Spring Break Already on the Way!

DR. YUKI JOHNSON

A belated greeting for the new term in 2012!

The last day to add classes has already passed, and all the classes for the spring term are now well underway.

I hope everyone is looking forward to a great term, with spring break already on the near horizon.

Once again, the fall term has flown by like an arrow, though we concluded the term with a heartfelt holiday party with faculty, staff, retirees and significant others. It was a pleasure to meet Zvi’s wife, Amy, for the first time as well as Liman’s and Kazue’s husbands, Bavo and Steven, respectively. This year, I hope to meet more family members of CLE faculty and staff. In addition, I am very glad to see many of you using the tote bag (picture on right) given as a token of appreciation to all faculty and staff this year! I hope it comes in handy and lasts for a long time.

On January 27th, 2012, just before the new term started, we held our 11th workshop, in which faculty were asked to bring three activities to be shared across all languages. After the series of lectures and demonstrations, we reached a stage in which we could share our teaching materials based on a common understanding of proficiency-oriented instruction. We had a great time learning what activities might be adopted in each target language. Creat-

Continued on pages 2 and 3...
tive activities included “Jeopardy,” “crossword puzzles,” “who has an alibi,” “bingo,” “information gap,” “counting,” “find the person in the description,” and more - all from beginning to advanced levels. It was a blast!

The next workshop will also center around the lecturers (using the notion of so-called “learner-centered” instruction). You will be asked to present a lecture describing/explaining the characteristics of the language you teach using PowerPoint. **If you are not well accustomed to use PowerPoint, this is a great opportunity to work on it so that you become fluent in the use of what has now become a basic technology / tool of the trade.** Many of us are from the older “handout” generation, typified by materials distributed in hardcopy. Times have changed—our students are in a new generation in which “typing” has replaced "writing," and they are comfortable with electronic content and display over paper and pen. Despite the pros and cons found in these changes, we, as educators need to be aware of the changes in students’ learning style and strategies. We don't need to become "PowerPoint professors," but we always need to keep up with the constant progress of technology.

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.

A few other announcements:

1. **POTLUCK PARTY**

   At the last workshop, we talked about having a potluck party - a suggestion I took seriously since it is wonderful to get together for fun (and learning) outside class once in a while. So, I am proposing to have our potluck get-together on **Monday, May 7th** after a short presentation that I am planning to give as an example for the following workshop. I am looking forward to having a variety of ethnic food that you will bring to share.
2. STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN NANJING, CHINA AND TOKYO, JAPAN

CHINESE: The East Asian Studies Program initiated a new study abroad program between Nanjing University and JHU for which we will be sending our students to Nanjing to study Chinese. We are now accepting applications from our students in the Chinese Program. In addition, the EAS Program realized a new summer intensive immersion language program in scientific and technical Chinese at Hopkins-Nanjing called “STEM”. The Program will provide specialized Chinese language training designed to address specific linguistic needs of students, researchers, and professionals in the fields of engineering, medicine, and public health. Applications are also now being accepted. I hope that these two programs will take root, flourish, and grow!

JAPANESE: A formal exchange program between the University of Tokyo and JHU has now been established, and applications are being accepted. We are sending one to two students each year 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). I hope that this program also finds success!

3. NEW FULL-TIME LECTURER IN CHINESE (MS. NAN ZHAO)

With deeply mixed feelings, we had to bid farewell to Dr. Han Ye at the end of December, 2011 due to personal reasons (good ones!). Han Ye had been working in the Center since 2010, but decided to get married and join her husband. Please join me in wishing all the best for Han Ye and her new family. Accordingly, we have hired a new lecturer to take over for Han Ye in the middle of the academic year. How lucky we were to find Ms. Nan Zhao! She has been teaching Chinese at Loyola and Towson and is familiar with our neighbor universities. She is energetic and bright, and says that she already feels like a member of the CLE team. Please join me in extending a warm welcome to Nan Zhao! I hope you have a great time teaching at JHU.

4. WORKSHOPS IN MAY

As mentioned previously, lecturers will be asked to give a talk about the specific language they are teaching (e.g., characteristics on phonetic symbols and syntax) using PowerPoint. You will be teaching other faculty about your target language, including structure and specific introductory aspects. I will give a presentation on Monday, May 7th before the potluck party, and will look forward to your giving a similar talk on Wednesday, May 9th and Thursday, May 10th in the morning followed by lunch. The schedule is as follows:

**Monday, May 7th:**
10:00-10:30 Presentation by Johnson in Krieger 300 (preparation for the next workshop)
10:45~ Potluck brunch party in the CLE lounge

**Wednesday, May 9th:**
9:00-11:20 Presentation by faculty in Krieger 300 (20 minutes per person up to 5 faculty)
11:00-12:30 Lunch at Niwana

**Thursday, May 10th:**
9:30-11:50 Presentation by faculty in Krieger 300 (20 minutes per person up to 5 faculty)
12:00-1:30 Lunch at the Club (celebrating the end of the academic year)

Those who are actually using the grammar/conversation system for 1st and 2nd year level 5 days per week (Chinese, Japanese, and Hebrew) will have to do the demonstration on May 9th. What an educational opportunity! I am truly looking forward to learning various aspects of the languages.

The Center is moving forward thanks to your energy, creativity, cooperation and important contributions. There will be many more wonderful events and opportunities to learn from one another coming up soon. Let’s keep working together to create an unique body of LCTL that will be recognized by institutions around the country (and the world). We are on the right track!
When I was younger, I always loved to write poems. But after I chose science as my major, I gradually gave up this hobby. This experience recalls the nice and fantastic time I used to have. I also love the feeling of expressing something directly in English and not translated from Chinese.

At first, I thought that only people like artists can write poetry, but I found I was totally wrong. Even ordinary people like me can write a wonderful poem if he or she writes out what is in the inner heart. From now on, if there is something in my heart, I can just write it out and be a poet.

This was my first experience composing English poems. It’s a good way to learn about all those vivid words and expressions in English. Even more demanding, poems require writing in an artistic way. I think writing poems is a good way for non-native speakers to improve their master of the language.

This is my first time writing a poem; I have not even written a poem of my native language yet. So I am amazed at my potential to be a poet, at least in English! This poem activity is really fantastic and mind-blasting! It makes me more interested in English Literature!

I’m glad that there is a chance for me to ask deep questions about myself: What am I looking for? What really made me proud so far? By writing the poem I Am From, I finally found answers to such questions: be grateful for life and be curious about nature.

The poems actually make me think about my childhood, my life, my parents, etc… I guess engineers also need poems.

Poetry offers many benefits to second language learners as they develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. For example, practicing appropriate rhythm patterns can improve fluidity of stress and intonation patterns in listening and speaking, while building vocabulary and reinforcing grammar structures can help improve reading and writing skills. Poetry can also build confidence by giving students an opportunity to find their “voice” through self-expression in the target language.

The following poems were written by students in the Oral Skills for ITAs. Also included are a few personal reflections expressing how the students felt after completing their poetry assignment.

**YOU ARE ALWAYS AROUND ME**
by Xiaohan Yang

When I was born,
You held me in your arms.
When I was learning how to walk,
You raised your hands in front of me.
When I felt upset,
You sat beside me and encouraged me.
When I left you for my own life,
You stood behind me and set me free.
When I go back to you,
I’ll hug you tightly and say, thank you!

**RAYMOND**
by Can You (Candice)

Reliable and kind-hearted
Always understanding and tolerant
Your smile is as radiant as sunshine
My best friend and soul mate
Only joy and encouragement you bring about
No tears or pain when you’re present
Dreams all come true when we walk side by side
Though the Language Lab is a place of constant motion, with students coming and going, over the last four years, if you have climbed the steps of Krieger and made it to the fifth floor, chances are that on some occasion you have run into Vivi Machi. Vivi will graduate in the spring of 2012, majoring in International Studies with a concentration in Russian foreign policy. She has worked in the lab offering support to students seeking proficiency in any of the languages offered at Hopkins, all the while mastering several languages of her own. Vivi is bilingual in English and French, but has become expert in Spanish and German as well. And as if that wasn’t enough, she also applied herself to learning Russian in the fall of 2010 and continues with it.

Vivi works hard in and outside of the language lab, a warm hug from a dear friend, wrinkles on the faces of parents, a familiar figure viewed from behind. The poems are the songs we are singing everyday.

Student Spotlight: Vivi Machi

RAQUEL CRUZ–STRATTON

member of Pi Beta Phi and layout editor for the JHU Creative Literary Magazine. When not laboring on campus, Vivi spends her time working at an Irish pub in Baltimore’s historical Mt. Vernon district.

To clear her mind and reduce stress through activity, Vivi hoop dances and is a freelance writer for JHU’s newsletter. Vivi works extremely hard, but knows how to have just as much fun; for example, she spent her 16th birthday in Tahiti where she says she had her “best birthday ever.”

While we will miss Vivi’s smile and helpfulness in the lab next year, we know that her future either in the Peace Corps or as a journalist in D.C will take her far. Vivi thanks the lab for its friendliness and cohesiveness, and we thank Vivi for her positivity and dedication.

So, if you are planning on backpacking through Eastern Europe or taking a trip to Washington, look out for Vivi; she will surely stand out as a passionate and enthusiastic member of CLE and JHU’s community!

THE HUMMINGBIRD
by Liang Dai

A hummingbird came out of nowhere and stopped by my window
It was an unexpected moment for me to come across her

She maneuvered up and down as well as back and forth
So happily she danced in the air like a spirit in a fairy tale

Her bright feathers were shining in the soft morning sun
So swiftly she flapped her wings as if the whole world stood still

Maybe she was merely curious to glance around during her journey
Or she could be sending an invitation to lead me to a wonderland

But definitely she would not overstay for she never waits for the slow and dull
And she took an elegant turn before leaving one last impression in my mind

by Lei Raymond Feng

Autumn is splendid in Baltimore
Red as fire, shiny as gold Clear as crystal, blue as the ocean
O, and there are squirrels popping up happily
On the grass and in the tree

Autumn is short in Baltimore
Yellow carpet under a tree Brown cookies dotting the lawn
O, and there are those little creatures Competing with “who hides the most pine fruit”

Winter is coming soon in Baltimore
Golden rays go through the window, into my eyes
Grabbing my camera and out I run
Hoping that time will be frozen, at least in my lens

All of the sudden, trees violently swing
Down pours the blond, red and brown
Gorgeous, marvelous, dazzling... I run out of words
I try to freeze this scene, but catch none

It’s autumn

by Yuan Zhao

What are poems about?
This is a hard question.
Poems are about the greatest warriors,
the most captivating beauties,
the glory of a city,
the legend of a whole generation.
The poems are songs preserved on the lips
of the bards
the everlasting fame of great names
more enduring than the inscription on bronze and stone.

What are poems about?
People always think about it.
Poems are about the sorrows of tourists,
tearful separation of lovers,
lamentation for the departed,
those rosy shadows reflected on the heart of bourgeois ladies.
The poems are flowers not dying with time,
unfading memories of transient youth,
lives full of fury and passion.
What are poems about?
It is almost about everything.
Poems are about sweet smiles of children,

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There I was on a humid June evening with the world’s largest mall to one side and the world’s tallest building to the other. I was in Dubai, the sleek and modern city that symbolizes the rapidly developing Middle East. As I viewed a dazzling water fountain show I decided to strike up a conversation with the man to my left. Armed with a year of Arabic from Johns Hopkins I introduced myself. Minutes later, I discovered that he was a Syrian living in the United Arab Emirates, and he introduced me to his family. We discussed politics, America, and his son and I exchanged email addresses.

During my trip to the region I had many encounters like the one above, with both college students and polished businessmen. I was fortunate enough to participate in the ‘The Ibrahim Leadership and Dialogue Project in the Middle East’, and inter-faith program in which I traveled with five other undergraduate students to Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Israel, and the Palestinian Territories. In an era where views of the Middle East are often misguided and based on subjective media sources, the Ibrahim Project seeks to improve understanding and promote tolerance. It is sponsored by the Ibrahim Family Foundation (which covers all the expenses) and administered by the International Institute of Education. Additionally, Professor Steven David traveled with us, giving lectures and leading informal chats about the role of religion, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and other critical issues.

To be able to travel to Saudi Arabia and Israel on the same itinerary was a remarkable accomplishment, and it certainly allowed me to hear an incredibly diverse range of opinions. During the two week study-tour, I met Embassy staffs, Saudi college students, Israeli settlers, and youths on both sides of the infamous ‘Separation Wall’ that lines much of the Israeli-West Bank border.

While studying or reading about a protest in Jerusalem or the authoritarian regime of Saudi Arabia can provide a solid framework of knowledge, first-hand experience is an invaluable asset. Jerusalem’s relationship with the Abrahmic religions is so complex and ancient in origin; I understand that far better after seeing how close the Western Wall is to the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

While studying Arabic in the classroom is great practice it cannot compete with the opportunities I had to converse on the streets of Jerusalem and Dubai. In Israel I learned about the nuances of Jewish traditions, something far less familiar to me prior to the summer. The cultural component of the trip was less structured but crucial in terms of its impact. For an American male in my age bracket, the chance to meet young Saudi women and talk about their everyday lives was an exceptional experience. Other examples included discussions with Christian Palestinians in a community center in Bethlehem and Orthodox Jews in the occupied West Bank.

The Ibrahim Project is only open to a couple of universities and I would encourage all students looking to learn more about the complexities and sources of tension in the Middle East to visit the program website - http://www.iie.org/Programs/Ibrahim-Leadership-and-Discourse-Project.
Arabic Language and Culture: Past and Present
KHALIL TAHRAWI AND FADEL ABDALLAH

Arabic is currently one of the major world languages, spoken by some 400 million people as their national formal language in some 21 countries in Asia and Africa. Moreover, it’s the religious and spiritual language of some 1.5 billion Muslims all over the world, who strive to learn Arabic in order to gain first hand access to understanding the beautiful and poetic language of the Qur’an and Hadith as the two major sources of Islam.

In the Middle Ages, Arabic was the *lingua franca* of a great civilization and cultural and scientific renaissance when Europe was going through its Dark Ages. Hence, Arabic was instrumental in promoting global trade and cooperation. And, in modern times, due to the strategic location of the Arab World and its richness in oil and other yet untapped mineral resources, many world government organs perceive Arabic as one of the most critical languages whose study constitute great rewarding experiences and tangible benefits. Those non-Arabs who mastered Arabic and became known as Arabic Linguists have rendered great services to their native countries in the areas of diplomacy, international trade, mutual understanding and cooperation.

Many schools in the USA and elsewhere in the world have realized the importance of Arabic learning, hence the constant increased enrollment in Arabic classes during the last decade.

The Arab World, though united in its common Arabic language of education is, nevertheless, culturally rich and diverse. Being the cradle of great ancient civilizations and the three great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the current geographical Arabic World has always been the crossroad of multiple streams of cultures, enriched constantly by the contributions of many cultures from Greece, Rome, Persia, Turkey, India and China. In modern times, one can see in the Arabic market places all kind of products from all parts of the world, from Japanese and American cars to fast-food establishments, such as McDonald, Burger King and KF.

Several Arabic-Muslim empires throughout the ages united multitudes of diverse races and cultures into one cohesive civilization, producing pioneering achievements in the fields of science, mathematics, trade, diplomacy and all other fields of learning.

Contacts with the advanced Arab civilization through the well-documented Silk- Road trade in the Persian–Arabic Gulf, the Mediterranean Basin, Muslim Spain and Sicily played important role in stimulating Europe’s cultural and intellectual renewal in the later Middle Ages and leading to Renaissance.

The influence of Arabic civilization and its contributions to universal civilization can be surmised from the following highlights:

The numerals used as the universal symbols of arithmetic bear the name of “Arabic Numerals.”

Al-Khwarizmi, a Muslim–Arab scholar was the founder and developer of Algorism (Latinized from the founder’s name), a science which is the basis of all modern computing.

It was an Arab shepherd from Yemen who discovered the coffee as a stimulant, and it

Through its history, Arabic alphabet has served as the basis of an elaborate and sophisticated calligraphic, carving and decorative arts forms, as shown in these examples.

Continued on page 9...
Greetings dear colleagues,

I don’t know about you, but I have a confession to make. I really love this time of year. When classes start up in January that’s the time I always get that special feeling in my bones (arthritis?) that tells me the first snowstorm can’t be far behind. Yep, I’m a snow buff. Like any ten-year-old kid, I can’t wait to drag my insulated boots through the white powder. At least that’s the way it used to be. This year the snow has been long in coming and, frankly, I’m glad. Now that the JHU-GC Cooperative Russian Program has lost its reliable delivery system it’s going to be a rough ride trying to encourage Russian majors and minors to take classes at the other campus in sunny weather, let alone when it snows. Here’s what happened. Last semester what used to be short twenty-minute scenic ride connecting the two campuses overnight became a prohibitive three-hour ordeal as Colltown unexpectedly extended the Blue Route by three stops – the train station, Mica, and Morgan State. And guess what? The network failed to notify. On the first day of classes eight Goucher students showed up at the Van Meter Circle to await their ride to Hopkins, but no shuttle came. Students and faculty spent the entire fall semester scrambling to make adjustments. At first Goucher hired an Ayre Bus to transport students back and forth between the two institutions. The vehicle was luxurious, but entirely too big. At 600 dollars a day it was also too expensive. The students hated to see it go. Students and faculty were subsequently encouraged to use taxis and other means of transportation to get to class and work. This worked for some, but not for others. One particular Hopkins student deserves a medal for her endurance and fortitude. For this poor soul the taxi often didn’t come, or came late, or (brace yourselves) ended up transporting her to Union Memorial Hospital instead of Goucher!!!

For further readings on the theme of this short article, we recommend the following works:

- Al’ America: Travels Through America’s Arab and Islamic Roots, by Jonathan Curiel.

And to add a twist of fun to this article, do you know that Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple, was sired by an Arab father from Syria?!