



Telegram photo by Lad Strayer

Yvonne Rogers, program manager for adult literacy at the Community Action Agency, watches as Nachio Kinugawa of Japan writes a message on the chalkboard during the English as a second language class Monday at Garfield Elementary School in Adrian.

English as a second language program grows

By Autumn Lee
Daily Telegram Staff Writer

ADRIAN — Clayton resident Esteban Sanchez says going to the doctor or even the grocery store can be difficult for people who speak little English and need a translator.

Sanchez, who speaks Spanish as his first language, is one of 15 people enrolled in a English as a second language class taught in Adrian.

His instructor, Yvonne Rogers, who also teaches adult basic education, said enough people have joined the class that it was moved from the Lenawee County branch of the Community Action Agency to Garfield Elementary School, 239 Cross St. The class is still being offered by the Community Action Agency, and is held from 6 to 8 p.m. on Mondays. Another class that will be offered during the daytime may start in mid-September, Rogers said.

Rogers said the class will receive a few computers, and in the fall, curriculum will be provided for people interested in becoming U.S. citizens.

The class is also growing in other ways. Rogers has traditionally taught English as a second language to people who speak Spanish. Now she has a student in her class who speaks Japanese.

Nachiro Kinugawa, also known as

"Kinu," joined the class on July 6. Rogers said he is there at the request of his employer to develop conversational skills in English. Kinugawa works as a quality engineer in Hudson.

Kinugawa writes and reads English, but doesn't speak very much English, Rogers said.

"He needs to be able to communicate with his fellow employees," she said. "Chances are if he's successful, others will join the class when they come to the state."

Sanchez said a problem he's encountered while learning English is how fast other people speak it. Besides learning English, he said he is learning to read and write it, as well.

Clayton resident Paula Cortes said the class has been helping her. Both she and Sanchez said they would recommend the class to other people.

Rogers said it's fun to see the students talking and communicating with each other.

One of the women in the class recently got a job in Manchester and told some of her fellow employees about the class, Rogers said. Some of those employees then started attending the class.

Rogers said the students feel vested in the class, and their commitment is huge.

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"They are so faithful to coming to class each week," she said.

Rogers does not speak Spanish to her students, so they are totally immersed in English, she said. Sometimes her students share things in Spanish — but she said

they're careful not to exclude Kinugawa. If they share a word in Spanish, he is asked to share the word in Japanese.

"They are very cognizant of his presence," she said.

The class does a lot of "ice-breakers," Rogers said. For example, she asks the students about what they did over the weekend and if they had fun.

Rogers said she likes to bring other pieces of informa-

tion, such as idioms, into the class to make it fun. The students recently learned that the phrase "out of the woods" actually means "out of danger."

"They are just so enjoyable," she said. "They really want to be here. That's what makes it so worthwhile."

The registration fee for the class is \$25 for a year and includes a textbook. For more information, contact Rogers at 517-937-7183.
