

Seniors learn they can learn

BY SHERRY KAHAN

(Five Shay of Livonia is firm in the belief that older people can learn as well as

anyone. On the other hand Ann Ornelas of Southfield is of the opinion that it is harder to learn when older

Both have been testing their theories in a free class for senior citizens at Madonna College, Livonia. Twenty-one elderly citizens recently completed a course in beginning Spanish with the help of Sister Mary Hagoline, who also teaches Madonna classes in Spanish civilization and culture, Spanish literature, Latin American civilization and culture as well as the Spanish language.

The course is one of several the college has offered the past two years to seniors, who can be admitted at the age of 65.

One of the courses, arts and crafts for deaf seniors, was given at St. John Deaf Center in Warren.

"We are hoping to be funded again so we can continue our programs for seniors," said Sister Colleen Morris, director of gerontology programs at the college.

DURING A CLASS break, Sister Hagoline was glad to discuss her students and the class.

"They are very motivated," she said. "There is no need to artificially motivate them. When I see people anxious to learn and eager to make an effort, I find it rewarding to work with them."

Mrs. Shay would like to pick up the language because she has Spanish-speaking friends with whom she would like to have something in common.

Said Jeanne Feldstein of Southfield, "I decided it would be nice to know something of the language—it's a fun language."

NORA THERRIAN of Redford Township came with her three sisters, Jean Dorniak of Detroit, a school nurse, Bernice Dorniak of the same city, a public health nurse, and Helen Read of Northville, a private secretary.

Mrs. Therrian reported that "it's a nice thing to do for six weeks."

She added, "It is to use traveling south of the border."

Mrs. Ornelas occasionally visits her husband's relatives in Mexico.

"I'm just home from a three-week visit and they want me to come back," she said. "But my Spanish is very limited. I could make myself understood but it was hard to understand when someone asked me a question."

"So I was determined to keep up my Spanish on a daily basis. Sister Hagoline is the best teacher I've had because she pronounces the language perfectly. I've been in classes where the teacher didn't speak Spanish correctly."

THE THREE-HOUR class met once a week, spending part of its time in a classroom setting, the other in the language lab where students donned headsets that appeared to put them in contact with a space satellite.

Instead they were hooked up to a lesson

in Spanish which allows them to hear the language as it is really spoken.

"I think I'm learning more here because it's a conversational class," noted Ann Rannan of Novi. "I love the teacher. She's marvelous."



Two Southfield women become acquainted in the language lab at Madonna College. Studying Spanish are Jean Feldstein (left) and Ann Ornelas. (Staff photo by Sherry Kahan)

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