

Learning English doesn't have to end when the school year ends.

Black Hawk College is offering a free program this summer to help English as a Second Language (ESL) students practice their speaking skills.

The Summer 2017 Conversation Class will meet from 9-11 a.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, June 13 through July 20, at the college's [Adult Learning Center](#) in Rock Island and at the college's [Outreach Center](#) in East Moline.

An evening class will meet from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays at the Adult Learning Center and Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Outreach Center.

"This program helps students maintain English proficiency," said Dave Stroud, coordinator of the BHC Adult Learning Center.

The program began at the college's Adult Learning Center in 2015 with just 13 students. It grew to 39 students in 2016. This year, the program has expanded to the college's Outreach Center with more than 200 students registered between the two sites.

ESL students can come to the Conversation Class as often as they like - every day, once a week or whenever they can. Daily topics are provided - such as banking or citizenship or going to the doctor - and students may suggest their own topics for conversation.

Volunteer tutors also are needed to facilitate small conversation groups with the ESL students. No experience is needed.

"The tutors keep the conversation going," said tutor John Mercer. "This is a rewarding and fun experience for both our students and tutors."

Mercer created the program because he saw a gap between when ESL classes end in June and restart in August.

"We wanted to keep them talking during the summer," he said. "That's beneficial to continue learning English."

To become a volunteer tutor, contact Mercer at the BHC Adult Learning Center at 309-796-5561.

To register for the Conversation Class, call 309-796-5560.

Last updated 5/31/2017

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