

# LANGUAGE LESSONS

*Monmouth institute gives immersive English language experience*

**By Emily Mentzer**  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Butterflies in your stomach?

To native speakers of English, it is common understanding that this phrase means the same as asking if someone is nervous. But to the students at Monmouth English Language and Culture Institute, it's a very confusing statement — at least at first.

"No, it doesn't mean you like to eat insects," said Roger Shinkle, director and co-owner of the English language school, much to the laughter of the small class of advanced students.

Idioms, jokes and accents prove the toughest when someone is learning English, students said.

"Sometimes I cannot understand a joke, so I cannot laugh," said Shinichiro Takemoto from Japan.

When international students learn English in their home countries, their teachers don't always have the right accent.

"The pronunciation is far different," said Faafili Papalii of Samoa.

To learn, students are placed in small classes, no larger than 15 at once, Shinkle said.

"That's very good for language learning," he said. "We're trying to make things happen very fast."

The institute, based in Monmouth, is a total immersion experience for international students to learn English before moving on to an international — often in the U.S. — high school or college. Students live with host families and spend their time speaking, listening, reading and revising.

"We're always looking for host families in the community," said Maryanne Shinkle, Roger's wife and co-owner. "It's a fun way to have an international experience in the family."

Students, who pay for their housing, range in age from 18 to 43, with the average age of 20.

On the entrance to the school building, a sign reads, "English only please."

"Here, we have to speak the language," Takemoto



Roger and Maryanne Shinkle (far left and right) serve as a host family for students at the institute when needed.



said, whereas in his home country, he doesn't have to use English all the time. "Speak, speak, speak. Listen, listen, listen."

Another difference in learning English at the institute is vocabulary. While vocabulary is important, Takemoto said in Japan, he would have to study hundreds of words every day and take tests on those words.

Here, Roger Shinkle said things are run differently.

"One of the things we teach our students is how to learn a language," he said. "It's not just a matter of showing up to class. It doesn't work that way. That's slow."

Students learn via fre-



Faafili Papalii of Samoa and Ibrahim Daghri of Saudi Arabia study on their tablets at the Monmouth English Language and Culture Institute on Friday.

quency rather than intensity, Shinkle said. For example, a student will remember more if he or she spends six minutes a day for 10 days studying rather than an hour in one day.

"It's like cramming versus

studying a little every day," he said. "You might pass the test just fine cramming, but learning a language, passing the test means nothing. You have to have skill."

Students are given tasks to complete in town, forcing

interaction with native speakers.

It's tough for them when people speak fast, Papalii said.

"It's hard (to understand) over the phone," added Behailu Bezuneh Kasse from

## Learn More

- Call the Monmouth English Language and Culture Institute at 503-838-0157 to volunteer as a host family. Background checks are run on host families.

- People also may get involved by coming to campus at 300 N. Stadium Drive and being a conversation partner.

- Roger Shinkle said he is always looking for places for students to get involved in the community, including service opportunities.
- If two students are placed in one house, they are never from the same country to ensure that their common language is English, Maryanne Shinkle said.

- For more information: [www.elci.us](http://www.elci.us).

Ethiopia. "The phone is hard."

Part of what makes it more difficult to understand someone over the phone is the accent, the speed at which the other person is talking, and the lack of ability to see their mouths and body language. Drive-thrus are not much better.

"They talk very fast," Kasse said. "So, like, if you go to McDonald's, you should go inside. I have a lot of times people give me the wrong food."

Students' skills with English vary from beginning levels to more advanced. While some are learning the subtle difference in the pronunciation of the words "peddle" and "puddle," others, like Papalii, are ready for college.

She recently was denied admission to Brigham Young University-Hawaii, and is now working toward acceptance at Western Oregon University.

Papalii hopes to earn a bachelor's degree in education and use that to be a high school counselor.

"There's a lot of troubles and things going on in the teenage students' lives right now," she said. "I really want to help them help their lives."



Faafili Papalii studies English and learns study and academic skills at the institute. She says she has a lot of homework, including applying to universities such as WOU.



Faafili Papalii chops the grass at her host family's house with a bush knife, the same way she would cut the lawn in her native country of Samoa.

POLK SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
**NATIVE PLANT SALE 2015**  
AT THE POLK COUNTY FAIR GROUNDS  
ORDER ONLINE BY JANUARY 16TH AND COME TO THE  
**PLANT PICK UP DAY: FEB. 6TH**  
OR  
GO TO THE **OVERSTOCK SALE: FEB. 7TH FROM 9AM-4PM**  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 503-623-9680 X 5 OR GO TO [POLKSWCD.ORG](http://POLKSWCD.ORG)



Wild Hyacinth

**Itemizer-Observer**  
**WE'RE ON FACEBOOK**  
**WE'RE ON TWITTER**

**Pencil us in!**  
[www.polkio.com](http://www.polkio.com)  
Polk County  
**Itemizer-Observer**

**Solution on Page 5A**

4		9	7	1				
	8	5	2			4	1	6
	1			6				
		2					4	
8			9		1			2
	7					3		
				8				7
1	2	7			5	9	6	
				2	7	1		5

**Sudoku**  
Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

4	3	2	8	1	6	7	5	9
5	6	9	3	7	4	8	1	2
1	7	8	9	5	2	4	6	3
3	4	7	2	8	5	6	9	1
2	1	6	7	4	9	3	8	5
9	8	5	1	6	3	2	7	4
7	9	1	4	3	8	5	2	6
8	5	3	6	2	1	9	4	7
6	2	4	5	9	7	1	3	8

**How to do Sudoku**  
Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row, and three-by-three square. See example above.