Message from the Director

Dr. Yuki Johnson  
Director, CLE

I hope you had a great start to the New Year and that you are revitalized and energized for the new term. May your 2011 be filled with happiness and success.

The fall term flew by like an arrow, but quietly. I saw many more students making use of the Lab working on homework assignments and exams, and I often had a chance to chat with them about their progress in language learning. While many did not know with whom they were chatting (so I was able to get fairly unbiased feedback), they were quite unanimous in their enjoyment of the opportunity to learn a new language. Many reflected on the challenges of language acquisition, and to some this was the very factor that motivated them to learn more. It was a pleasure to listen to the true voices of our students, and I hope they feel a sense of deep accomplishment following this term and that they will be eager to rise to the challenges of still higher levels of language learning.

In Fall of 2010, I began teaching the 1st year Japanese grammar lecture class, and while it has been many years since I last taught 1st year students, the opportunity to engage students at the most basic level refreshed my enthusiasm and interest in expanding teaching methodologies, especially involving new computer technologies. As a linguist, I always loved to teach grammar, and teaching the excellent students at JHU confirmed to me how important a thorough knowledge of grammar and culture is to the education of ADULT learners. Taking advantage of tools and materials available on the internet provided an endless source of input for incorporating aspects of culture in class. A simple combination of PowerPoint, video clips, photos, and other media gave a fantastic window on language and culture, and while it took hours to pour over websites with fun and educational video clips and pictures, it refreshed my own knowledge of the culture and taught me a few new things about life today in Japan. Ten years ago, I would not have thought of incorporating so many materials and media from the internet, but I have come to re-realize the power of visual / multi-media presentation of learning materials.

As part of restructuring the basic Japanese courses, I adopted a new textbook called “GENKI,” and... Continued on page 2
Message from the Director

reference used by major universities across North America, Europe, and Japan. While there are always pros and cons with any textbook, this is a major positive change in our instruction, allowing our students to communicate with students at other institutions regarding their progress in learning Japanese. Instructors, too, can exchange ideas about the program, curriculum, and materials from a common basis. I hope students had a good learning experience with the new text, and I am happy to see the program consistent with more modern methodologies worldwide.

This term, again, I will be visiting classrooms from time to time to offer more feedback on instructors’ teaching methods and activities. Also, I would strongly encourage you to visit your colleagues’ classes. Please consider visiting 1st Year Japanese classes to find out what we are doing, and consider how things can be improved in other target languages. There is so much we can learn from each other!

In Spring 2010, the CLE held a workshop on learning, communicating, and sharing information, such as our student demographics, majors, reasons for studying a language, etc. Everyone engaged in sharing their experience and learned a lot about each other’s program. In Fall 2010, we again held a workshop, this time concerning consensus on the curriculum based on the ACTFL Guidelines introduced in Spring 2010 throughout the ‘Less Commonly Taught Language’ programs like ours. We will continue to hold collaborative workshops to share teaching approaches and identify concerns with materials and curricular activities. I will be holding another workshop before Spring Break, focusing on some of our languages reciprocally using various drilling techniques. (Please know that techniques of employing communicative activities will follow soon.)

I am looking forward to insight on various languages such as Arabic, Hebrew, Kiswahili, Persian, and many more.

Though it is not an easy task, and it may take a while, these types of workshop opportunities will help to build a united approach across our language programs, identify and develop the strongest methodologies appropriate to each, and build an even more excellent CLE.

And, of course… we had a great Holiday Party this year again! We greatly enjoyed the food, drink, and conversation among colleagues. Some of the highlights of the gathering were the presents to all Center faculty, including the new CLE T-shirt, CLE pen, CLE USB stick, and CLE mug!

A few other announcements as we begin the New Year and one piece of sad news…:

A NEW LOOK

Thanks to Valeria, we have a new logo!

I would like to promote our Center more positively and visibly throughout the university so that people are better aware of the existence, function, and goals of our Center. We will be giving away CLE T-shirts and pens to all students, helping to advertise and disseminate the message of language learning at JHU. Those who are taking language courses, please wear your CLE T-shirt and use the pen!

FAREWELL TO VALERIA

With deeply mixed feelings, we must bid farewell to Ms. Valeria Costadoni. Valeria has been working in the Center since she was an undergraduate. After graduation, she undertook a six-month internship at the University with us, and then became a full-time administrator in CLE. Most of you know her very well, and I am sure we have all been truly impressed by her work in the last one and a half years. Not only did she design and maintain the CLE website, she was the source for many issues of the CLE newsletters – not to mention our LOGO! She has taken care of all matters related to course offerings and helped with ESL administrative duties. Her contributions to our Center are numerous and much appreciated. Recently, Valeria received the well deserved opportunity to move on to higher education and is awaiting acceptance into a combined MA/Ph.D. program in the Departments of Latin American Studies and History at Florida International University.

Since the time she expressed her hopes for the future, I knew this day would eventually come. Though I will be sad to lose her, I congratulate her sincerely for her departure and wish her the best. Her work will be succeeded by Vanessa until the end of January, and we will post a position announcement to recruit a new full-time administrator. Valeria’s last day at the CLE is January 31st, 2011. Please stop by the office to thank, congratulate, and bid farewell to Valeria.

Valeria, thank you for everything you have done for us. You will be missed, and we wish you the best in your new school and exciting challenges ahead!

Study Abroad Programs in China and Japan

The East Asian Studies Program initiated a new study abroad program between Nanjing University and JHU for which the program will be sending students to Nanjing to study Chinese. In addition, the EAS Program realized the new summer intensive immersion language program in scientific and technical Chinese at Hopkins-Nanjing. This program is funded by the Luce Foundation and will be based at the Johns Hopkins University-Nanjing University Center for Chinese and American Studies (Hopkins-Nanjing Center) on the campus of Nanjing University in China. The Program will provide specialized Chinese language training designed to address the specific linguistic needs of students, researchers, and professionals in the fields of engineering, medicine, and public health.

Expected to launch in Summer 2011, this program will include experiential research and learning opportunities such as visiting laboratories and attending research/clinical workshops.

The program is also currently planning a formal exchange program between the University of Tokyo and JHU. Once this is realized, one to two students per year will be able to travel to U-Tokyo to study the Japanese language and other culture courses that can be officially transferred to JHU to fulfill course requirements (if necessary). U-Tokyo is the most prestigious university in Japan, and EAS and CLE are very excited to see this new opportunity come to life. To build more detailed plans, Dr. Lori Citti, Director of the Study Abroad Program, and Dr. Yuki Johnson will be visiting China and Japan from February 26th to March 5th.

Detailed information will be announced soon after their return.
Greetings from the Russian Program

Dr. Olya Samilenko
Russian Program

Greetings dear colleagues!

What a hectic semester it’s been! On the Russian end, on top of the usual teaching Annalisa and I do, the two of us have been gearing up for the annual external review of the Russian Program which comes upon us every ten years at Goucher, sort of like a weaker strain of the black plague.

The project entails all five sections of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures working together in utter confusion. Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on the outcome, the ML review is a big deal. It’s also a real pain in the neck, especially since I’m the one who gets to do the self-study for the Russian section, a task which is about as fun as… well, a pain in the neck.

This time around, though, I experienced an interesting moment. As I began rummaging in my copious files, hoping to find indisputable evidence of my Program’s greatness during the last decade, I stumbled upon three interesting looking letters tucked away in a forgotten file labeled “old.” They were written by Goucher’s President Emerita, Rhoda Dorsey and French Professor Wolf Thormann, who chaired the Modern Languages for thirty years.

Although I had obviously inherited the letters from the former chair of the ML, when I myself became chair in 1995, I don’t ever remember actually reading them. The yellowing, parchment-thin documents, all typed on an Underwood, lay in the palm of my hands like relics from a bygone era, which of course is exactly what they were.

All three letters described in fits and starts how the Russian Program came to Hopkins. I thought I would share that story in the essay below, which I’ve entitled The Odd Couple. The idea was to make it short and sweet, but in case I don’t succeed let me know and I promise to make the sequel even shorter. Or maybe, I won’t even write one (although I’ve already picked the title).

The Odd Couple

It all began in 1970, a time when national enrollments in Russian were still experiencing the heady aftermath of the sputnik era. In those years Goucher College had a reputation of being a really fine teaching institution. One of the brightest plumes in its cap was the Department of Modern Languages. In an era when translating often passed for language pedagogy, the ML, headed by Wolf Thormann, strove to develop all four skills in its undergraduates. It regularly churned out French, German, Russian and Spanish majors who actually were able to speak the target language well. This fact, apparently, did not go unnoticed.

When the distinguished Hopkins’s professor and Russian translator, Norman Henley retired, the administration at Hopkins made a momentous and, from a financial standpoint, prudent decision not to replace him. According to Thormann, a meeting of the Hopkins faculty was called, and the entire Hopkins faculty (yes, you heard me right) voted to bring the Goucher Russian Program to Homewood! The “deal” provided Hopkins students with the unique opportunity to minor and double major in Russian, providing they also majored in a discipline taught at Hopkins. Equally important, it allowed them to participate in a broad range of extracurricular activities funded by Goucher that enhanced their experience in Russian.

After reading the memos, being an inquisitive person, I wanted to know more. Who had been the original signers, I wondered? I started making phone calls to some of the old timers among the faculty, but by then I felt a bit guilty and decided I needed to get back to my self study. Besides, I was coming up against a brick wall. President Dorsey, who now lives in Lutherville, told me that she had long since forgotten the name of the Hopkins Dean. Nevertheless, she vividly recalled that there had been other provisions in the original contract besides the one concerning the Russian exchange.

One ambitious plan would have provided for the creation of (brace yourselves) a bi-institutional symphony orchestra!

My wild goose chase had one positive outcome. It led me to conclude that back in 1970 Goucher and Hopkins were more than the kind of neighbors who nodded to each other across the driveway. They seemed to have engaged each other in dialogues on many subjects, some of which were rather off-the-wall. Yet the two schools had ended up signing a very practical joint

Continued on page 4

Hiring New Full-Time Lecturer in Hebrew

With strong support from the Program in Jewish Studies, the CLE is currently seeking to hire a full-time Hebrew language lecturer.

In addition to joining our current faculty, the lecturer will also work with Hebrew Literature and Jewish Studies faculty to coordinate the Hebrew language curriculum with developments in the broader Jewish Studies program.

This is a great addition to the Center and the hope is that the Hebrew Language Program will continue to grow in future semesters, attracting more students.

The Hebrew Lecturer Search Committee is open to recommendations of anyone who may be a good asset to our Center. If you know of someone who may be a qualified applicant, please contact Dr. Yuki Johnson with your recommendation. More information about the position will be available on the CLE website.

We look forward to hearing from new applicants and hope that Hebrew, along with our other language programs, continue to grow and evolve in the coming semesters.

Want to submit an article?

The CLE is always looking for language-related articles for every issue of the CLE Connection. We encourage faculty, staff, and students to help keep the newsletter up-to-date.

To submit articles, pictures, or news, email cledu@jhu.edu.
A Year in ESL

The ever-evolving English as a Second Language program at JHU always looks forward to each semester with hopes of finding new ways to engage students in English language studies. With the recent changes in the program, these past few semesters have shown that 2010 was truly a landmark year for ESL.

Summer at JHU saw a surge of interest in the intensive curriculum. Despite a drop in total enrollment from the previous summer, international and local students signed up for multiple ESL courses, driving class sizes to their limit and bringing tuition totals to a record high. Students chose from core curriculum classes such as Listening and Speaking, and Reading and Writing. Those enrolled in the immersion program also took courses in American Culture through Film, TOEFL Preparation, and Medical English. After hours, students visited Camden Yards for their first Orioles experience, spent afternoons sailing along the Inner Harbor, enjoyed conversation groups over lunch, and mingled with fellow students, faculty, and staff at the annual ESL picnic.

Even as the summer drew to a close, there was no slowing down for ESL. In the fall, two brand new courses were created—Public Speaking and Grammar, Writing, and Editing—for which students again signed up in record numbers. ESL Director Uma Saini was also able to reach out to new students by presenting the ESL at JHU program at an ESL Open House in December, sponsored by JHU Medicine. This upcoming spring, the Grammar class will again be offered, along with a course in Strengthening Oral Communication Skills that has returned to the curriculum due to popular demand.

With so much excitement building around ESL, 2011 promises to be a year to watch.

JHU-Goucher Russian Program History

agreement that involved a critical language. This agreement was still in effect to this day.

I had worked in the program over twenty years, yet had never really thought about how strange the whole thing was. After all, in size and scope the two institutions could not have been more different. Goucher represented the best of the liberal arts tradition. Its bread-and-butter were the undergraduates. Hopkins, on the other hand, boasted an international reputation in research that extended to the far corners of the globe. The university focused mostly on its graduates, although it obviously was also concerned about the undergraduates, as well. If Goucher and Hopkins had anything in common, aside from their excellence in two distinctly different areas, it seems to have been the fervent hope that by pooling together their resources they could give their undergraduates the best possible training in Russian that would enable them to compete more effectively in a world where the Soviet Union continued to flex its muscles with troubling regularity.

And so, maybe because it was, after all, the height of the counter-culture and the hippy movement, the most unexpected union came about. Goucher’s Russian Program, while remaining a full-fledged language section of the ML, also became a Hopkins Program, while Homewood became an extension of Goucher’s Russian classroom. The end result yielded one perfect whole that turned out to be far bigger and far more multi-faceted than either half by itself. The unlikely merger between Johns Hopkins, the hulking research giant, and Goucher College, the little liberal arts dynamo, was consummated by the deployment of a blue shuttle, which the passengers affectionately dubbed the Blue Bird of Paradise, and whose cost was shared by the two institutions.

By the time I arrived in 1989, the Bird of Paradise connected the two campuses in an exceedingly bumpy twenty-minute ride. Nevertheless, I thought that I would be able to put those twenty minutes to good use by eating my sandwich right there on the bus. A bad case of indigestion quickly disabused me of my ideas. But aside from the rough ride on the Blue Bird (and there was never any other kind), things did go smoothly for the Cooperative Program because my predecessors, dedicated teachers to the core of their being, put their heart and soul into the Program, giving all their students the same attention and respect regardless of whether they came from Hopkins or Goucher. It was this that made the Program thrive.

Russian Professor Emeritus, Rudy Lentulay, who hired me in 1989 and who himself retired in 2000, once told me that the French Section at Goucher became very jealous of the fact that the Russian Professors throughout the seventies and early eighties always seemed to have more students. “Why is it that your students love you so much?” Wolf Thomann was reported to have asked Vlada Tolley, Rudy’s colleague, whose husband Kemp Tolley had been an Admiral in the U.S. Navy during WWII. “Because we love them back,” retorted Vlada, with devastating simplicity.
Faculty in Focus: Annalisa Czezculin

Valeria Costadoni

Since its creation, the Center for Language Education has believed in not only advancing students’ knowledge of language, but also nurturing a greater awareness of the importance of language and the desire to see the field of language education grow. With this mission in mind, it is no wonder that the CLE boasts one of the most energetic and ambitious language instructors in the field.

Annalisa Czezculin has been a part of the CLE family since the fall of 2003, when she joined Professor Olya Samilenko as a lecturer of Russian as part of a cooperative agreement between Goucher and JHU. Since then, Annalisa has worked tirelessly to promote Russian language learning at both campuses. Through her and Prof. Samilenko’s efforts, the program now boasts a hefty fourteen course curriculum, exciting study abroad opportunities, and includes students from the partner universities as well as College of Notre Dame, Loyola College, MICA, Peabody, Stevenson University, and Towson University. Annalisa can often be seen traveling back and forth between Goucher and JHU to accommodate students at both campuses. In addition, she supplements her teaching duties with involvement in forthcoming publications, participation in a number of language associations, and trips to workshops and conferences throughout the country.

“I have the best of both worlds,” says Annalisa. “My colleague, who is also my good friend, teaches grammar through literature, while I teach from a linguistic perspective. Together, we make a team that allows us to be a small, adaptive program that remains comprehensive and autonomous.”

Nowhere is her passion for language learning more evident than in her work as part of the CLE’s Russian program. Her teaching methods are rigorous and her expectations of students very high. As she explains, “We always want our students to reach their full potential... The emphasis in our classes is always on pushing students to exceed their grasp and disturb their comfort zone just enough to simulate real-life experiences.”

Even when speaking about her curriculum, the love of her field of study is evident in Annalisa’s words: “The object is for the student to begin with grammar and to culminate in not only higher-level skills, but also to have a world understanding of Russia’s contributions and potential in the world.”

The secret to Annalisa’s seemingly unstoppable pace seems to be that even though she is in every way an accomplished teacher, she is still very much like a student in her commitment to growth and desire to learn. This passion surely stems from Annalisa’s beginnings as a language student—a title that she seems never to have grown out of.

Annalisa is a “homegrown” talent—having begun her collegiate life right here at Homewood with a double BA in Russian and Biology. After graduation, she spent time tutoring sciences at Hopkins, followed by a teaching assistantship in Russian at the University of Pittsburgh, and a period as an Academic Advisor, as well as Co-Director of the Center of Russian Language and Culture at the Friends School of Baltimore. Along the way, she picked up a diploma in Russian Language and Literature from Leningrad State University, an MA in Teaching Biology from JHU, a second Russian diploma, this time from Moscow State University, and a Masters in Slavic Linguistics from the University of Pittsburgh. Annalisa then became a teacher of Russian, Chemistry, and History at John Carroll High School in Bel Air, MD, where she caught the eye of Prof. Samilenko. From there, she split her time between teaching social sciences at Salisbury Christian School, devoting after hours as a tutor at several Sylvan Learning Centers throughout Maryland, and of course, teaching Russian Language, Literature, and Culture at JHU. In 2007, Annalisa added another degree to her already impressive list — PhD in Slavic Linguistics. Annalisa’s commitments even extend beyond the world of academics, as she is also actively involved in the planning and execution of school-wide events, social functions, community service projects, dance ensembles, and scout troops.

For her efforts, Annalisa has receive a mountain of praise from her peers. Among her many trophies, she has received an Excellence in Teaching Award from the U. of Pittsburgh, has had her teaching portfolio placed in forthcoming publications, participation in a number of language associations, and trips to workshops and conferences throughout the country.

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Student Spotlight: Tobi Ojo

Emily Cheung

You may have noticed a few new faces at the Language Lab this semester. This past fall, the Lab was given a chance to expand its services by employing a number of new student specializing in tech help and project development. These new student workers have proven to be an invaluable help to the Center and we thank them for a job well done!

The student we would like to highlight this term is Tobi Ojo. He began working in the CLE’s Language Lab this fall as a student tech. As a student tech, he helps students in the Language Lab who have technical issues as well as handles many media processing issues for the center.

Tobi is currently a junior at Johns Hopkins studying International Studies and Anthropology. He speaks English and Spanish. He is also currently spending his intersession abroad studying in Barcelona.

As a relatively new member of the CLE and Language Lab he appreciates the sense of community and revelry between the student workers.

He states that “Everyone is friendly and eager to help out one another, whether that be taking someone’s shift or giving advice about classes. The general niceness also transfers to the way we interact with the students who use the lab, which I think is awesome.”

After Hopkins, Tobi wants to attend law school and then work for an international non-profit organization like the United Nations. In addition, he wants to travel the world to taste different foods from different cultures.

Tobi has a very bright future ahead of him and we are so happy that he is a part of the CLE.
The students will give and receive gifts. Cynthia wants a car and Simon wants good food. Munisa wants peace in the world. Mary received a ticket to Montreal. Brian received his gift, he will go to India. Pat wants FIFA 11. Hilary wants books. Pat will not be traveling. Hilary and Simon will go to Georgia. Pat will go to Connecticut.

The students like food. During break they will eat chicken, chapati, sambosa, cookies, pie, ham, and moose.

Siku kuu za Desemba na Januari: Holidays of December and January

The students of Swahili will travel the world during the break. Mary will go to Montreal and Wisconsin for break. Cynthia will go to Orlando. Brian will go to India and Kai will go to Delaware. Munisa will not be traveling. Hilary and Simon will go to Georgia. Pat will go to Connecticut.

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The students have to buy gifts for their family. The fathers want to see their children. The mothers want to see their children. The fathers want clocks. Cynthia will cook homemade food for her parents. Kai will write letters for her mother and grandmother. Brian will buy left handed scissors for his cousin who is having surgery on her right arm.

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Wanafunzi wa darasa la Kiswahili watasafiri ulimwengo wakati wa likizo. Mary ataenda Montreal na Wisconsin kwa likizo. Cynthia ataenda Orlando.

This spring, Annalisa looks forward to teaching an advanced Russian class at JHU and three classes at Goucher; among them, “The Soul of Russia.”

We wish Annalisa much success in the upcoming semester and look forward, as always, to seeing her around the Center for Language Education.

Best of luck, Annalisa!

Hopkins Students are Talking About Persian

Students in Dariush Dehghan’s fall 2010 Beginning Persian class took a moment to share with the readers of the CLE Connection why they love to study Persian and to encourage other students to do so as well.

Caroline Berger: Farsi language at Johns Hopkins has blossomed into a 15 person introduction class. The professor is invested in his students and the class is eager to learn.

Sumedh Ratnakar Risbud: I really like the class and I really appreciate professor Dehghan’s teaching method.

Alexo Esperato: From the beginning, students have worked with the Arabic alphabet. While challenging at the beginning, this strategy pays off in the end—it is a beautiful alphabet, and writing is essential to any language. Dr. Dehghan’s teaching experience shows off in class; he monitors closely that each student is making adequate progress, provides thorough and timely feedback, and is always available to help. Finally, Persian class is not just about the language. Class sessions include discussions about life itself, which stimulate learning and personal development.

Kerry Frank: Persian is a very interesting language. The class is interactive, and you will, by the end of it, know each student personally.

Daniel Diaz: Persian Language is beautiful.

Bijan Arab: Every day I look forward to the philosophical musings of professor Dehghan.

Jacob Peters: Professor Dehghan does a great job of engaging us and teaching us not only the Persian language but Iranian culture as well. The class is very interactive and fun.

Toshiro Baum: Farsi class is an engaging and exciting class which focuses on not only the beautiful Farsi language but the millennia Old Persian culture which accompanies it.

Patrick Shekiba: We learn a lot more in class than just Persian language. We learn how to live.

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A Special Look at the New Japanese Program
What First Year Japanese Means to Me

Danielle Stern, ’14
First Year Japanese has been everything to me. It is where I met my best friend, where I met two extraordinary teachers, and where I became exposed to the language that sparked me to change the path of my academic career.

I came to Hopkins eager to study Japanese, as I had visited Japan two years prior and have wanted to study abroad in Tokyo ever since. I had attended a summer program last year where I picked up a few weeks worth of language skills, and so when I first stepped into the classroom I instantly felt very comfortable. I loved returning to the sounds of the Japanese language classroom, where the students struggle to understand each other, yet marvel at their progress as the days go on.

The environment in my conversation section was one of effort and strength. Every student worked together to create a supportive environment, where even if you used “は” instead of “る,” everyone would just giggle together, and no one would judge you in the least. There were times when we would whisper answers to each other when Katagiri-sensei put us on the spot, only to calm the look of anguish on the other person’s face, knowing that you could expect the same in return.

The same can be said for the teachers, who, acknowledging the completely foreign nature of the Japanese language, were incredibly patient and understanding. There was never a time when anyone became too frustrated to continue, or when anyone even thought of giving up.

As I mentioned earlier, I met my best friend in First Year Japanese, an outgoing international student from China. “Wang-San” and I met in lecture on the second week of school, when I aimlessly decided to sit down next to the girl in the hot pink trench coat. We hit it off instantly, laughing about the fact that kanji would be much easier for her to learn, seeing as she is a native Mandarin speaker. I made a lot of other great friends too, friends that I know that I will have for a lifetime. We joke about our lack of Japanese knowledge, and rejoice when we are able to actually have a relatively coherent conversation.

When I started off the semester, I thought that I would be an International Studies major, combining my interests in political science, economics, and foreign language. As I became more immersed in my Japanese language education, I began to realize that Japanese language and culture are where my interests truly lay. After about a month, I switched my major to East Asian Studies, and was immediately welcomed by this absolutely fantastic department. I am so excited to be studying an area of the world that I am truly passionate about, and be a part of such a welcoming community.

First Year Japanese a Fulfilling Course

Qian Xiang Yee, ’13
Many have asked me why I am learning Japanese. With my stringent GPA requirement, a language class is the last thing people expect me to take. Usually, I tell them that I want to chat with the air hostesses on board the All Nippon Airways flights to and from Singapore. A 24-hour journey is, after all, pretty unbearable without some form of distraction.

To be honest though, I am not sure myself. I have been exposed to facets of Japanese culture since young. I grew up watching Pokémon and Gundam (albeit the English version) and reading manga like Naruto and Dragon Ball (translated into Mandarin). It struck me that a translated work may be missing some of the finer nuances imparted by the writer, and I decided that being able to read, write and speak Japanese would open up a whole world of experiences for me.

Learning the basics was no easy task, and I was struggling to learn the 46 characters of Hiragana on my flight here (yet another reason to speak with the hostesses), not to mention the other 46 similar-sounding but vastly-different looking Katakana characters. I was relieved, though, when Yuki-Sensei explained how Japanese, unlike English, was an extremely structured and precise language.

Japanese class was a daily affair, with Yuki-sensei lecturing on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Katagiri-sensei conducting conversation classes on the other days. The first few conversation classes were disasters; we could barely read what Katagiri-sensei was saying, much less understand what she spoke (it didn’t help, too, that she completely refused to speak in English). It was sometimes embarrassing to know that you knew so little, yet comforting when you realized that everyone else in the room was equally clueless and that we were all trying to learn together. Our conversation class grew closer than any other class I have attended, and I regret that we will not be able to stay together next semester.

Yuki-sensei used a system of continuous learning and assessment. There would be quizzes on the previous lecture every Tuesday and Thursday, and it was usually a mad scramble the night before to memorize and practice for the quiz. I have to admit that I did not do as well as I would have liked, as I had not yet acquired the precision required by the language. I would frequently lose points over seemingly trivial mistakes like writing a single character wrongly. However, a little pain helped me to learn faster, and today I am amazed at how much I have learnt over just one semester.

Turning Japanese—In the Right Direction

Dr. Yuki Johnson Fall brought change to the Japanese Language Program. With a new teaching practicum and textbook (Genki), CLE Director Yuki Johnson and Lecturer Satoko Katagiri undertook a new approach stressing language proficiency, cultural knowledge, and authentic conversational immersion. Lectures on Tuesdays and Thursdays stress linguistic aspects of grammar fundamentals in combination with aspects of Japanese culture. Conversation classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays provide practice within a fast-paced Japanese-only (no-English) format moving from simple exchanges to challenging conversational exchanges spanning a breadth of authentic cultural, professional, and academic situations. Such a proficiency-oriented approach represents a major update to teaching methodology at JHU and gives students a depth of knowledge of linguistic fundamentals as well as the skills needed to communicate effectively in Japanese. Hand-in-hand with a command of the linguistics underlying Japanese, students gain a level of cultural competence that is essential to effective, authentic communication – not to mention, fun!

In their first semester, students quickly realized one of the first rules of language learning – that competence is acquired through continuous daily effort, not cramming. Attendance was nearly perfect in every class, for those missing class found themselves quickly left behind – and missing out on the fun. Along with grammar, vocabulary, and conversation, students learned countless aspects of Japanese culture, geography, food, mannerisms, body language, and hygiene practice, ranging from classic to more...
A New Direction for Japanese

modern aspects of life in Japan, including movies, music, and how to place an order at a Japanese Starbucks.

Change is the only constant, and the changes seen in the Japanese Language Program will continue, emphasizing core knowledge of grammar and linguistics coupled with exposure to Japanese life through fun, authentic windows on Japanese culture.

We at the CLE hope that many more students will take on the rewarding challenges that await in learning Japanese and that the value of learning another language and appreciating another culture stays with them through graduation and beyond.

A Look at First Year Japanese

Natasha Senn, ‘13

The summer before my freshman year, staring at the long lists of courses offered at Hopkins, I struggled to choose the five courses which would kick off my college career. I debated signing up for Japanese but was intimidated by the thought of learning an entirely new alphabet and immersing myself in a language so different from English. So, I decided against it. The summer before my sophomore year, I once again contemplated the issue. After a year in college, I had finally built up the courage necessary to dive head-first into completely new and unknown territory. So I sat down at my computer and registered for First Year Japanese.

My only regret since then has been that I only have two years left at Hopkins to study Japanese. While learning over a hundred and thirty characters in four months was no easy feat, studying for Japanese somehow never felt like a bothersome duty. Class time was anything but a series of boring lectures. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, we would attend conversation class. At times, this seemed more like a theater improvisation class in which everything just happened to be in Japanese. We would pretend to buy cakes at a bakery, order food at a restaurant, and make plans to meet up with friends on the weekend. On occasions, these plans actually turned into real get-togethers and a few of us would meet outside of class to get ice cream and practice our Japanese. Such role-playing was not only a great way to practice speaking Japanese and a great reinforcement of the vocabulary and grammar taught in each lesson but also an occasion to learn new things about our fellow classmates. While classes on Tuesday and Thursday consisted of lectures on Japanese grammar, the professor often included interesting cultural facts. She also encouraged us to further immerse ourselves in the culture and language by showing us previews of Japanese dramas and anime and suggesting we continue watching them at home, a suggestion which I more than happily followed. Hearing even a few words or a sentence which I could actually understand in a Japanese show always brought a smile to my face.

If one good thing came from starting Japanese only in my sophomore year, it is that I got to learn Japanese with the Genki textbook which was not used in previous years. Since those of my friends studying Japanese at other schools are also using the Genki textbook, it is easy to practice speaking with them. I am also hoping to continue my Japanese language studies abroad in Nagoya next fall and was reassured to discover that the program also uses the Genki textbooks. I am therefore much more confident that I can properly transition between taking Japanese at Hopkins and taking it at Nanzan University in Nagoya. Until then, I look forward to continuing my Japanese language studies here at Hopkins. It has truly been a rewarding experience and a class which has taught me a skill rather than simply adding to my breadth of knowledge.

First Year Japanese students with instructors Johnson and Katagiri
More News on the Way

The CLE Connection is published twice a year at the end of the fall and spring semesters, respectively. The next issue will be released:

August 15, 2011

During the summer semester, be sure to check out special editions of the ESL Newsletter!

International TAs Share their Poetic Talents in ESL Classes

Students in Nancy Gooding’s English as a Second Language for International TAs classes get more than just a lesson on teaching in the classroom. The ITAs incorporate poetry into their studies of English language expression, too. As in previous semesters, Nancy’s class shares with us some of their work.

I Am From by Qingzhu Yuan

I am from the light fragrance of a daisy.
I am from the brisk flow of a stream.
I am from the clear sapphire of the sky.
I am from the sea-kissed sand of a shore.
I am a gift of nature mum,
And hope never to be forsaken.
I am from a bass note of a viola.
I am from a graceful leap of a dancer.
I am from the passionate color of red.
I am from the innocent smile of a child.
I am a favorite of god the creator,
And hope never to be forsaken.

Chasing the Dream by Zihan Chen

Chasing the dream is a way of living
Having a dream is the starting point
Endeavoring to find a map for the journey
Never lose the direction
Zeal is the fuel
Infinite difficulties should not be an obstacle
Hard work will be the way to overcome it
Always chasing the dream
Nothing is impossible.

What To Be by Cencheng Shen

To be a strong horse running in the field?
You get imprisoned in the dark stable.
To be a happy fish swimming in the sea?
You get caught by the tight net.
To be a free bird flying in the sky?
You get shot by the terrible gun.
To be a tall tree growing in the woods?
You get hewed by the fierce chopper.
To be a good human living on the earth?
You get embarrassed for what we have done.

I Am from by Yongjie Xin

I’m from the creek of spring; when the ice is crying,
I begin singing.
I’m from the rain of summer; when the cloud is sad,
I carry the message to your hand.
I’m from the cornfield of fall; when the sunshine is smiling, you can see me playing with wind.
I’m from the snow of winter, when the world is sleeping, you can find my beauty.

Music by Liang-Hui Chu

Music is the theory within majors and minors
Music is the nature in everyone’s consciousness
Music is the math to count the beats precisely
Music is the ocean waves dancing and pulsating
Music is the stimulant to energize our exhausted bodies
Music is the intoxicant to soothe our sodden souls
Music is the tulip to perfume our daily routines
Music is the oriole to animate our banal life
Music is the joy when you see a new born baby
Music is the tear when you see a crippled patient
Music is the nun when you hear Bach’s Cantata
Music is the cornrows when you listen to Usher’s OMG
Music is the universal language
Music is the magic

Shiffman Honored by TESOL

It seems the applause has yet to die down for former CLE faculty member Doris Shiffman.

Shiffman, who retired from JHU earlier this spring and was the subject of our Faculty in Focus section in the last newsletter, will be honored by the Maryland TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) association at their next conference in December, by receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is established to honor the accomplishments of professionals in the ESL/ESOL field who throughout their years of service have exemplified dedication to ESL/ESOL students at any educational level and/or in ESL/ESOL teacher training.

This award is bestowed upon individuals who have been working in the ESL/ESOL field in Maryland for at least 15 years and who have made substantial and exemplary contributions to the field, its students, and /or teachers at any educational level.

Doris is the seventh person to ever receive this honor and we couldn’t be prouder to call her one of our own.

Congratulations, Doris!
Happy Birthday from CLE!

January
3: Liman Lievens
4: Cindy Simpson
8: Ye Han
22: Annalisa Czeczulin

February
3: Wakil Ahmed
4: Satoko Katagiri
6: David McNeal
9: Jane Kamau
21: Becky Hsieh
23: Nancy Gooding

March
3: Elya Papoyan, Christine Shaner
4: Logan Brunner

April
12: Olya Samilenko
20: Emily Cheung
23: Choonwon Kang
24: Fadel Abdallah
25: Christy Waddail, Vivi Machi

May
4: Migiam Yiu
6: Vanessa Verdine
19: Julia Yarmolinskaya
20: Aiguo Chen
25: Patrick Ojo

June
11: Vivian Braun
23: Yuki Johnson
28: Kazue Zon

July
16: Sierra Costanza
17: Doris Shiffman
20: Prakash Abhishek
24: Uma Saini

Upcoming Workshops

Under the guidance of Director Yuki Johnson, two workshops will be conducted in the spring term for CLE faculty. These workshops will be offered in March and May of 2011 with details to be announced via e-mail.

The first workshop will concern actual drill techniques usually used during the first 20 minutes or so of class. Attending faculty will all actually be learning some of each others’ languages.

Regarding the second workshop, Dr. Johnson is planning to invite Dr. Cohen from the University of Minnesota to participate regarding modern teaching methodologies and opportunities worldwide.

An esteemed guest at previous CLE workshops, Dr. Fukada chats with retired CLE instructor Kazue Zon

Dr. Cohen was a founder and Director of CARLA (the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition) and is an emeritus professor of second language acquisition and instruction. He is considered among the most eminent scholars of the field, and his research has had far-reaching influence on the entire field. His visit to our institution is eagerly anticipated.

CLE faculty are encouraged to attend and take advantage of this unique opportunity.

Vanessa Verdine
The CLE celebrated another productive year this past week with its festive annual holiday party.

Cheerfully decorated with candy canes, candy dishes, and poinsettias, the party was attended by not only CLE faculty and administrators, but also a welcome abundance of guests from a variety of university departments and administrative offices.

Guests enjoyed a delicious and generous lunch buffet of soup, salads, spanakopita, lentils, and an array of deli sandwiches, as well as cheese, wine and a sweet dessert spread. Attendees caught up with retired colleagues and new acquaintances from other departments.

A number of small personal gifts were distributed, and some lucky attendees won prizes from CLE’s own door prize drawing. Congratulations to all door prize winners!

Over in the Language Lab, there was also a student employee holiday party with pizza, cake, and holiday goodies galore. Students entered into a door prize drawing, chatted with one another, and celebrated the end of the fall semester. And of course, no Language Lab party could be complete without the traditional screening of foreign language videos on the Lab’s big screen. Every student also went home with a special personal gift courtesy of Lab coordinator Cindy Simpson.

From the CLE and the Language Lab, happy holidays and a happy New Year!