A New School Year!  

Dr. Yuki Johnson

The new school year started even before the Labor Day weekend. I know that we all feel a sense of excitement and urgency when the new term starts at the end of August, and I hope you had a great, productive, and enjoyable summer and are ready for a great start to the new academic year. I hope that Labor Day weekend gave you a little time to adjust to new schedules. This is a good time to review and preview the current status and upcoming events for the CLE.

My first two years at Hopkins really flew by, and as I start my third, I owe thanks to everyone in the Center and outside as well who helped to accomplish so many positive changes. We are progressing each year in strengthening our programs without moving too fast or making hasty changes. The effort will continue with valuable input from all.

Before the new school year started, we held three workshops (August 19th, 22nd, and 24th). Almost all CLE full-time faculty attended and contributed valuable perspectives. We covered material and discussion related to teaching of speaking, reading, listening, and writing, as well as the theories of testing and issues around the teaching of culture. Content pertained to beginning and upper levels of education under a common theme of learner communicative competence. Sincere thanks to all who participated in these workshops.

The Open House for CLE was held in the Language Lab on August 26th - the second time this event was held in the new Lab. We had a give-away for the CLE t-shirt, and I’ve already seen students wearing the shirt on the first day of class. We will be looking to an increased number of effective ways to promote our language programs, and such will be among the future projects for all faculty members in CLE. Let’s hope that more students open their hearts to learning a new language.

Please see below for several other announcements for this year:

**The Center under the Umbrella of Centers and Programs in Arts and Science:**

There are a variety of recent changes in administration and structure that pertain to the Center. Due to the restructuring of Arts and Science under the leadership of the new Dean, Dr. Katherine Newman, our Center is now under the Dean of Centers and Programs, Dr. Ben Vinson. I look forward to working with Dean Vinson, though I also miss Dean David and appreciate his support over the last two years. Since the new structure has begun, Centers and Programs are more coherently organized and are working together more closely. I attended the meeting in May for the first time with the-
rest of the Directors and learned a lot about other units at JHU. Our role among JHU Centers will continue to grow following the retreat for Centers and Programs scheduled in late September. This is a great step forward for our Center in that we are now included in the regular academic organization with the rest of JHU. I will keep you posted with items arising from the retreat.

A Few Upcoming Workshops

We will be conducting a few more workshops this year—two in the fall term (October and December) and one in the spring term. Basic theories in teaching have been briefly introduced through the workshops held thus far, and future workshops will turn attention more to actual materials. Although we are teaching different languages where cultures vary widely, it is important to share basic ideas among ourselves and gain better techniques and approaches founded in rigorous, up-to-date pedagogical methods. Detailed information will be sent via e-mail.

AP Credits for Chinese and Japanese

Starting this academic year, we are planning to give 3 credits to those who received 4 or 5 points in Advanced Placement tests prior to joining JHU. The 3 credits are equivalent to beginning level, but students can be placed into an appropriate level based on the placement test given in the Center. This arrangement will encourage high school students to take the language further at JHU, and we will have more students who start to take a language at a higher level. I hope to develop this arrangement with other language programs in the Center.

Farewell To Ms. Vanessa Verdine, and Welcome to Dr. Zvi Cohen and Ms. Sally Anderson.

As you already know from previous correspondence, Vanessa Verdine has worked with us for a good portion of her undergraduate studies and for six months beyond. She has now moved on to advance her career and education, and I wish her the very best for happiness and accomplishment. Please join me in extending sincere thanks for all her work over the years, and - Vanessa - please do stop by our office to say hello from time to time.

Two great pieces of news regarding new additions to CLE! Dr. Zvi Cohen joins us in the Hebrew Program, and Ms. Sally Anderson in CLE administration. Sally joined CLE on June 6 and quickly dove in to the Summer ESL activities. She graduated from Furman University, Greenville, SC in 2009 with a BA in French and Political Science. After graduation, she worked at the French Embassy until 2010.

Dr. Cohen received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh in 1999. He has taught Hebrew at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and joins us as a new recruit to the CLE with valuable experience. We are truly lucky to have him. Here is to their continued success and thanks in advance for building great relationships among CLE faculty and helping our programs flourish.

Looking back over the last few years, and looking forward to exciting times ahead, I hope you join me in the sense of family that joins our academic unit at JHU. As our ties grow closer and programs grow stronger, I look forward to CLE placed squarely on the world map among the best places to gain a solid education in language!
Portfolio Assignment for Language Learners

Nancy Gooding, ESL for International TAs

At the beginning of each semester in my ESL for ITA classes, I try to impress upon my students that learning a language is a process that has no particular end date; they will continue to learn English long after ESL classes have been completed. However, in order for this learning process to continue, students must develop strategies to help them continue learning independently. It's crucial for students to become active participants in their learning process. They must be able to monitor not only what they learn, but how they learn.

To guide my students toward this end, I use a portfolio assessment throughout the semester, which helps them self-monitor their learning. These portfolios are a valuable tool for students to keep track of their progress and become more aware of their individual strengths and weaknesses. As their self-monitoring skills become stronger, the students not only take ownership of their language learning, but also develop more confidence in their ability to improve their language skills.

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The portfolios we use contain teacher, peer, and self-evaluations of all the student’s presentations, an individual idiom log, and an individualized pronunciation worksheet with exercises that are practiced and monitored throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, students are asked to review their portfolios and write a letter of reflection discussing their progress by addressing the following 3 topics: (1) the progress they made in the class, (2) what they did during semester they are most proud of, and (3) how they will continue to improve their English in the future. Through these reflections, my students have begun to demonstrate control of their own learning rather than merely looking to the teacher to tell them what to learn. I would like to share some of their thoughts to show how this process has helped create more confident and autonomous language learners.

Excerpts from ESL ITA Students’ Letters of Reflection

Describe the progress that you made in this class.

I think I’m more confident when I communicate with people in English, especially when talking about academic topics. Also, I am better at fluency.

Although I still have some problems such as adding syllables between words, I feel more confident when I give a presentation. I have conquered my nervousness.

I made huge progress in my English with better tempo and pausing. Now when I speak English, I feel like a confident human and not a robot.

I think that I am more conscious about the good side and bad side of my English.

What did you do this semester that you are most proud of?

I am proud that I can explain something in front of many people without worrying or memorizing a script.

I am most proud of the improvement in my speaking ability, especially with linking sounds which are not found in Chinese. I made a lot of progress, but I understand that there is still room for improvement.

The thing I am most proud of is that I can understand professors very well now. I pay more attention to how professors teach in class. What I-

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Incorporating small group discussions in the classroom is a great way for students to use the target language in an authentic setting. These PH.D. candidates are (front left to front right) Cencheng Shen, Applied Math & Statistics; Jim Yang and Changkyu Yoon, both Mechanical Engineering; and Ken Hu, Chemistry.
IELP heats up this summer!  

This summer, fifty-seven students from twelve different countries came to participate in the Summer IELP at Johns Hopkins. On campus they were hard at work studying for Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing, Accent Reduction, American Culture Through Film, and TOEFL Preparation. Students spoke highly of these classes, which were led by our tireless faculty Barbara Gulick, David McNeal, Christy Waddell, Jill Williams, and Julia Yarmolinskaya.

Participants also put their English skills to the test outside of the classroom at events like baseball and harbor sailing, which quickly sold out. They eagerly swept into the CLE lounge for weekly lunch conversations during which they revealed their adventurous spirits with tales of discovering Baltimore. Some even ventured out to Washington D.C. and New York City to see the sights.

At the certificate ceremony, students were honored for their fine achievements over the five-week program. Afterward, groups came forward to grace the audience with songs from their home countries. While it was bittersweet to say goodbye, everyone was full of enthusiasm for what the students had and would accomplish with their study of the English language.

A big thank you to our faculty, staff, and students for making this year’s summer IELP such a great and memorable success!

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Excerpts (cont’d) from page 3

learned in this class helps me understand how they present materials and the intentions of their words.

What I am most proud of is that I know how to use rhetorical questions and other techniques to monitor the class so my lectures are more engaging and understandable.

How will you continue to improve your English in the future?

I think I will grab every chance to talk with native speakers. I am aware of my weaknesses and I know how to improve them.

I think the way to improve my English is to practice it by reading newspapers and watching movies and TV shows. Also, I think chatting with natives and discussing academic topics is another way to improve.

To further improve my English, I will practice more in my daily life for sure. Practicing is the best way to learn. Also, I will pay more attention when listening to native speakers.

The most important way to improve my English is to imitate native speakers and try to find out the differences between mine and theirs. Also, increasing my vocabulary will help me not only in my oral English, but my written English as well.
Japanese is not an easy language to learn. To speak it you must learn what syllables make up the language, and how to pronounce the mysterious consonant between r and l, and an often complicated syntax; to write it you must learn three alphabets, a seemingly unlimited number of characters, and how to write them properly. For a native English speaker, these are all daunting tasks, yet the CLE’s robust Japanese program shows that students are eager to tackle the challenge. However, the desire alone will not teach them Japanese. That is where the knowledgeable instructors of Japanese at the Center for Language Education come in. Makiko Nakao, who teaches alongside Satoko Katagiri and CLE Director Yuki Johnson, has been a part of the CLE since 1994. I spoke with her about her background and her observations on teaching Japanese, and along the way I learned about her uniquely attentive approach to teaching a language as intimidating as Japanese.

Ms. Nakao attended The Kansai Gaidai University, where she had the “eye-opening experience,” as she puts it, of studying with Hajime Yamamoto, Dean of the Center for International Education. She began teaching English in a Japanese high school, where she encountered her first example of cross-cultural language teaching. From her experience at Kansai Gaidai, she had the opportunity to study at Ohio State University with Mari Noda, the author of numerous textbooks on East Asian pedagogy. As a TA at Ohio State, she became aware of the differences in Japanese and American teaching methods. Her training as a TA at Ohio State University prepared her for her first teaching assignment at the University of Hawaii, where she taught in a large Japanese program of twenty professors. There, she says, she met many influential colleagues, and benefitted from the large size of the program. After her time at the University of Hawaii, she began teaching at the University of Maryland. The new environment and wide age range, including undergraduate, graduate and adult students, expanded Ms. Nakao’s breadth of experience in teaching American students. After teaching at the University of Maryland, Ms. Nakao came to the Johns Hopkins University, and has remained a great asset to the Japanese Program and to the Center for Language Education since.

There are numerous differences between teaching Japanese students English and teaching American students Japanese, since in Asian cultures even languages are taught and learned by rote, whereas in American classrooms the rote method is very unpopular. In retrospect, she says, “When I was teaching English in Japan, they didn’t ask any questions...95% of the students in class would do exactly what I told them to do”. The catch? “They would do what I told them to do, but nothing more”. In Japanese schools, teachers can plan weeks ahead because they know exactly how the lesson plan must progress, leaving little to no room for adjusting the lesson plan. She admits that this aspect is easier on the teachers, but she stresses that “asking questions is a very important thing”. While it may be more difficult, teachers can incorporate the questions that students bring up into their lesson plans, thereby tailoring the class to the students’ needs.

After having taught at three different institutions, Ms. Nakao says that JHU students are, above all, hard-working. Unlike other universities, JHU does not offer a Japanese major or minor, so students who take the heavy load of the Japanese courses do so knowing full well that they will not be able to concentrate in the subject. Ms. Nakao lauds her students, saying “students [at JHU] will do even more than you tell them to”. For instance, her students frequently come to office hours even when they don’t need help, “just to chat in Japanese” because “they feel like five hours a week is not enough to practice speaking”. Unfortunately, due to academic major requirements at JHU, many Japanese students are not able to continue learning Japanese past two years. She notes that these students, many of whom are-engineers, are remarkably driven to learn Japanese. Many are learning Japanese from scratch, with the desire to go to Japan or to read anime, and decide to invest what time they can in Japanese before they must apply themselves elsewhere.

Ms. Nakao has a unique position as a teacher, having taught not only university students but also her American-born daughters to read, write and speak Japanese. While they were learning to read Japanese, she would have them read the text aloud, as she was taught to do. She would do the same while teaching them to read English, until her husband asked her why she would do so. She then realized that, while English reads more or less as it is written, the more complex Japanese characters often don’t—the characters are different words in different-

Cont’d on page 6...
Swahili Proverbs

Jane Kamau, Kiswahili

Students of Beginning Kiswahili use some Swahili proverbs learnt in class. Test your Swahili knowledge!

Paliondokaa wanafunzi sita darasani la Kiswahili katika Kriegar. Darasani kuna mwalimu. Wanafunzi Pat wa nyumba ya simba alisema "Je, unaweza kunifundisha kusoma saa?"


Mwalimu alisema "ajabu ya shingo kukataa kulala kitandani." Hilary alisema "mtihani ni lini?" Mwalimu alisema "Ogopa ni ngao pia."

Bwana Ogega hana maswali. Yeye alisema "Mwenda pole hajikwai." Mwalimu alisema "Mkono mtupu haulambui." Bwana Ogega alisema "moja na moja si tatu."

Mwalimu alisema "paka akiwa hakimu panya hawezi kushinda kesi."

Brian, amechelewa, akaingia na alisema "Wanapopigana tembo wawili ziumiazo nyasi... ninataka kusoma."

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Translation of Swahili proverbs

Tunda jema halikawii mtini
A good fruit does not stay on a tree

Leo kwako, kesho kwa mwenzio
Today trouble's at your house, tomorrow at your friend's house

Ajabu ya shingo kukataa kulala kitandani
It is amazing when the neck refuses to lie down on a bed

Ogopa ni ngao pia
Fear is a shield too

Mwenda pole hajikwai
One who walks slowly does not stumble

Mkono mtupu haulambui
An empty hand is not licked

Moja na moja si tatu
One and one does not add up to three

Paka akiwa hakimu panya hawezi kushinda kesi
When a cat is the judge, a mouse does not win any case

Wanapopigana tembo wawili ziumiazo nyasi
When elephants fight, the grass suffers

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Faculty in Focus

( cont’d ) from page 5

contexts. Her Chinese students often are very good at reading and understanding passages with these more difficult characters in them, because the characters and their meanings are shared between Japanese and Chinese; however, it is not so easy for them to read aloud, because the spoken word in Japanese is different from the spoken word in Chinese. Naturally, Ms. Nakao incorporates reading aloud into her classes at JHU.

Whatever it is that compels a student to learn a language, however much he wants to learn, what would he be without a great teacher behind him? Japanese is a rigorous, five-day-a-week commitment, with no major or minor promised to the students who enroll year after year. Already, the program consists of driven students who will come to office hours just to chat, and the Japanese teachers are there even just to chat. With her great knowledge of teaching methods and their efficacy, both from professional and personal experience, as well as her upbead, unflaggingly positive attitude, Ms. Nakao is the kind of teacher whom the beginning Japanese student would be very lucky indeed to find at the front of her classroom.

Makiko Nakao with one of her Japanese classes last year.
Hopkins students have never balked at challenges; they flock to rigorous summer courses in science and mathematics. The study of Arabic during the summer, however, has never been as popular. Professor Tahrawi believes that Hopkins students feel Arabic is simply too big a challenge to undertake in such a short period of time. As an alumnus of the program, I can state unequivocally that studying Arabic over the summer is a great decision.

The quality of the instruction notwithstanding, the study of language is by nature extremely cumulative and the question remains whether it is possible to reach a level of proficiency sufficiently high to succeed in Second Year Arabic. Despite the short duration of the course, all Hopkins students who completed both summer sessions will place into Second Year Arabic in the fall. In fact, many of them will be better prepared; the summer allows students to focus on one subject without distractions. When a language is one of five or six courses, the weekly vocabulary test often gets the short end of the stick: that ten page term paper worth twenty five percent of the final grade takes precedence. The intensive nature of the summer course with its bi-weekly quizzes, however, leaves every vocabulary word memorized and every grammatical structure learned.

Beyond the academics, the course is also quite enjoyable. Professor Tahrawi's depth of knowledge goes beyond the Arabic language; he provides insight into the Arab perspective of current events. In-class discussions about the Arab Spring and Hosni Mubark's trial gave us much needed breaks after the drilling of Arabic grammar. Arab culture is also taught. Professor Tahrawi has resided in various Arab countries and is well acquainted with their cultures. We examined many facets of Arab life: from the social structures in various Arab countries to how they take their coffee. We delved into the history of the language, a subject that itself could occupy the whole course. All and all, any Hopkins students remaining in Baltimore over the summer should consider taking Arabic.
"understanding". As a student of anthropology, my undergraduate career has revolved, in part, around questions of what it means to understand. In this light, I feel that the study of languages has been critically important in my development as both a thinker and an activist. And when I consider these questions of “understanding” on a political and social register, it seems to me that the importance of studying Arabic in particular becomes especially clear. The stakes are simple and pressing: if our university is to remain a leader in training the next generation of scholars, professionals, and diplomats who seek to understand, it must continue to support the study of this beautiful and important language.

It is worth noting that the Arabic language has been the subject of much talk in Baltimore City in recent months. One local writer, Justin Sirois, has partnered with Haneen Alshujairy, an Iraqi refugee, to launch the “Understanding Campaign”, which aims to teach every Baltimore resident one Arabic word. I think it is important that we recognize this popular push toward broadening global understanding when considering the tremendous value of Arabic instruction at Johns Hopkins. In the space of the last decade, learning Arabic has become deeply embedded in popular culture—for U.S. citizens and students, it can no longer be considered the sole province of academics or members of the Foreign Service. The world in which we live is one in which Arabic is a visible and audible part of everyday geopolitics, though this visibility often comes with misunderstanding and misrepresentation.

It is in the spirit of responsiveness to the demands of this world—both locally in Baltimore and more broadly in relation to the conflicts between Western and Arab or Islamic nations that dominate our headlines—that I emphasize the importance of language education as a mode of fostering cross-cultural understanding in the contemporary United States. This is especially apparent when we consider recent public debates about immigration, the war in Iraq, and allegations of terrorism. A current of misunderstanding about the many millions of people throughout the world who speak Arabic pervades many of these debates, and I feel that such misunderstanding is compounded by the fact that most officials and citizens of the United States are unable to communicate with their counterparts in Arabic-speaking nations. More locally, many U.S. citizens of Arabic heritage contend with racial profiling and prejudicial treatment in public spaces ranging from schools to airports. And just last year, a U.S. student was detained by the Transportation Security Administration during a routine airport security screening when officers found that he was studying Arabic vocabulary flashcards.

In this political environment, it seems that disagreements tend to be addressed through force more often than through sustained discussion or diplomacy. Whether we consider domestic examples of prejudice such as one might encounter in a U.S. airport, or international examples such as the U.S. government’s “War on Terror”, native speakers of Arabic tend to be most adversely affected. Likewise, it is deeply troubling that the Arabic language seems to have become a mark of contagion—something to be contained and controlled—for some in the United States. But, this widespread misunderstanding of those who speak Arabic also seems to open up the possibility—rather, the demand—that Arabic language education might foster more peaceful ways of addressing problems and disagreements emerging from the problems in communication.

Speaking personally, the training in Arabic language that I have had here at Johns Hopkins has prepared me for a career in medical anthropology and public health in which the ability to communicate with one’s interlocutors and patients is of paramount importance. My goals as a student interested both in the intersections of health and poverty and in working on these problems in Arabic-speaking regions would be unreachable without such language training, and I know well that many of my peers share similar aspirations. For me, this one word that I highlight above—understanding—expresses the experience and responsibilities of being any kind of student: “understanding” in this sense is the critical praxis toward which all of us aim and which the university tries to foster. As I approach the end of my undergraduate education, it is clear to me that my training in Arabic has been among the most important components of this path toward understanding. With both the aspirations of individual students and the possibility of more peaceful diplomatic relations in mind, I can think of few more important considerations for our university’s future.
Remember that uproariously funny song from the Broadway play *The Producers* that begins “Springtime for Hitler and Germany…?” Well, think closer to home, delete some words and you get: Springtime for Hopkins and St. Petersburg! Yes, as some of us (we won’t mention names) baked in Baltimore, our students from the Goucher-Hopkins Cooperative Russian Program indulged in the cultural delights of scenic St. Petersburg. Smolny Institute remained a top draw. Hopkins majors Maddie Stone and Peter Baumhart took advantage of the cool breezes of the Neva River to stroll along the granite embankments during the spectacular White Nights. Joining them there were their Goucher classmates Daria, Pugh, Abbigail Wegman, Katie Everhardt, and Eric Damiana. Hopkins and Goucher students weren’t the only ones to end up in Peter the Great’s city on the Finnish bay. Dean Steven David, whose daughter was in Smolny visited in early June. On his heels in July came Goucher President Sandy Unger. Even Dr. Annalisa popped in for a day or so before zooming on to Moscow and Vladimir on some administrative business. In Moscow she lunched with former Russian Major Billy Beaver, now in his third year of graduate work at the University of North Carolina. What a champ! He was studying Turkish, through the ACTR Flagship Program in Moscow with the intention of combining it with his interest in economics. Finally, last but not least our very own Hopkins student winner of the prestigious Boren award, Ethan Doyle soaked in the culture in the ancient cities of Vladimir, Yaroslavl’ and Bogoliubovo.

Ethan sent me his Independence Day greeting and this lovely photograph of the famous medieval church *Spas na Nerle* (Savior on the Nerl) which he snapped in Bogoliubovo.

*Poka*

Olya