Message from the Director

Yuki Johnson, Director of CLE

I hope you had a great, revitalizing summer and are ready to dive enthusiastically into the start of a new academic year. I hope the new year brings success, excitement, and rewards.

My first year at Hopkins really flew by. I learned so much about JHU and our students, and I will continue to work with your support toward a vision of academic excellence in the Center.

The first steps were carried out smoothly thanks to everyone in and outside the Center. Thank you all again for your support and cooperation. The effort will continue for many more years.

In the spring term, we held two workshops: one a brief introduction of ACTFL, and the other on computer-assisted learning materials created by Dr. Fukada from Purdue University (“Speak Easy”).

This year I will be conducting a couple more workshops as well as inviting a speaker to give a seminar on language education. I will also continue to visit your classes to learn more about you and each language program and to talk further about language pedagogy.

The Open House for CLE will be held in the Language Lab on August 27th from 12:30-1:30. This will be the first event in the new lab and let’s hope that more students open their hearts to learning a new language and our programs will keep flourishing.

Several other announcements as we begin the New Academic Year:

A FEW UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Two workshops are planned in the fall term one in October, the other in December. The first workshop will be given on the theories underlying testing, and the second on effective ways of improving learners’ productive skills. For a third workshop, I am planning to invite an eminent scholar in the field of language acquisition/instruction from CARLA at the University of Minnesota. Detailed information will be sent to you via e-mail.

BLACKBOARD NOW IN USE

Starting in fall 2010, Hopkins changed from the current web-based technology (Web CT) to Blackboard. There are small but significant differences of which you should be aware. There will be plenty of hands-on workshops given by CER and you are certainly encouraged to attend them.

FAREWELL TO CLE MEMBERS

In addition to Ms. Kazue Zon, these faculty and staff have moved on from CLE.

MS. BECKY HSIEH joined the Chinese Program in 2000. She initiated Chinese Calligraphy, which became one of the most popular courses in Chinese. We are sad to see her leave the university, but we will hope that her retirement will be filled with joy and happiness. Thank you, Becky, for your years of teaching service at Hopkins.

DR. LIPING FENG joined the Chinese Program in 1995. While at Hopkins, she co-developed a textbook for learners of Chinese entitled: Chinese Odyssey: Innovative Multimedia Courseware (Vol.1-6), which many of our Chinese students have used. She joined a wellness company in New York that provides leadership training to corporations and other organizations. This is an exciting career change for her, and we all wish Liping the best of luck in her new life in NY!

MS. LI LU taught at the University of Michigan from 2009-2010 after serving as a Chinese instructor at Inter-University Program for Chinese Studies at Tsinghua University from 2005-2009. She also was an instructor at Nanjing University from 2003-2004. We welcome Li Lu to JHU as well as to the USA. We hope your experience here will fulfill your teaching career.

MS. VIVIAN BRAUN joined JHU in the Department of Near Eastern Studies in 1989 as lecturer of Hebrew. She has now joined our Center and will offer three levels of Hebrew.

She has forty years of professional experience in higher education teaching Modern Hebrew, Biblical Hebrew, and Hebrew Literature in Translation. She has also taught at Towson University and Baltimore Hebrew University. We are lucky to have such an experienced language educator joining CLE and wish Vivian many more years of joy and happiness in our Center.

MR. FRANK HALLAM is the new Lab Technician for CLE. His office, however, is located in Gilman Hall (not in the Language Lab), and we can contact him directly any time that we experience computer problems or other IT-related issues. He can be reached at 410-516-...
This summer, the students in the Intensive English as a Second Language program had more than just an enriching academic experience. In addition to their class time, students enjoyed picnics, baseball games, sailing trips on the Inner Harbor, lunch conversations, and outdoor movies. Unfortunately, with the end of summer came time for students to bid their newfound friends farewell.

Those intensive five weeks have been some of the most exciting and lively our ESL program has ever seen. Students came out in record numbers to participate in our many events. Despite the rain, nearly 50 guests gathered in the Laverty Lounge of Krieger for the annual picnic; baseball tickets completely sold out; and we needed almost twice the number of boats than in past years to accommodate our sailors.

Through lunch conversations, we learned that ESL students were adventurous travelers as well—exploring cities outside of Baltimore including Washington DC, Boston, Williamsburg, and New York City. Our faculty team—made up of Nancy Gooding, David McNeal, Pat Palmer, Christy Waddail, Jill Williams, and Julia Yarmolinskaya—also had a busy summer taking students on field trips, attending various Hopkins events, and making sure the Closing Ceremony and International Lunch went smoothly.

Summer 2010 was easily the most enjoyable semesters of ESL in recent years. A big thank you to everyone—faculty, staff, and, most importantly, students—who helped make this summer one to remember!

Note: ESL does not end once the summer is over! We will be offering two brand new courses this fall. See our website at www.cledu.jhu.edu/esl for more information.
Kiswahili Students Recap the Spring and their Future Plans


Nenelwa Tomi
Dexter Aringo
Sarah Sullivan
Desty Muciri Muthiri

While learning Kiswahili, we also learn about the culture of the Swahili people. Swahililand culture is foreign to us Americans. Bantus do not have the concept of hours, because they do not use routine schedules. They follow the sun. They day begins in the morning when the sun rises, and people wake up and milk the cows. Afterwards, they each eat breakfast. Kiswahili does not have a word that means “boring”. The concept doesn’t exist for them. 

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Beginning and Intermediate Kiswahili


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Mwaka huu ndio mwaka wangu wa kwanza katika Johns Hopkins University. Tafadhali, mimi nilianeza kuwa ni mwaka uliana msaidizi kwa kufikiria juu ya migation yangu ya baada ya kuchu kikuu cha Johns Hopkins University. 

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Nenelwa Tomi
Dexter Aringo
Sarah Sullivan
Desty Muciri Muthiri


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Beginnig and Intermediate Kiswahili

Mwaka huu ndio mwaka wangu wa kwanza katika Johns Hopkins University. 

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Nenelwa Tomi
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Beginnig and Intermediate Kiswahili

Mwaka huu ndio mwaka wangu wa kwanza katika Johns Hopkins University. 


Checking In with Becky Hsieh

Since retiring in the spring, former Chinese lecturer Rebecca Hsieh has been keeping busy!

She has been enjoying time at home—and abroad—with her family.

She sent us these pictures from her last calligraphy class and her vacation in China.

Keep in touch, Becky! We’d love to hear more from you soon!
Student Spotlight: Chris Mihalsky

Chris on vacation from the Language Lab in China

“[Teaching international students] has taught me to respect what it means to come here ... and adapt.”

Faculty in Focus: Doris Shiffman

Doris Shiffman’s first ESL for ITAs class in 1989

Students are often inspired by teachers. Under their guidance, students grow, learn, adapt, and create new ways of approaching the world. A good teacher will often inspire a student to take on the role of educator for other generations. The mark of a great teacher, however, is their ability to recognize that they are still themselves students—growing and learning and creating.

Doris Shiffman has dedicated her life to both being a student and teaching them. Inspired by excellent teachers in high school and her time as an undergraduate Political Science major, Doris got her start as a student teacher at the University of California at Berkeley. At that time, TESOL was just a newly formed organization and ESL classes were few and far between. Still, Doris seemed to recognize a good thing early, tutoring international students in American History. This was the only ESL class offered at the time. Later, she would move on to teaching English, as well.

After graduation, Doris spent time in Boston as a teacher’s aide and at Yale as a writing tutor. Upon making the decision to return to school, Doris was inspired by a friend who was taking adult English as a Second Language courses. She obtained her Masters after time at both Berkeley and Johns Hopkins University.

Since then, Doris Shiffman has become something of an ESL institution all her own. Before the Center for Language Education had even come into existence, Doris was doing her part to improve language learning at the Homewood campus by being the first teacher of the newly created course, “Communication Strategies for Foreign Teaching Assistants.” Designed with the help of Janet Constantinides, a consultant for the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, the course introduced international TAs to the culture of the American classroom, pedagogy, and language. In an article from the JHU Gazette dated December 5th, 1989, Doris detailed how a role-playing technique she was using with her students helped them discover the expectations and colloquialisms of their American students. This technique is still used today.

The program only grew from there. As more and more students began taking Doris’s classes and showing marked improvements in their teaching skills, JHU departments took notice. Larger academic departments on campus, particularly those with a high number of teaching assistantships to offer, began contacting Doris for help in placing and strengthening their graduate student teachers.

In the summer of 2005, right on the heels of the ESL program being transferred from Advanced Academic Programs to the then Language Teaching Center, ESL for ITAs joined the language programs at the center and has since become a staple of the Homewood curriculum.

From humble beginnings, English as a Second Language studies have grown to the forefront of education. In her years of service, Doris has seen the field grow and adapt to meet changing times and changing needs.
"A more communicative approach has developed," Doris remarks on the ways the teaching of ESL has changed. "Students come with much more awareness." This awareness is also reflected in Doris's ability to learn from her students' experiences and trails and use them to develop a better understanding of what skills a teacher needs in a new environment. Doris reveals that among the many things she's learned from her students over the years—ten words in Chinese, Economics vocabulary, the Greek alphabet—the most important is that her students have very different struggles than others.

"[Teaching international students] has taught me to respect what it means to come here, to do everything that other students do, take this course and adapt."

Since it's inception in 1989, Doris's Communication Strategies course has also been adapted. The biggest change to the curriculum has been in technology. Now, students are able to upload, share, and access their own coursework from home via WebCT. ITA students are also able to stream video of their own teaching practice online. The web element has allowed instructors like Doris to keep student work neat and organized for review, as well as providing an outlet for students and teachers to share questions and answers instantly via forums and email communication.

"Many professors expect perfection, but this is simply not true in the case of language learning."

Her ability to understand the concerns of her students and provide individualized help done much "rethinking." Teaching ESL to international students is not like teaching undergraduates.

In all her experience teaching, Doris has in love, and later asked her to speak at their wedding. It is this kind of dedication that has been the hallmark of Doris's work as an educator.

In the spring of 2010, Doris made the decision to retire. She has since spent the summer volunteering at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, visiting the Baltimore arboretum, and spending time with her beloved grandchildren in New York.

She leaves with parting words of gratitude for having been a part of the CLE family, where she was embraced by colleagues who understood and "truly enriched" her life.

It has been a pleasure working with Doris these past few years and she will truly be missed. We offer many thanks to Doris for her unwavering dedication to language teaching, language learning, and tip our hats to a truly great teacher.

We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors, Doris, and hope that you will continue to think of us, as well.
Tsai Named Vice Dean for Humanities

Emily Cheung  Johns Hopkins Political Science professor, Kellee Tsai has just been named the Vice Dean for Humanities, Social Sciences, and Graduate Programs. Professor Tsai will be working closely with the new Vice Dean for Science and Research Infrastructure, Gregory Ball. The appointment of Professor Tsai is the third appointment in the new planning of the dean’s office.

The Vice Dean for Humanities, Professor Tsai, will work with department chairs to formulate new developments in the humanities and social sciences programs. The position has two pivotal roles related to Johns Hopkins’s graduate programs. First, Professor Tsai will review policies related to admissions, financial aid, academic performance, degree requirements, and teaching obligations of doctoral students. Second, she will coordinate with the humanities and social sciences departments to discuss the research and teaching portfolios of graduate students.

Before becoming the Vice Dean for Humanities, Social Sciences, and Graduate Programs, Professor Tsai became a faculty member at Johns Hopkins in 2000 where she was promoted to the rank of associate professor with a tenure in 2006 and became a full professor in 2007. Beginning in 2008, she served as the director of the East Asian Studies Program at Hopkins. This program grew exponentially under her leadership since 2008. Her work as the director includes: establishing a speaker series, creating a senior honors track for undergraduates, procuring research and conference travel grants for students, forming a student advisory board committee for East Asian Studies, and forming weekly language corners in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. She has also secured a three-year grant from the Luce Foundation to establish a technical Chinese language and research program at the Hopkins-Nanjing Center.

Professor Tsai specializes in comparative politics, the political economy of development, Chinese politics, and international political economy, just to name a few. She has authored two books and co-edited or co-authored two other books and has published many articles and chapters. Her latest book is Capitalism without Democracy: The Private Sector in Contemporary China. She has received research grants from the Committee on Scholarly Communication with China/American Council of Learned Societies, the Ford Foundation, Fulbright-Hays, and the National Science Foundation. She also serves on the board of directors of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations and the editorial boards of the Contemporary Issues in Asia and Pacific Series at Stanford University Press and the Pacific Affairs journal. She attended Barnard College and received her bachelor’s degree in political science. She continued her studies at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs and received her master’s in international affairs and a doctorate in political science.

Professor Rebecca Brown will serve as an interim director of the program for one year until a senior faculty member is available to take Professor Tsai’s place. Professor Brown is a visiting associate professor who has been at Hopkins the last two years and teaches classes in art history and political science.

We want to congratulate Professor Tsai on her tremendous achievements and wish her the best of luck in her new position.

CLE Open House Chance to Attract Students

As part of Fall 2010 Orientation activities, the Center for Language Education will be hosting an Open House for incoming students on Friday, August 27th, from 12:30 to 1:30pm in the Language Lab.

This event is a chance for each language program to advertise their classes and attract new students. It is also a great way for students who have already signed up for language classes to meet their professors and bring up any questions or concerns they may have about the language.

There will be designated Lab areas for each language, so please try to arrive early for set-up.

As in previous years, the CLE will be providing refreshments for all faculty, staff, and students in attendance.

We hope to see you there!