ESL Program Blossoms at South

Osmond Duffis-Sjogren
ESL - South

When you enter his office, you see the signs of worldwide travel on the walls and on his desk: maps of Caracas, Venezuela and Mexico, worry beads from Cyprus, and memorabilia from Costa Rica, Turkey, Ecuador, and Italy. Osmond Duffis-Sjogren, English-South, has been hard at work this year creating South’s first full-time ESL program to serve foreign students in learning English.

The ESL (English as a Second Language) program at South has exceeded all expectations this year. Osmond just began his full-time position at BCC in August. Since then, he has put in countless hours to assist students from a variety of cultures in their acclimation to American higher education. South serves a large number of foreign students, particularly Hispanic.

Due to his efforts, the class offerings for ESL will be much larger this summer, with 12 classes in writing, grammar, and pronunciation. There are currently approximately 200 students in the program and Osmond anticipates that this number will double by the fall term.

“I enjoy what I’m doing,” commented Osmond. “Teaching ESL is very emotional as well as physical because you have to get involved to communicate the abstract meaning of language.” He continued. He sometimes feels drained after teaching his classes but puts in a lot of time one-to-one with students to help them further their understanding of American culture, since they are so sensitive about being “different.”

He also has devoted extra hours to developing a library of ESL teaching aids to help his students, thanks to funding by the SPD (Staff and Program Development) Committee. And in his spare time, he publicizes his classes in local high schools.

Osmond was born in Panama and is one-sixteenth Swedish, which explains his hyphenated name. He earned his Bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Panama and his Master’s degree in Linguistics from Northeastern Illinois University. He has travelled extensively, taking most of a year off from work in 1986 to see the world. His travels have taken him to Mexico, Cyprus, Costa Rica, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Australia, Jordan, and Thailand.

He taught English in Saudi Arabia to officers of the Saudi air force among others, where Osmond learned how it feels to be in the minority. The cultural differences were dramatic there, with women being seen as unable to drive or have a voice in things. He learned a lot about Saudi religious beliefs, which helped him to understand the culture.

Thanks to a combination of pictures, audio tapes, written assignments, and classroom discussion, Osmond’s students have gained a great deal of confidence. He teaches them idiomatic phrases whenever possible so that they learn the subtleties of English. He encourages them to bring in artifacts from their countries to share with his other students to maintain a sense of pride in their heritage. Students enjoy Osmond’s classes so much that they are beginning to refer other family members and friends to his program.

The pay-off for Osmond has been seeing his students progress, both at BCC and by going on to upper division. He has seen several students from his earlier days at a Stranahan High School teacher go on to pursue engineering degrees at universities.

Dedicated BCC instructors have taught ESL classes on Central and North campuses for some time. Now our students in south Broward will have the same opportunity to prosper in college. Osmond is to be commended for taking initiative and providing outstanding service to students!

Music Notes: April Concerts

A evening concert of jazz featuring two big bands and a small combo will be presented on Tuesday, April 14, beginning at 8 p.m. in Bailey Concert Hall.

Broward Day at the state capital.

Traditional big-band dance tunes will be performed by the 17-piece Hall of Fame Band, composed of former.

The BCC Symphonic Band, directed by Malcolm “Mike” Black, will present its annual spring concert on Wednesday, April 15, beginning at 8 p.m. in Bailey Concert Hall.

Richard Bee Crawford of the BCC music faculty, will feature a costumed staging of the opening scene of Mozart’s “The Magic Flute.”

The program will also include...