

Learn in g English harder for illiterate immigrants

BY HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH
 Associated Press Writer

KANSAS CITY, MO. | Before Bob Jansen can teach English to the adult immigrants in his lowest-level class, he has to show about a quarter of them how to hold a pencil.

Adult education teachers like Jansen are finding themselves starting from scratch as uneducated immigrants and refugees from conflict regions of Africa and rural areas of Mexico and Central America flock to the United States.

An estimated 400,000 legal and 350,000 illegal immigrants are unable to read or write even in their native language, according to a July 2007 report from the Migration Policy Institute, an independent Washington think tank.

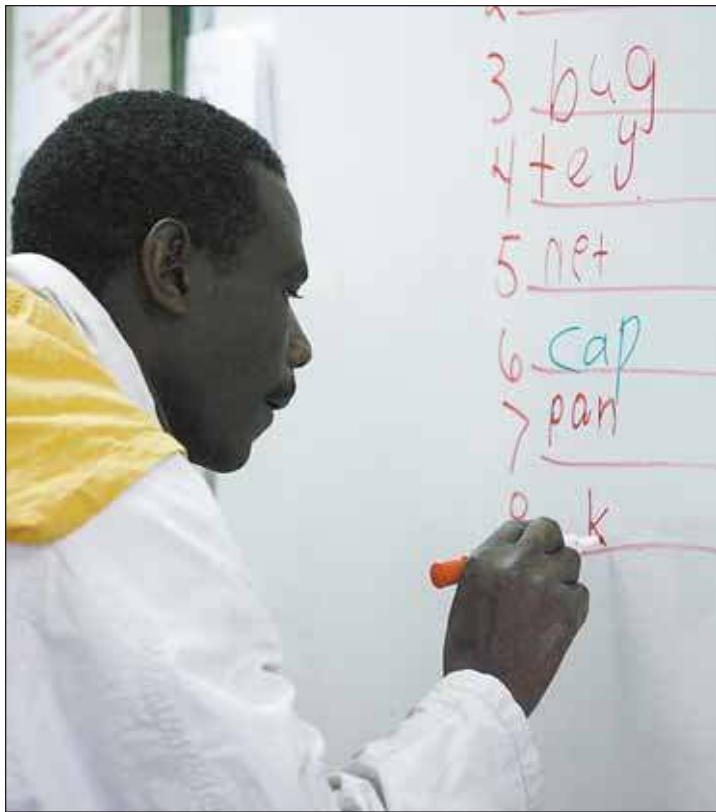
"It takes a lot of patience to teach this class," said Jansen, an instructor at the Don Bosco Community Center.

During one recent session, Jansen drew male and female stick figures on the dry erase board and taped pictures of different modes of transportation alongside the sketches. Students crafted sentences like, "He is on the orange airplane."

His students, including five Somali women clad in long head scarves, also recite the alphabet and practice vowel sounds. Others in the class come from other African countries as well as Latin America, Asia and the Middle East.

One of the students, Rebeka Goup, did not attend any school in her native Sudan before she came to the U.S. in 2000.

"I need to learn English to talk to people," said Goup, who is one of the most fluent students in the class but speaks in broken English. Asked in English where they



Juma Kennedy, from Tanzania, tries to spell out the word "kit" during a spelling exercise in Bob Jansen's English I class at the Don Bosco Community Center in Kansas City, Mo.

are from, many of her classmates respond with their names or addresses.

The immigrants, some of whom attended school for the first time in refugee camps, tend to flounder alongside classmates who attended school in their native countries.

More states are looking at student performance as they decide how to distribute federal dollars to programs that provide English classes for adult immigrants.

Those who teach the students say they are penalized for their slow progress, and are discouraged from offering them separate classes.

"One hand of the government is letting preliterates people come here as refugees," said

David Holsclaw, director of Don Bosco Community Center's English as a Second Language Program, which serves about 2,500 students a year. "And another hand of the government is making it hard to serve them because they want to tie our funding to testing."

It's easy to understand why immigrants struggle if they aren't literate in their native languages, said Barbara Van Horn, co-director of the Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy at Pennsylvania State University.

"They haven't made the connection between their oral language and the fact that what is printed, those letters represent sounds that are used to make up words," she said.

C-PP



ERIC WENSEL | THE LEADER

Voters approved the Corning-Painted Post school district's \$3.4 million maintenance plan, which called for partial replacement of the East High roof. District officials hope to receive State Education Department approval in time to have construction begin in the summer.

Continued from 1A

"It's huge," Ginalski said. "I've said from the beginning we needed a win for many reasons. It's very uplifting as we move into the new year."

To educate the public about the project, district officials held meetings with PTA groups and community organizations.

"That certainly helped,"

school board President Bill Carlson said. "Especially in lieu of the previous lack of communication. District officials spent a lot of time visiting different groups of people."

Officials now hope to receive approval from the State Education Department and put the project out to bid in time so work can begin at the end of the school year.

State education law mandates school districts must have a five-year maintenance plan in place. Carlson said the board and administration will look at the fifth year of their current plan in spring and begin development of a new plan in the fall.

The board will certify the vote results at today's board meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Hugh Gregg Elementary School.

REJECTED

Continued from 1A

In Hornell, voters approved the \$75.2 million capital project, 719-685, but because the project would have exceeded

the district's debt limit, the district needed 60 percent approval for the project to pass.

The project included energy saving steps such as replacing the roof, air handling units

and unit ventilators as well as making electrical upgrades.

The district also planned to make technological upgrades, such as adding Smart boards.

KUHL

Continued from 1A

improve science facilities.

■ \$292,000 for St. Bonaventure University technology upgrades.

■ \$195,000 for Elmira College technology upgrades.

■ \$97,000 for Alfred University psychologist training program.

ing program.

■ \$43,000 for University of Pittsburgh at Bradford/St. Bonaventure for an entrepreneurship center.

■ \$752,000 for Alfred University Rural Justice Institute.

Thomas Meier, president of Elmira College, said Kuhl has

once again delivered for the district.

"These funds will help bring the historic first building of the world's first college founded to provide college education to women back to use," Meier said. "We thank Kuhl for his unyielding support."

JOB

Continued from 1A

construction have been offset by declines in leisure and hospitality, professional and business services, and manufacturing," officials wrote in the report.

However, Chemung County Executive Tom Santulli said more jobs have been created over the last few years and many area companies continue to give positive outlooks for 2008.

Chemung County led the state in private sector job growth and was third in creating those jobs in 2007, he said.

Other parts of the state have

done better, but largely by expanding government positions, he said.

"I believe in the services government provides but it should never be a growth industry anywhere," he said.

Santulli said the report gives a constructive view of where the state has been and where it's headed.

The report said the state is moving toward a service-based economy. More jobs will surface in education and health, leisure and hospitality, professional and business services, and finance.

But Santulli is concerned that a service economy is not sustainable and would prefer

the state tried to attract more manufacturing and professional jobs.

"We know what the problems are and the problem is the high cost of doing business," he said. "When will the state begin to tighten its budget?"

"When you go to Albany, everyone wants to tell you how wonderful everything is - everything isn't wonderful," he said.

Locally, the county has worked hard to consolidate and share services to cut costs, Santulli said. However, the state is not currently providing a level playing field with costly taxes and as a result, businesses and people have fled to other states and abroad.

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST

WETM 18 Storm Team
 Chief Meteorologist Scott Mayer
 Meteorologist Joe Pasquarelli
 Meteorologist Matthew Szejbka

Today	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Cloudy, flurries later	M. cloudy, flurries	P. sunny	Inc. clouds, showers turn to rain	Windy, showers tapering later	Breezy, sct. flurries	P. cloudy
High 36 Low 15	High 34 Low 24	High 35 Low 18	High 42 Low 22	High 45 Low 35	High 34 Low 27	High 35 Low 21

National forecast
 Forecast highs for Wednesday, Dec. 19

NEW YORK
Today will be cloudy with scattered snow showers or mix, highs in the upper 30s.
Tonight will be cloudy with scattered snow showers and lows in the mid-20s.
Thursday will be mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of snow showers and highs in the mid-30s.
Thursday night will be mostly cloudy with lows 15 to 20.

WEATHER HISTORY
 In 1967, a record 83 inches of snow covered the ground at Flagstaff, Ariz. The heavy snows inflicted great hardship on reservations.

MOON PHASES

First Full Last New
 JAN. 17 DEC. 24 DEC. 31 JAN. 10

SUNRISE | SUNSET

Sunrise today	7:32
Sunset today	4:38
Sunrise Thursday	7:33
Sunset Thursday	4:39

	YESTERDAY			TODAY			TOMORROW		
	H	Lo	Prc	H	Lo	Oulk	H	Lo	Oulk
Albany	29	2		32	14	Snow	35	25	Cldy
Boston	32	18	.01	38	23	Snow	35	33	Snow
Brownsville	74	63	.01	79	63	Cldy	81	66	PCldy
Buffalo	34	22	.01	37	26	Cldy	32	27	Cldy
Chicago	37	25		33	22	PCldy	35	23	Cldy
Cincinnati	42	18		39	33	Rain	46	29	Cldy
Cleveland	36	18		35	31	Cldy	37	29	Cldy
Denver	45	25		48	23	PCldy	47	23	PCldy
Little Rock	58	33		60	39	PCldy	61	49	Rain
Los Angeles	58	54	.09	64	49	PCldy	64	49	PCldy
Memphis	54	37		60	43	PCldy	58	49	Rain
New Orleans	65	40		73	53	Cldy	73	60	Rain
New York City	37	29		47	29	Cldy	43	35	PCldy
Omaha	36	18		36	15	PCldy	35	20	Rain
Orlando	71	43		74	50	PCldy	75	51	PCldy
Philadelphia	38	27		47	25	Cldy	46	29	PCldy
Phoenix	67	43		63	44	PCldy	64	45	PCldy
Pittsburgh	37	18		38	28	Cldy	38	26	Cldy
Portland, Maine	27	5		28	9	Snow	30	27	Snow
Portland, Ore.	52	40	.26	46	38	Rain	41	39	Rain
Providence	35	14		42	19	Snow	39	30	Snow
Richmond	43	21		52	27	Cldy	50	29	PCldy
Sacramento	54	49	.50	51	44	Rain	51	44	Rain
Santa Fe	47	26		45	29	PCldy	45	36	Cldy
St. Petersburg	70	49		71	54	PCldy	73	57	PCldy
St. Louis	64	36		70	46	PCldy	71	58	PCldy
Spokane	32	19		33	12	PCldy	32	20	PCldy
Spokane	37	30	.19	36	30	Snow	35	27	Cldy
Syracuse	31	22	.09	35	23	Snow	33	27	Snow
Tampa	72	43		73	52	PCldy	74	55	PCldy

increases for most domestic programs and contained numerous cutbacks and program eliminations.

"The omnibus bill largely yields to the President's top-line budget numbers, but it also addresses some of the bottom-line priorities of the American people," said Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa. "The Grinch tried to steal Christmas, but we didn't let him get all of it."

Democrats were able to fill in most of the cuts by using the very budgetary sleight of hand lambasted by conservative groups such as the Club for Growth and Citizens Against Government Waste.

The White House, which maintained a hardline for months, has been far more forgiving in recent days, accepting \$11 billion in "emergency" spending for veterans, drought relief, border security and firefighting accounts, among others. Other budget moves added billions more.

"Congress did come down to the president's overall top line," White House press secretary Dana Perino said. "And in regards of the emergency

spending, most of that spending would have passed on an emergency basis anyway. It's not added into the baseline of the budget."

The bill passed the House late Monday. Under an unusual legislative two-step, the Iraq portion of the bill would be returned to the House on Wednesday, with Republicans supplying the winning margin. That vote, if successful, would send the entire omnibus bill to Bush for his signature.

Democrats succeeded in reversing cuts sought by Bush to heating subsidies, local law enforcement, Amtrak and housing as well as Bush's plan to eliminate the \$654 million budget for grants to community action agencies that help the poor.

Democrats also reversed Bush-sought cuts to state and local law enforcement grants, aid to community action groups and airport modernization grants.

Democrats also added funding for food programs, subsidies to community development banks and Homeland Security Department grants to first responders.