



Rose Mingo-Holtz

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.”

Nelson Mandela

There are many reasons for learning a new language. It provides greater insight into other cultures – not only when you travel, but more importantly, when you build relationships professionally and personally. You become a better communicator with the ability to think in different languages. In addition, research shows that learning a language offers tremendous cognitive benefits by keeping our brains healthy and fit.

Normandale is one of Minnesota’s leaders in providing opportunities to learn a language. In six-week courses, you can learn American Sign Language, Arabic, French, Hebrew, Japanese, Chinese, Russian or Spanish. In addition, the college offers an English Speaking Skills course to help those who are new to English. Over the past few years, Normandale has served hundreds of adult learners in these courses, helping them gain new skills and enrich their lives.



Cindy Jones

Nancy Peterson is the CEO of Display Sales. Her company sells holiday decorations, banners and flags. They import products, and Peterson travels to China annually to meet with vendors and partners. She decided to take Mandarin Chinese to become well-versed in the language and to better understand the culture.

“From my previous experience with trying to learn Chinese, I thought this would be really hard to do,” said Peterson. “The class was all adult learners and a lot of us were initially very nervous. However, Youmei Hou (the instructor) immediately created a very relaxed setting and was always there to help us. This year was my ninth time traveling to China, and I felt much more confident because of the knowledge I gained in this class.”

Prior to coming to Normandale, Eric Lipman was a highly successful professional who was a self-proclaimed “Hebrew School dropout.” With an upcoming trip to Israel, he was motivated to better understand the Hebrew language. Lipman found out about the course at Normandale through the Jewish Community Relations Council, and had heard great things about the instructor, Saleit Faleschini.

“Normandale has done the right balancing act to help anyone who wants to learn Hebrew accomplish genuine learning,” said Lipman.

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“Professor Faleschini has done an excellent job of taking all of her knowledge and blending it with best practices. I believe there is high demand out there for people who would love to learn Hebrew in this type of an atmosphere, and I’m glad I had this experience.”

Cindy Jones grew up in Maine, where her dad’s side of the family was French Canadian. Jones had tried to learn French on several different occasions, but it didn’t stick. This time she drove 40 minutes each way from Andover to pursue her goal. Jones knew right away that this was the class for her.

“Initially, my goals were to see if I would be comfortable in the class, like the teacher, and be able to do the work,” said Jones. “My goals were definitely met. After the first class, I knew I finally found the way (the class, the teacher, the environment) in which I was going to learn French. I could feel it in my heart. French is incorporated into every aspect of my life now, I feel stronger about it than I ever did before.”

Jim and Donna Powell had never taken French, but have planned a family trip to France this summer and wanted to know the language. They enjoyed how comfortable the instructor, Rose Mingo-Holtz, made the learning environment. Jim also mentioned that as the course moved along, he found himself using different parts of his brain.

“The class is very beneficial, because I know I am hitting parts of my brain I have not used in 40 years,” said Jim Powell. “As I was looking at this new language, my high school German was coming back. It feels great to stimulate my brain, and I want to do that throughout my life.”

The reasons to learn a language are many. However, Normandale works to create a comfortable and effective learning environment where students can get what they need from a class, and hopefully take away so much more.



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Saleit Faleschini