

# Professor creates software

**Spanish professor builds software to help students**

BY JUSTIN GUNTERMAN  
Staff Reporter

Some professors spend their free time reading, some spend their time grading homework and some, like assistant professor of Spanish Ben Ogden, develop their own software to benefit students. Ogden said software development has been an interest for him since "dOS Era," the operating system before Windows become popular.

Ogden not only knows the Spanish language, but he also knows numerous coding languages that he said have allowed him to make a computer program for students. Ogden said students can't always meet up to work on Spanish homework together, so the Verbos program, along with his other programs, are ideal when it comes to teaching students the language.

His first project, Verbos, was intended for students who needed help learning verb conjugations, which he said is one of the hardest parts of the Spanish language. Ogden said he found students quizzing each other about different verbs, so he decided to make a program for students who don't have someone to study with.

Ogden said the program is beneficial because it allows students to practice verb conjugations whenever and wherever they want. The program is usable at every campus computer and also is available via remote access on any student's personal computer. He referred to the program as a permanent study buddy.

Ogden said this is important because prior to the program being available for everyone, students



**Adam Antor/Index**  
Sophomore Parker Stanton practices his Spanish for a Truman State course using "Verbos." The program was developed assistant professor of Spanish Ben Ogden.

had to visit the language lab to do most of their Spanish homework. Ogden said that was acceptable when the software first came out more than a decade ago because

many people didn't have personal computers. Ogden said as technology has become a necessity, putting the program out for everyone seemed necessary.

Senior Jeanette Patrick has had hands-on experience with the program. During her 200-level Spanish class, Patrick was required to use the program for her

homework assignments. "The program is a good way to learn verbs," Patrick said. "It's a great method of repetition when it comes to learning the conjugations."

The program has spread throughout Kirksville, Ogden said. Ogden said the only serious inquiry he received regarding the program was from a teacher at Kirksville High School who expressed interest in the program and since has set up a language lab for her students.

"I would like to think that it could be sold for a profit, but I'm not interested in making money," he said. "I made a program that benefits the students as well as myself, and I think that's enough for me."

Beyond being converted to Windows, Verbos is a program that has remained generally unchanged since it originally was developed decades ago.

"Don't let the program's retro looks deceive you," sophomore Ashley Byrne said. "This is a great program for learning verbs. It's been helping me get through Spanish class one day at a time and it's a great tool for learning verbs."

Ogden said he has experimented with making other programs with newer programming tools available for Windows. Ogden said he also has developed Tutor Español, Composition Writer and the Testing Center. Ogden said these all have the same general purpose as his first program — to help students get a better understanding of the Spanish language without help from others.

"Every added exposure to the language is helpful," he said. "Learning a language is a gradual process. The more exposure you get to a specific language, the better you will be at a given language."

# Support group offers comfort

BY ANNA GRACE  
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Sixteen years after discovering she had a brain tumor, Kirksville resident Nancy Hueber and her family started a peer support group to help other people affected by brain injury feel less alone.

Hueber said she learned she had a baseball-sized intra-ventricular meningioma — traditionally a benign, contained brain tumor. Hueber said she realized something was wrong when her vision became impaired, she suffered from dizziness and massive headaches and fell down a flight of stairs due to the tumor. A week later she underwent a brain surgery in which the tumor was removed. Ten days later, she was up and walking. Hueber said after facing multiple hurdles, she is now regaining clarity and is in a place where she feels she can start the group.

During 1996, when Hueber was first looking for support to supplement her family and church fellowship members, she said there were not support groups online. Years later, when they began to appear, she said it was refreshing to meet others online who had experienced what she had.

She began to discover people in her social circle who suffered from brain injuries and felt the need for a local peer support group.

"It would be really nice to have a face in front of them that says, 'I understand,'" Hueber said.

She said she thought there was a need for the group to be in-person because many of the people she knew who suffered from brain injuries were not necessarily searching for support on online social net-

work because sufferers of brain injuries sometimes have trouble using a computer. Hueber and her husband, Truman State music professor Thomas Hueber, started a group for brain-injured individuals, caregivers of those with brain injuries and families affected by brain injuries during Nov. 2012. The group meets once a month, Hueber said. She said they currently have about 15 people, who are either victims of a brain injury or have been affected by someone who has had a brain injury. The peer support group includes survivors and patients of both benign and cancerous brain tumors, stroke victims and people who have injured their brains during accidents.

"It makes them feel not crazy, to find out, 'Wow, everyone here suffers from fatigue,'" Hueber said. "We all suffer from loss of what used to be and accepting their new normal."

Hueber said there have been indicators of the group's success — one man said the group made him feel alive.

The victims are not the only ones that benefit from the group, Hueber said.

Thomas said he thought it was equally important for the caregivers of people with brain injuries to have a group with which to meet.

The Huebers said at the last meeting, people shared strategies for dealing with the side effects of brain injuries, like using white boards to post things in order to remember, a phone app that shares lists between phones or a remote control for light switches so a brain injury victim does not have to struggle to look for a light switch.

"We're all learning from each other," Thomas said.

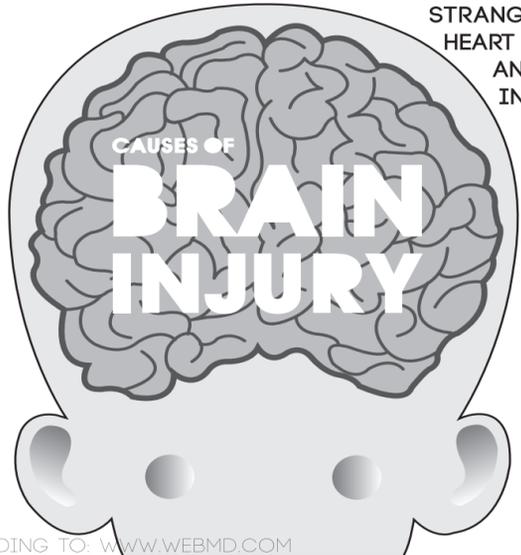
## MARCH IS BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH!

### CAUSES OF TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY INCLUDE:

- FALLS OR ACCIDENTS
- BLOWS TO THE HEAD
- PHYSICAL VIOLENCE
- SPORTS INJURIES
- CAR ACCIDENTS

### CAUSES OF ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY INCLUDE:

- NEUROLOGICAL ILLNESSES
- ABUSE OF ILLEGAL DRUGS
- POISONING OR EXPOSURE TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES
- CHOKING OR DROWNING
- STRANGULATION
- HEART ATTACKS
- ANEURYSMS
- INFECTION
- TUMORS
- STROKE



\*ACCORDING TO: WWW.WEBMD.COM

Thomas said they had also contacted Vicky Wehner, Coordinator of Disability Services, and invited any Truman students who have a brain injury or have been affected by brain injury to the meeting.

Hueber said her daughter and Truman sophomore Megan Hueber helped her parents with making posters for the group and went to a meeting to watch the children of attendees, and ended up laughing about how many Post-It notes their parents had to use to remember things.

"I feel like it's its own little support group for kids," Megan said. She said she thought it was a good ex-

perience for the children to see other children whose parents also are dealing with brain injuries. Megan said she tries to make the group fun as well as supportive, and brings games and plans fun activities. She said the children range from 8 years old to 20 years old.

She said she benefits from the group as well, after having lived with a parent with a brain injury for 17 years. She said there are more and more children coming, and seeing new faces makes her day.

The group meets from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on the first Monday of every month at the Fellowship Baptist Church across from the YMCA.

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