants learn to evaluate students in three areas:

- The ability to carry out linguistic functions (ask questions, describe situations).
- The ability to speak in different contexts (find a restroom, address groups of people).
- Accuracy (ability to be understood by different groups of people).

After listening to oral exams, conference participants attempt to label students' speaking ability as novice, intermediate, advanced or superior.

Siskin said novice students usually have poor accuracy and would have difficulty being understood by native speakers. He said such students tend to speak in isolated words instead of sentences.

Superior students have a native-like speaking ability, Siskin said. These students can speak on a wide variety of subjects and express abstract concepts.

Siskin said most students who take two years of a foreign language at the University reach the intermediate level. He said students who study overseas often achieve the advanced level while few undergraduates ever achieve the superior level.

## IFC begins 92-93 budget hearings

The Incidental Fee Committee, the seven-member group that each year allocates student fees to the Athletic Department, the EMU and most student groups, began budget hearings Tuesday for the 1992-93 school year.

The IFC will now meet every Tuesday and Wednesday until late April to decide on each group's funding for next year. A summary of each week's hearings will run in the *Emerald* on Fridays.

At the Wednesday meeting, the committee voted on three budgets, increasing two and decreasing one.

The Amazon Co-op Child Care was allocated a budget of \$26,589, up from this year's \$24,336. The additional money will provide funds for student employees.

Last year, the co-op ran into a \$5,000 deficit when work study employees continued working after those funds had run out.

The *Student Insurgent* received a slight increase. Next year's budget will be \$4,617, up slightly from this year's \$4,784 to reflect an increase in the cost of production services, printing and duplication.

The Hong Kong Student Association had its current budget of \$1,401 cut to \$1,257. The IFC noted that not all of last year's allocated money was spent, so funds were cut in advertising, audio visual setup, reference and administrative line items.


At Tuesday's meeting, Students for Choice and Forensics both received substantial increases, but the business fraternity Alpha Kappa Psi was zero-funded. In addition, the IFC unanimously voted down a special request from the ASUO for \$2,750 to cover costs for the planned recall election of JoSonja Watson.

"The funding for this recall election is crucial in order to assure the fairest, most complete process," ASUO Elections Coordinator John Goodman said. "Student government on this campus is under fire and we can't afford to jeopardize our reputation any further."

Goodman found no sympathy from IFC chairwoman Lydia Lerma.

"I don't think all of the students at U. of O. should have to pay for the error that an (ASUO) executive made," Lerma said.

The IFC rejected Alpha Kappa Psi's goal statement and refused to hear the group's \$189 budget



GROUP	1991-92	1992-93	% CHANGE
Students for Choice	\$200	\$1,002	+500
Alpha Kappa Psi	189	0	-100
Forensics	12,605	13,820	+ 9.6
Hong Kong Stud. Assoc.	1,401	1,257	- 10.3
Amazon Co-op	24,336	26,589	+ 9.3
Student Insurgent	4,784	4,617	+ 0.7

Graphic by Jeff Paslay

request, the amount allocated for this year. In order to receive IFC funds, a group must provide a goal statement explaining how it provides for the "cultural and physical development" of students.

IFC members who voted against Alpha Kappa Psi found the organization too narrowly tailored to the interests of business students.

The IFC approved an amended budget of \$1,002 for Students For Choice, a group that works in coalition with community groups and other universities to protect abortion rights, and to educate and register voters. Last year the group received first-time funding of \$200.

There was some question as to whether the group's political nature would preclude it from receiving IFC funds. Oregon Revised Statute 351.070 states: "IFC funds may not be used to fund an organization which advocates, through the expenditure of funds ... ballot measures before Oregon voters."

Students For Choice is currently working with the anti-OCA group "No On Hate" to defeat an OCA ballot initiative. The group agreed to keep IFC funds separate from funds used to work on explicit political issues.

The IFC also approved a \$13,820 request by the University Forensics Program. The ASUO recommendation was \$12,296. The increase was given to cover transportation costs.

The Forensics team argued that driving to far-away tournaments, such as San Diego and Utah, was taking a toll on its members that could lead to safety concerns. In light of these concerns, the IFC decided to allow for plane travel.

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By GARY LARSON

