



STAFF PHOTO BY MEGHAN BROWN

Translator Miao-Ju Olsen, right, helps Taiwanese students Alice Liu, left, and Angel Lee, center, read the menu at The Mudpie Coffee House in North Chattanooga before ordering dinner.

# Immersed in English

## Taiwanese students learn language through UTC

BY CARRIE HARGETT  
STAFF WRITER

**S**tudents from Taiwan taking classes this summer at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga were able to learn English by practicing during trips around the city.

The three-week program was specially designed for the 23 Taiwanese students. It was taught by teachers of the English as a Second Language program at UTC.

The goal of the program is to prepare the students to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language. If they pass, they have the opportunity to attend UTC, said Jane Womack, head of the ESL program at UTC.

"Our goal is to get more (international) students to go to UTC," said Terry Olsen, president of the World Trade Society of Chattanooga and a UTC graduate.

The students attend the Tung Fang Institute of Technology in Kaohsiung City, Taiwan. Robert Lin, an instructor at the institute who came as the group's chaperone, has been speaking English for about 20 years.

"Some of the people, when they started they were shy, but now they have opened up," Mr. Lin said.

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 330 students have enrolled in the ESL Program at UTC since it started in summer of 1995.
- 42 countries have been represented by students.
- 15 former ESL students have graduated from UTC with either a bachelor's or master's degree.
- 10 former ESL students are currently attending UTC.

The classes offer an intense study of English that includes learning grammar, speaking, listening and reading. Instruction can last for five hours a day.

"Grammar class is difficult for me, so I need to practice more," said Angel Lee, 19.

Ms. Lee came to Chattanooga with her younger sister, Jenny. They have been studying English for 12 years.

"We came to help each other," said Jenny, 17.

Mr. Olsen and his wife, Miao-Ju, planned activities for members of the group to occupy them after their classes. They took the students to Nightfall, Ruby Falls, Imax 3D Theater, a Lookouts game and more.

"The students admit they are

extremely sleepy because they have done so many things," Mr. Olsen said.

They attended The Walden Club where they were taught how to cook Italian food, which is very popular in Taiwan.

"In Taiwan at business meetings, they eat food from Italy," Mr. Olsen said.

They also went shopping at Warehouse Row, Hamilton Place mall and the Chattanooga Market.

"I like the mall," Angel said. "The prices are very low."

Several house parties were thrown for the students. On a visit to Signal Mountain, they got to explore the outdoors.

"I love walking outside in the forest," Jenny said.

Jane Womack started the ESL program 10 years ago. The normal program is 10 weeks instead of three weeks. Students do not receive college credit for the program.

E-mail Carrie Hargett at [chargett@timesfreepress.com](mailto:chargett@timesfreepress.com)

If you have comments on the Life 101 page or suggestions for topics, e-mail Features Editor Mark Kennedy at [mkennedy@timesfreepress.com](mailto:mkennedy@timesfreepress.com) or call him at (423) 757-6645.