Greetings and welcome to the fourth issue of the LTC Connection! I hope you had a peaceful and restful summer and are ready for the academic year 2008-2009.

The LTC is flourishing. This is a direct result of each and everyone in our Center. Faculty, staff, and student assistants, the current and the graduated. With your continued dedication and expertise, we can look forward to another successful year.

New to LTC for 2008-2009 are two instructors complimenting our Chinese Program, Aiguo Chen and Hongen Yao. For details see page six. Please join me in welcoming them to LTC.

The summer has been busy. This summer witnessed the largest enrollment in our ESL classes. 70+ students from 14 different countries enrolled in 11 ESL classes. Phyllis, Valeria and Sarah contributed to the success of this program and I thank all of them. It has been a pleasure working with them during the hot days of summer.

Please mark your calendar for Wednesday, September 3, 2008. JHU will be hosting an Orientation Day for admitted freshmen. The LTC has been scheduled to give a presentation and meet with students in the Language Lab from noon-1:30. Of course lunch will be provided.

Our Annual Business Dinner is scheduled for Wednesday, September 17. Please be at the Johns Hopkins Club at 5:00 p.m. The details will be provided later.

My office hours for the next year will continue to be on Tuesdays from 12:00 to 4:00. Please feel free to stop by with your concerns, issues, suggestions, or just for a cup of tea. I am looking forward to working with each one of you as we begin yet another great year!

With the new fall semester approaching, faculty are encouraged to get to know the Language Lab and all the services it has to offer you and your students.

The Language Lab is home to 31 workstations that service all languages, a conference table which can seat up to 15 people, and class videotaping services available by request. Services must be reserved through Cindy Simpson at csimpson@jhu.edu.

Additionally, the LTC Lounge is available for a small group to meet or hold class if necessary. Please keep in mind that it is only available during normal lab hours and should be reserved through Carol Young at ltc@jhu.edu.

Let the Language Lab work for you and your students this semester!
After dedicating years towards learning a foreign language, what better way to end an incredible journey than to have a pot luck on the last day of classes?

I did not start learning Japanese until my junior year at Johns Hopkins; yet, these two wonderful years of learning Japanese have really inspired my interest in the Japanese language and culture.

Thus, in the fall of my senior year, I decided to apply to JET (Japan Exchange Teaching), a government-sponsored program which allows recent college graduates to go to Japan and teach English to middle and high school students in Japan. I think JET has a very meaningful purpose. It promotes not only an internationalization of language but also culture exchange and culture understanding, which are very important in our world today.

On a personal level, I know JET will also provide a great opportunity for me to continue my study of Japanese. I hope to strengthen my language skills and expand my knowledge of Japanese culture. I look forward to getting to know the students there, to learn about the education system in Japan, to travel and see Japan’s countryside.

Most importantly, I look forward to just experience Japan from its heart.

LEARNING JAPANESE OPENS DOORS

“AFTER DEDICATING YEARS TOWARDS LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, WHAT BETTER WAY TO END AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY THAN TO HAVE A POT LUCK ON THE LAST DAY OF CLASSES?”

A SPECIAL SHOUT-OUT TO NIA BAYNE, ELEMENTARY RUSSIAN

Nia Bayne, a graduate of two semesters of Elementary Russian, was awarded a Wilson grant to fund six weeks of research first in Nagoya, Japan, then in Moscow, Russia, where she plans to study the influence of the popular anime series on the cross cultural attitudes of Japanese and Russian students studying each other’s language.

This exciting project is driven by Nia’s desire to combine Russian and Japanese into a meaningful career. I should also point out that Nia, who is musically gifted, wrote the words and melody to a haunting Russian song, which she performed during the international festival at Goucher.

Nia, we congratulate you!

A UNIQUE JAPANESE EXPERIENCE

After dedicating four years towards learning a foreign language, what better way to end an incredible journey than to have a Japanese themed pot luck on the last day of classes?

The Advanced Japanese class held a pot luck in honor of the graduating seniors: Chris Chen, Meme Wu, and Jennifer Kim. Professor Nakao made traditional burdock root and carrot stir fry (kinpira gobo), fried chicken (kara-age), and celebratory sticky rice with azuki beans. Freshman Isabel Ishizuka served traditional green tea, or maccha, drinks and showed everyone the correct way of drinking traditional maccha. We learned the correct way to hold the tea cup, the manner in which to spin the cup so that the most attractive side faces others, and how and when to give thanks to a tea master. These are all things that even some Japanese people are not aware of.

What was unique about the pot luck wasn’t just being able to eat and drink traditional Japanese food half way across the world from where it originated, but we were all required to bring our own chopsticks, bowls, plates, and cups. After reading several stories in the textbook as well as selected articles from newspapers concerning the adverse effects of disposable utensils and plates on the environment, we became more environmentally conscious and carried that idea into the pot luck by bringing our own plates and chopsticks.

I hope the pot luck becomes a yearly tradition that Advanced Japanese students can look forward to after completing the Japanese language program. It’s well worth it!
TEACHING BEYOND THE SCIENCES

With environmental and conservation movements becoming a growing concern worldwide, the Johns Hopkins community has made significant efforts in ensuring that the university is not only meeting the “green” standard, but developing new ways to solve pressing ecological problems.

Since May of 2007, the JHU Recycling department has revitalized its program, quickly becoming the leader in institutional recycling in all of Maryland. Among the recent changes, recycling and waste handlers have been extensively trained on the recycling mission, the collection process has been improved, and the central recycling and trash facilities on campus have been upgraded with state-of-the-art equipment—just to name a few.

The Johns Hopkins Engineering and Applied Sciences Programs for Professionals (EPP) have also made significant “green” improvements, developing courses on alternative energy and actively engaging in research.

Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to be a part of this new movement and make the effort to keep Hopkins “green” and do their part for the greater ecological environment.

For more information on JHU’s Recycling program, feel free to visit their website at www.recycle.jhu.edu.
ACTFL UNITES FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

This fall, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) gears up for their Annual Convention and World Languages Expo.

ACTFL is a national organization committed to the growth and support of the teaching and learning of languages. With a membership comprised of more than 9,000 foreign language educators from all levels of education, as well as individuals from government and industry, the ACTFL provides a broad forum in which to discuss and introduce new ideas regarding the advancement of foreign language teaching in the US.

The ACTFL’s Vision Statement also stresses the organization’s promotion of linguistic research for the benefit of developing language programs and ensuring that the language-teaching profession reflects the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of US society.

This year’s convention will take place in sunny Orlando, Florida, November 21st to the 23rd at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort. Pre-Convention workshops begin November 20th. Bringing together more than 6,000 foreign language educators and administrators from across the world, the convention features over 600 different educational sessions covering a broad range of topics. LTC faculty may register for the convention on their own or contact Carol Young at ltc@jhu.edu.

Additionally, ACTFL is home to two publications - Foreign Language Annals and The Language Educator - available for free to language educators.

For more information about ACTFL or this year’s convention, visit their website at actfl.org.

OPEN HOUSE INTRODUCES FRESHMEN TO LTC

On Wednesday, September 3rd, from noon-1:30, LTC will welcome the JHU class of 2012 by hosting an Open House on the last day of Freshmen Orientation.

JHU’s Orientation theme for 08-09 is “Rock the Hop.” Orientation is when new students become familiar with the campus, start making friends, and learn all the resources Hopkins has to offer them. The LTC will showcase how language learning can enhance students’ college and life experiences.

At the Open House, stations will be set up in the Language Lab for each of our languages and LTC faculty will have the opportunity to meet students and orient them to their language of interest. Lunch will be served providing a taste of foods from around the world and custom LTC tee-shirts will be given to the first 50 students.

If you have any ideas or suggestions about how to make this Open House a memorable one, e-mail them to ltc@jhu.edu.

ARABIC OFFERS A Glimpse INTO A NEW WORLD

It is a universally accepted fact, that, in order to learn a language, students must immerse themselves in the culture and environment of that dialect. In other words, the most effective way to learn French is to go to France; the same is true with Russian, German or Chinese. However, for most students, high school or college classrooms are the only available locations to receive this education. Lucky for me, I spent the last two semesters learning the Arabic language in Khalil Tahrawi’s class. I felt that, in addition to the reading and writing skills I acquired, Professor Tahrawi imparted an appreciation for Arabic culture and exposure to the Arabic world that would be hard to match in any equivalent setting.

Upon beginning to learn Arabic, it is rather intimidating to attempt to decipher its vocabulary. Slowly, my classmates and I learned each letter’s distinct shape and unique sound. The same words that once seemed so foreign and inscrutable became familiar. In addition to a new alphabet, the Arabic language comes complete with sounds, that at least initially, seem utterly alien. We would repeat the sounds on our DVD’s, hoping that one day, we too could roll our ‘ras’ and convincingly use the guttural sound of ‘saa.’

After we mastered the Arabic alphabet, we focused on learning to converse. We used a book of dialogues that began with simple conversations; mostly consisting of basic introductions (my name is… I am a student). Eventually, we came across more complex situations. In one such conversation the protagonist expressed frustration at airport security. We also watched videos about a fictional character named Maha and her trials and tribulations in New York City. Maha’s parents are Egyptian and often, she confided in me and my classmates, she feels lonely and isolated in such a big city. Later, we met her cousin, Khalid, who still lives in Egypt. Khalid has three brothers and they enjoy watching Soccer together. These stories offered two significant perspectives that broadened our understanding of the Arabic world; Maha as an Egyptian living in America and Khalid, still living in Egypt.

In addition, our teacher, Khalil Tahrawi, was always happy to answer any questions we may have had concerning the language and culture of the Arabic world. He would often answer with anecdotes about his experiences as a younger student and also at the University of Cairo. Through his deliberate and insightful responses, my classmates and I were able to obtain a better understanding of the complexities of the subject. Thus, while we may not have been in Baghdad, Cairo, or Dubai, Professor Tahrawi’s class offered a wonderful and effective way to learn this rather difficult foreign language- and without the jetlag.
Faculty in Focus

MAKING A CONNECTION WITH STUDENTS

Khalil Tahrawi, an Arabic professor for the Language Teaching Center takes satisfaction in his own academic achievements, but especially in the progress of Hopkins’ Arabic program since his arrival in 2004. Having begun his career as a high school teacher in 1968, he now teaches Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced and Upper Advanced Arabic at Hopkins.

Tahrawi was born in Palestine where he lived until he graduated from high school. Tahrawi’s favorite teachers from elementary school and secondary school, as well as some from college were the ones that inspired him to become a teacher.

“My teachers set a good example for me and I wanted to follow in their footsteps,” Tahrawi said.

After finishing high school, Tahrawi moved to Egypt for college and to earn the equivalent to a Master’s in Arabic. Then, he went to the United States to earn a Master’s and Doctorate in education. Although he originally planned to return to Palestine, he, his wife and children decided to stay in the U.S.; Tahrawi hoped to use the knowledge from his degrees at U.S. institutions to improve the Arabic language curriculum and teaching methods in America.

Since starting at Hopkins in 2004, Tahrawi has experienced difficulties, as well as rewards from teaching undergraduate students.

“Teaching a foreign language is a challenge because you have to make that language liked by students and encourage more students to take your classes,” he said.

In order to win over his students, Tahrawi includes lessons about culture and stories about his own personal experience learning the language.

He maintains that it is especially important to engage first year students, which is why he always insists on teaching Beginning Arabic.

“One once they like the first year, they will continue,” he said.

Tahrawi’s passion for teaching Arabic not only has led to recognition and appreciation from his students, but also to the growth of the program.

In September of 2004 there were thirty students in all levels of Arabic and three years of the language were offered, but currently there are about one hundred students who can now take Arabic for four years. Moreover, Tahrawi looks forward to the possibility of a minor in Arabic in the future.

Recently, Tahrawi felt proud to see his students from the class of 2008 graduate and continue to pursue their education because they started with him in 2004. He marveled at how it only seemed like yesterday when they were freshmen and he was a new professor at Hopkins. Yet, at the end of four years Tahrawi has overseen the expansion of his department and his students are going on to pursue careers as lawyers, doctors and other professions.

When Tahrawi is not teaching, grading assignments or preparing his lessons, he enjoys gardening, reading and traveling. He understands the value of balancing pleasure with hard work.

Tahrawi’s advice is to not take academics so seriously all the time, as people tend to learn better if they are relaxed and if they are interested in and open-minded about the subject matter they are studying.

Nevertheless, he believes people always have to work for what will come.

“It’s okay to move slowly toward achieving your goals, step by step, but don’t turn back,” Tahrawi said. “Even if it takes a long time, don’t retreat.”

“Teaching a foreign language is a challenge because you have to make that language liked by students and encourage more students to take your classes.”
NEW FACES AT LTC

As the fall season approaches, our “connections” continue to grow with the addition of new faculty and staff to the LTC community.

We welcome Aiguo Chen from Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania as one of our two new lecturers.

Aiguo Chen

With 24 years of teaching experience at the university level, an M.A. degree in Second Language Acquisition from Dalian University of Foreign Languages and another M.A. in Education from Millersville University in Pennsylvania, Chen will be a full-time Chinese instructor. He will teach three sections of Intermediate Chinese.

Also joining LTC’s Chinese Program as a part-time lecturer is Hongen Yao. In the fall, Yao will be teaching a section of Beginning Chinese and the Selected Readings in Chinese Fiction and Short Stories class.

Yao has been teaching Mandarin since 1993 and has taught most recently at University of Maryland, College Park. He holds a M.Ed. Degree in Bilingual Education from Texas Tech University and an M.A. in Social Science Information from East China Normal University.

Lastly, Sarah Addison, a senior English and Writing Seminars major was part of our office staff this summer.

Sarah assisted LTC over the summer, especially with the English as a Second Language program, but will return to her other job in Undergraduate Admissions once the 2008 school year begins.

CLASS OF 2008 COMMENCEMENT

On May 22 at Homewood Field over one thousand undergraduates from the JHU class of 2008 celebrated their graduation.

Despite the windy weather, students and their families and friends were thrilled to hear final inspiring words from university President William R. Brody and guest speaker William S. Nye, also known as Bill Nye, the Science Guy.

It was President Brody’s last commencement address since he will retire at the end of 2008.

LTC would like to congratulate Mel Arevalo, Aaron Lazorwitz, Jaclyn Lim and Jamie Tsui, four of our former student assistants and recent graduates.

After completing their four years at Hopkins, Mel is attending medical school in Guadalajara, Mexico, Aaron is attending UT Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, Jaclyn will pursue her Ph.D. in Biology at Stanford University, and Jamie will pursue interests in business and finance.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: LAB STUDENTS SEE THE WORLD

On a gloomy Tuesday morning, patrons walk into the Language Lab to be greeted with a smile and offered assistance by student employee, Wesley Sudduth.

Wesley, who has been working in the Language Lab for almost a year, is a sophomore and majors in International Studies with a minor in Economics.

A language lover at heart, Wesley admits that the best thing about working in the Language Lab is to be able to talk to people who are learning different languages. Further, Wesley is also a student of LTC having taken Beginning Arabic II in Spring 08 taught by our very own Dr. Khalil Tahrawi.

“A learning a completely new alphabet and being able to read and understand it is the coolest thing about Arabic,” Wesley exclaims enthusiastically.

This summer, Wesley will be a busy bee as he will be an RA for pre-college students and conducting research for the Provost’s Undergraduate Research Awards program in Hopkins. He will be studying eminent domain issues in America.

For the academic year 2008-2009, LTC and Language Lab will bid farewell to Wesley as he travels to southern France for a year of study in Menton, near Nice. All work and no play will make Wes a dull guy, so he will be hitting the scenic French beaches and partying after a day of hard work in all his French-taught classes.

We wish him a happy and safe trip! Bon voyage!

Hello! My name is Whitney Taylor. I am 19 years old. I am from Baltimore, Maryland. I am a student at Johns Hopkins University. My major is African Studies and my minor is Business. I like to read, listen to music and cook. In the future, I will speak Swahili if I go to Africa. My father wants us to travel there because my uncle went and he likes it there.

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My name is Carolyn. I am a student at Johns Hopkins University and I am studying Public Health. After college, I want to work in Africa. I want to provide humanitarian aid. Kiswahili will be useful in East Africa.

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Hello! My name is Nechari Riley. I am a student of Swahili. I hope to learn more about Swahili after I graduate this May. I hope I will travel to Kenya this December.

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Jambo! Huyu ni mwanafunzi atakajejaribi kusema Kiswahili bila kuongea kama (ingeni) Mmarekani.

I think my ultimate goal in learning any foreign language is to gain the knowledge and practice necessary to at least carry on a conversation in the country which the language spoken. Swahili is one of the most interesting languages I’ve ever come upon. Africa is a place I’ve always wanted to visit, and Swahili class has been a way to learn more about different African cultures. The class itself has been a lot of fun. What I love the most is that I am comfortable working with the 5 other students in our class.

I’ve been allowed to approach the language with an open mind and a good sense of humor I’ve enjoyed the intimate size of the class and look forward to working with our group next semester.

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Thank you very much LTC! We have enjoyed studying Swahili and it’s wonderful to have the opportunity to study this language. This semester we listened to world news (in Kiswahili) and we read (Kiswahili) African stories. We are grateful for all your hard work in organizing these language classes and finding such fantastic teachers.
HAVE SOMETHING YOU’D LIKE TO SHARE?

We’d love to hear it! The LTC Connection is always encouraging faculty and staff to submit for upcoming issues. Students love to see their names in print and the newsletter is the perfect place to showcase all the hard work (and fun) you and your students have done throughout the year. It is also a great place to contribute ideas from conferences, draw attention to your language programs, and let the LTC community know what is happening.

If you have any articles, pictures, student works, or announcements you would like to share, don’t hesitate to send us an email. Newsletter submissions can be sent to Carol Young at ltc@jhu.edu, and any questions regarding the LTC Connection can be sent there as well.

Remember, the LTC Connection is published in January and August of each year.

See you next issue!

BRINGING HOME THE GOLD!

Michael Phelps may be from Maryland, but LTC has its very own Gold Medalist! Can you guess which LTC staff member is in the picture on the right?

Going on her many ski trips, bike rides, and hikes throughout the year, Phyllis Steiner, on this ski trip in Steamboat, Colorado, won the NASTAR Gold on the women’s downhill course. Way to go Phyllis!

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

We’re very pleased to announce to you that Doris Shiffman is the proud grandmother of a baby boy!

Elias Petros Caloyeras Shiffman

June 24, 2008

6 pounds, 12 ounces

Mother, father, and baby are all doing fine!

Please join us in congratulating Doris on this happy occasion!

HELPFUL LINKS

Many helpful links can be found at the LTC website under Faculty Resources, such as:

- Academic Calendar
- Course Rosters (JHED login required)
- Final Exam Schedule
- Classroom Equipment List
- Proficiency Exam Form
- Academic Advising
  - Registrar
  - Admissions
  - and much more ...

Visit http://www.ltc.jhu.edu/resources.htm