

Say it in Spanish Please...

It is not uncommon for teachers to only spend 3-5 years at a particular job, which makes Judy Tereshinski's longevity at Yankton High School that much more impressive.

"I started at Yankton High School right out of Yankton College," Judy said. "So far, I've been here at YHS for 42 years."

Judy currently teaches Spanish I-III and Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish, but as a math and Spanish major she's also taught Algebra I at different times during her career.

As a graduate of Yankton High School, Judy said her first years of teaching were surreal.

"It was a little tricky for me because when I was a new teacher many of my colleagues were teachers who had taught me just a few years before that," she said. "I was always a little cautious because I thought I was going to say the wrong thing to them, I was afraid I'd make mistakes, but I always had someone I could go to when I needed help."

Judy has now come full circle, she said.

"Many times a student of mine has become a teacher here and now the roles are reversed," she said. "As the oldest teacher in the building I try to help out as much as I can, but young teachers today are very adept at finding their own way."

During her career, Judy said the ways of accomplishing her job have changed — for the better mostly — but the actual job is pretty much the same.

"When I first started teaching we took attendance by hand and put a little scrap of paper out on the door every hour and someone came around and collected it and tallied the absences. Now we just do it on the computer and you can immediately see all the absences and tardies. We also do all our lesson plans on computers and the students and the teachers can go look at them any time."

There are also differences in the lunches and the way lessons are taught, Tereshinski said.

"We are all more aware of our caloric intake," she said. "The SMART board is pretty amazing. We can pull up anything right before their eyes. Some days the students wonder if they need the teacher, but the teacher/student rapport is still important."

Although the technological changes have made many parts of teaching easier, Tereshinski is still "old school" in many ways.



For 42 years Judy Tereshinski has been teaching Spanish to Yankton students. Through the use of new technology and "old school" teaching, Tereshinski teaches kids not only the Spanish language but also about the culture. Her love of knitting has also created an interest among many of the students over the years.

"I still keep a hard copy grade book and write my lesson plans out on the chalkboard," she said. "You can put it on the computer but some kids still need to say it, write it and repeat it to remember it."

"The kids still have the same problems, they are still inquisitive, which is great," she said. "The kids still don't like homework, but I think it's important to have homework every day so you have a chance to review what was done in class and practice doing it right away."

The kids in Tereshinski's classroom not only have similar problems and complaints of the students of generations past; they also sit in the same desks.

"I have all the same desks from when I started in 1970. I told the administration there was no need to get new ones," she said. "The new ones aren't made as well. These are made to last and we