Faculty in the International Languages Department have been talking about assessment more than usual lately. This is due to a number of factors including:

The appointment of Dr. Wendy Weiner, the new Dean of Arts and Letters, who has a special interest in assessment;

The hiring of Glenna Ewing as a new CSN Assessment Director, who comes from the Wisconsin system;

Department Chair Ken Umland’s recent attendance at the Indiana University—Purdue University (IUPUI) Assessment Institute in Indianapolis.

Now that the October 1st deadline for Assessment Planning and Reporting has passed, we take this moment to assess assessment. We have to do it. What do we get out of it? Does assessment mandated by the college really inform and reform our pedagogy, or is it just paperwork used for institutional reporting and not really of much use to those of us “on the ground?”

A quick survey of some

Continued on page 4

Welcome to My China

By Dr. Bette Brickman

“Pushing and patience.” According to the tour guide, those are the two qualities that the citizens of the Republic of China learn to acquire in a society of nearly one and a half billion people. This was part of our briefing on our first day of a 14-day tour (late summer, 2011) of three of China’s historical cities: Shanghai, Xi’an, and Beijing.

Why was I on this tour of China?

The ESL program at CSN has experienced years when the number of specific nationalities

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Professor David Schultz Presents at NAHLS

David Schultz, Spanish Professor, presented a paper at the National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies (NAHLS) Western Regional Conference held in San Diego on September 29 to October 2. Professor Schultz spoke on Hispanics and the Environment. His research included interviewing Hispanics working for the Nature Conservancy, SNWA, and the National Park Service.

This presentation ties into Professor Schultz’s interest in carrying out ‘green’-oriented service projects with his students. These projects have included participation in the Las Vegas Wash Green-Up held this fall and a five km walk held on April 16, 2011 to raise WASH (water, sanitation, hygiene) funds for a school in Puerto Firmeza, Peru. During the WASH event, fifteen students walked and many people supported the project by purchasing T-shirts. A total of $950 was raised. Professor Schultz extends a special note of gratitude to everyone who helped and especially to Luis and Milagros Aviles Diaz, two young Peruvians, who put forth extraordinary effort to make the walk a success. For information, please email Professor Schultz at: david.schultz@csn.edu

Letter From the Editor

Dear Readers,

As founder and editor of the Round Table newsletter, it has been my great pleasure to be associated with many professional and cooperative colleagues in the International Languages Department. At its inception, this publication was meant to be the voice of the ESL program at CSN and to provide a platform for sharing methods of pedagogy, ideas and experiences, and as a platform for colleagues to publish.

After a few semesters, the Round Table was asked to expand to represent not only the ESL program but also the other languages in the International Languages Department. As a result, the Round Table now represents the whole team known as the International Languages Department.

As I step down, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for the help and encouragement I have always received from the dedicated professionals who have contributed to the success and quality of this publication. I owe a special debt of gratitude to everyone who helped and especially to the Round Table staff and all the talented writers who have contributed to the newsletter. Congratulations to Amy Litman, the new editor. I hope she enjoys the challenge and rewards of publishing the Round Table as much as I have.

Adieu,

Elizabeth Hanley
Editor
News Briefs

Sony Sans Virtuoso Labs Installed in CSN Labs

Recently, both labs at Cheyenne and West Charleston had a new software and hardware program installed which makes filming, testing and grading students for their course requirements in ASL and Interpreter Preparation much more efficient. This software allows the instructor to view the students' work and comment on specific segments of the work (all time coded) in written form and also in ASL. The instructors can film themselves providing examples, making comments and modeling alongside the students' work. There are many features to this new software package that will help the students enhance their learning experience. Professor Caroline Bass states, “The Department of International Languages has brought the Deaf Studies Program into the forefront by making this purchase. You have to see it to believe all that it can do!”

Gallaudet University Recruiter Visits ASL Class

Amy Siebert, Gallaudet recruiter, visited CSN to share information about the BA and MA programs in ASL Interpreting offered by Gallaudet University. This picture is the response to her question, "How many of you want to become interpreters?"

Vocabulary Building Site for ESL Students

Diana Booth, ESL instructor, has created a site of vocabulary flash cards created to be used by ESL students who are using the Excellent English series levels two, three, & four. The cards cover vocabulary from Lessons 1 and 4 of each Unit. Diane invites you to use this site to introduce and familiarize students with new vocabulary. https://sites.google.com/site/dianasbooth/

The Policy Pit - Click here → http://sites.csn.edu/IL/interactive/lab/PolicyPit.htm
A Report Assessing Assessment continued from front page

of the lead faculty members for the International Languages Department shows that assessment reporting has impacted the way we do business. Many of the findings do not affect merely the discipline in question. They may also cause questions to be asked about the way instruction is delivered for other languages.

Japanese

Dr. Sachie Karasawa, Lead Faculty, states: "Every year, I use the assessment results to identify the component where the students' performance was the weakest and revise in-class activities/home-work assignments to address the problem. Between the previous assessment period (2009-2010) and the current period (2010-2011), improvement was made to emphasize culturally appropriate use of language (Outcome #4). This was because the previous report showed weak performance in the area. This year's results indicated significant improvement in the area after the above-mentioned revision was made. On the other hand, this year's results also showed weaker performance in the kanji component (Outcome #3). This will be the target area for improvement for the next assessment period.

Spanish

David Leavell, Lead Faculty, observed: "...we determined that we need to look at some of the technological obstacles that have been discovered with different modes of delivery of the actual assessment tool."

French and Italian

The disciplines of French and Italian agree that increasing listening comprehension will top their list of priorities.

Nathalie Odom, Lead Faculty for French makes the case for:

1. Implementing use of a correction code for any written assignments allowing students to self-correct their essays;
2. Revamped quizzes and added sections to the listening comprehension questions such as dictation exercises;
3. Written papers to be completed in class this semester rather than at home.

Franco Valeriani, emergency hire and de facto Italian Lead Faculty, reports: “Listening sessions will be increased in number and duration in order to accelerate students’ receptivity in the Italian learning experience/process.

Arabic

The discipline of Arabic reports that, because of the added difficulty of having to master another writing system, an additional course may need to be added to the sequence. This also might need to be considered for the Chinese and Korean sequences.

Judith Anderson, Professor of ESL and Lead Faculty for Arabic states: "1. Students who put in enough effort in ARA 111 to master the alphabet, basic vocabulary, simple grammar, and basic continued on page 5
A Report Assessing Assessment continued from page 4

conversation are well-positioned to succeed in subsequent levels of Arabic, and generally do well in these classes.

2. Because of the difficulty of Arabic, getting to a level of low-intermediate proficiency requires a strong commitment to mastering grammar and vocabulary. As a result, speaking is not always pursued as rigorously as we would like, especially given the time constraints. We will be proposing a class in conversational Arabic that will be restricted to students who have completed the ARA sequence (111-212) or the equivalent. It will focus on the grammar and vocabulary studied in earlier levels of Arabic.”

American Sign Language (ASL) and the Interpreter Preparation Program

Caroline Bass, Lead Faculty, reminds us how critical it is that our part-timers be kept in the loop.

Professor Bass notes that, “Faculty (both adjunct and full-time as well as mentors) must be more on the same page in terms of instruction and therefore we will institute a Deaf Studies Unit series of mini-workshop/meetings during CAPE week (both spring and fall).

Finally, assessment may lead to further, more detailed research.”

English as a Second Language

Stephen Peridore, Lead Faculty, has discovered that, “To address continued lower mean scores and higher degree of variance among scores at the ESL 128 exit level, the ESL faculty piloted McGraw-Hill’s Grammar Form and Function series for ESL 124/126/128 during the SPRING 2011 semester, and are now scheduled to pilot Pearson’s Focus on Grammar series during the spring 2012 term as a leading alternative to Azar’s Understanding and Using English Grammar series with the ultimate goal of increasing student mastery of ESL 128’s course outcomes.”

During an interview, Department Chair and ESL professor Ken Umland was asked the following question: After attending the IUPUI Assessment Institute, what would you like to share with the International Languages faculty?

Professor Umland replied, “Speaking as an instructor, assessment procedures give us a way to reflect on the effectiveness of our instruction. We ask the question, ‘Is what I’m doing in a given lesson or part of a lesson working? Why or why not?’ That’s about it, and grades don’t tell the whole story. Grades give us a fairly low-resolution snapshot of what a student may have achieved, and grading ends up, more often than not, being a normative process. Additionally, we should have a more criterion-based picture of what individual students can actually do when they leave our courses.

Because the word ‘assessment’ itself has taken on such negative connotations in some quarters, one of the presenters said he doesn’t even use it anymore. I think though, that we need to reclaim it as positive and useful. Assessment doesn’t have to be complicated. Assessment is not math. Sometimes it uses math, but it’s not all math. Any time you ask your students if they follow what you’re saying, if they need more explanation or more examples, you are, in fact, doing assessment.”
Amy Litman International Languages Full-Time ESL Faculty

Amy Litman is originally from Omaha, Nebraska. She graduated from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln with a B.A. in Business Administration. During this time, she studied for one year at the University of Seville, Spain, which encouraged her to move away from the Nebraska cornfields after graduation.

Ms. Litman taught English in Kobe, Japan for two and a half years and traveled in Asia for six months before returning to Nebraska for a B.S. in Secondary Education (Social Sciences) from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Following that, she earned an M.A. in linguistics with a concentration in Teaching English as a Second Language from Northeastern Illinois University. Ms. Litman returned to Japan for three more years and taught at the Nevada California International Consortium of Universities and Colleges – Japan (NIC).

Ms. Litman has been at CSN for eight years, both as an adjunct and emergency hire. When she’s not buried in essays, she can usually be found driving her teenage children and their friends around Las Vegas or hiking in the mountains at either Red Rock or Mount Charleston.

Julian Barroso-Merino International Languages Department Full-Time Spanish Faculty

Julián Barroso-Merino has a B.A. in Hispanic Philology with a minor in Linguistics. He has an M.A. in Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language and is working on his Ph.D. dissertation in linguistics and its applications from the University in Spain. He started to teach Spanish in his native country to foreign youngsters. Following that, he traveled to Lisbon, Portugal where he taught different levels of acquisition.

Mr. Barroso-Merino then returned to Spain in order to do research for his Ph.D. thesis. While there, he worked for the regional government in the area of business development. He has now joined CSN as Spanish instructor.
Returning to the Classroom: Reflections
by Kristen Young

Raise your hand if you remember when there was no Help Desk phone number in the classroom because the only equipment was the chalkboard. If you raised your hand, then you may find my thoughts on the process of becoming an instructor again after a 10 year absence compelling. When this fall semester began, I transitioned from a management position at UNLV to teaching again at CSN. Here is what I have discovered so far:

1. The students have not changed.

Contrary to our longing for simpler days, the students remain the same. They are still studying for the same purposes and their education is still vital to southern Nevada. Yes, some of them may plagiarize, but that is not new. Sure, some of them are distracted by their cell phones, but they were also distracted long before cell phones. If anything has changed, I would say that traditional college-age students are more polite and more accepting of the diversity in our world because of the environment they have always known.

2. It is easier to teach to multiple learning styles.

Many years ago, I remember explaining to students that the best way to be successful in college was to have excellent note-taking skills. Now, aural learners can focus on listening while in class and then view the PowerPoint presentation notes later in CSN Online Campus. Today professors can include photos, charts, and streaming video for visual learners with significantly less preparation. Multimodal instruction has become so trouble-free that you may be applying Fleming’s VARK model of learning styles without even being aware of it!

3. No line at the copy machine means more access.

Instructors can now create PDF documents for students to view in class instead of making 35 photocopies. Digital handouts are not only good for the environment, CSN’s budget, and instructors’ nerves when the copier jams five minutes before class begins; they also provide better access to class materials for students with disabilities. Our electronic teaching materials can be formatted to be accessible with less effort and expense.

4. Diversity is transparent.

As I walk around the campus, I see students from all ethnicities, religions, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds together studying, talking, and laughing. While there is always room for improvement, from my point of view, CSN’s student body appears to be more representative of our community than ever before. More importantly, these students are practically immune to the biases that existed in the past.

My personal journey back to the classroom has reinforced my faith in the future. We are heading in the right direction and I am very glad to be amongst sincerely dedicated educators.

This article will briefly discuss nouns, adjectives, and definiteness in Arabic.

First, all nouns in Arabic are either masculine or feminine; there is no neutral category or neutral 3rd person pronoun. Human nouns follow the gender of the person. The grammatical gender of inanimate objects follows no pattern. However, in most cases the ending of a noun indicates its gender.

Next, adjectives, which follow the noun they modify, agree with nouns in gender, number, and definiteness. Thus, if a noun is definite, the adjective must also be definite, as in “my car the new.” Finally, there is a construction that is roughly equivalent to the English “the car of my friend” or “my friend’s car.” In Arabic, this would be “car (of) my friend” (of being understood); the first noun is considered definite by virtue of the construction, and any adjectives follow the entire phrase: “car (of) my friend the new.”

In general, definiteness is similar to English; that is, first mention is indefinite and subsequent mentions are definite. One exception to this is abstract nouns, which are considered definite and always take

In Arabic, “there is no word for “a”.

Coming soon: adjective clauses, numbers and counting, dialects and diglossia.
Welcome to My China continued from front page

predominate. Several years ago, it was Japanese and Korean. Currently, it seems to be Chinese from all the major Chinese-speaking areas of the world. However, I have been surprised to see so many students from the Republic of China, commonly known as “Mainland China.” The students I have been seeing in my classes have an advanced level of English language proficiency and demonstrate a sophisticated world view. It was light years from my experience in 1978, when a group of theoretical nuclear physicists visited Stony Brook University for a conference and were delighted to discover ball-point pens, which they took back to China in great numbers. This was one year after the end of the 10-year Cultural Revolution, and China had begun to open its doors to Westerners and to participate in exchange programs.

I made the trip because I wanted to know more about the China that my students had come from. I was also interested in the language so that I could better help them with their grammar, speaking and writing. Therefore, before my trip to the East, I took a ten-week course in Mandarin. Those intensive lessons made me realize that the language is more than cultural; it shows a certain philosophy of life. For example, “ta” is equally used in speaking for the English pronoun “he,” “she,” and “it”, but is distinguished in writing by the different characters, the female character resembling a pregnant woman.

Although the Chinese language course I took helped me learn some useful expressions, I quickly realized that China is a nation of many dialects. The TV programs all had subtitles because the spoken Chinese varies so much from region to region. The importance of learning the correct tones was also brought to our tour group’s attention when we were told that our pronunciation of “thank you” (xie xie) sounded as if we were saying “pee pee.”

What became immediately obvious when I visited the three cities is that many Chinese people are doing well. The traffic in the major cities I visited made Los Angeles freeways at rush hour look like the interstate through the corn fields of Kansas and Nebraska. The cities try to manage the problem differently. Shanghai charges a one-time fee of $8,000 (a phenomenal sum) for car registration. Continued on page 11
International Languages Department Bids Farewell to Retirees

Dr. Patricia Butler

Dr. Patricia J. Butler has retired from the College of Southern Nevada in May of 2011 after 38 years of service. She began in August of 1973 and worked until June of 2011. Her first position, at what was then Clark County Community College, was teaching Spanish while serving as an Academic Counselor and Instructor of Cooperative Education. For fourteen years she was the Director of Student Financial Aid, while serving as the President of the Nevada Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and on the Executive Board of the Western Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. Dr. Butler was the Director of Student Development for 10 years. In 1994 she was named Outstanding Administrator of the Community College of Southern Nevada. In 1995, Dr. Butler returned to teaching Spanish, including teaching classes on-line. She particularly enjoyed developing new methods of teaching and helping new students who had difficulty learning a foreign language. During her tenure, she served on many committees for the college. Better known as Pat, her final words are: "I love CSN, I love the students and I love all my colleagues. I have had a wonderful and fulfilled life at CSN."

Professor Sandra Workman

Professor Sandra Workman joined the department in 1989. She was the first full-time instructor for the Deaf Studies program and developed the first Deaf Studies degree (AAS) in the state of Nevada. Sandra also consulted with representatives from California State University, Northridge (CSUN) regarding the acceptance of American Sign Language as a foreign language. CSUN accepted the Community College of Southern Nevada (as it was known at that time) as the first two years for their Deaf Studies program.

In addition, Sandra consulted with Truckee Meadows Community College and Western Nevada Community College regarding what curriculum to use when teaching in the direct method. In 2010, Sandra successfully pioneered the first and only distance learning classes, AM 145 and AM 146, in the state of Nevada. Professor Workman hopes to assist in having the degree program online.

Deborah Dean

Ms. Deborah Dean joined CSN in 1983 working in the word processing lab before transferring to classified staff in 1989. Ms. Dean worked in Continuing Education, Human Resources and Health Programs Advising before joining the Department of International languages in 1999. In 2001, she was awarded the Classified Employee of the Year. Since retiring in June of 2011, Deborah has spent time with her children and grandchildren and traveling.

Dr. Patricia Butler

Professor Sandra Workman

Deborah Dean
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In Xi’an, a subway system is about to open. The government in Beijing has a lottery system for vehicle owners wanting to gain a license plate, and drivers with license plates ending in certain numbers are prohibited from driving on certain days. There are stories of drivers who buy a car, but being unable to register it, just sit in it once a week while they enjoy a cup of coffee and read the newspaper. Also, Chinese drivers have the right-of-way over pedestrians, who seemed to have developed a special skill for crossing busy streets.

More of the city dwellers are now able to “buy” apartments in the city (according to our tour guide, individuals can not own land in China, as it is all owned by the government). After years of waiting and finally obtaining an apartment, the family is responsible for putting in the electricity, plumbing, windows, floors, ceilings, wall coverings, etc. Our tour guide, who is engaged to marry a Chinese-American from Los Angeles, had been spending the best part of a year traveling back and forth between his apartment and the Chinese equivalent of Home Depot, getting his home ready for his marriage this coming December.

While we visited many of the historical buildings and sites, we were reminded that so many had been rebuilt after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), or as Nien Cheng, author of Life and Death in Shanghai terms it, the “Cultural Annihilation.” That is when schools were closed, books (except for the works of Mao) were burned, and professionals were sent into the back regions of China to do to the work of peasants. During those ten years, there was a concerted effort by those in power and by the Red Guards to rid the country of the Four Olds: old ways of thinking, old culture, old customs and old habits. One of the special evenings of my tour was spent with our tour guide’s mother, who explained in detail what had happened to her family, landowners, during the Revolution. The Chinese people we talked to were surprisingly candid about the government, both past and present, except for when we visited Tianamen Square. There, we were cautioned to hold our questions until we got back on the tour bus as there were rumors of plain-clothed intelligence officers who patrolled the crowds.

In all three cities, we attended small (six tourists), home-hosted lunches with specially selected Chinese families. At one home, the husband cooked (while wearing an American flag apron), and the wife and her eighty-year-old mother entertained us. In another, the host had made and framed a picture, in Chinese characters and in English, continued on page 12
with the words, “Chinese-American Friendship. Welcome to My China.” The picture now hangs in my office at CSN.

I wouldn’t say that the end of the Cultural Revolution saw a rapid thawing of the Chinese attitudes toward the West, but I feel that many Chinese have always been interested in America, whose Chinese name, “Meiguo,” means “Beautiful Country”. Peter Hessler, (River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze), in describing his two-year Peace Corps experience teaching English literature at a Chinese teacher’s college in Fuling, Sichaun Province, maintains that although certain attitudes remain, as every society experiences a certain degree of indoctrination, the Chinese students who come to the U.S. to study are arriving with open minds and are living according to the Chinese adage, “We should not give up eating for fear of choking.”
College of Southern Nevada
Department of International Languages
Spring 2012

Arabic Classes at CSN

ARA 111: First Year Arabic I. Reading & writing the Arabic alphabet, basic vocabulary, & greetings & simple conversation. MW, 4:00-5:50; T/Th, 2:00-3:50; T/Th, 7:30-9:20 p.m.; 4 credits.

ARA 112: First Year Arabic II. Beginning grammar; vocabulary expansion, & conversation. MW, 7:30-9:20 p.m.; TTh, 12:00-1:50; 4 credits.

ARA 211: Second Year Arabic I: High beginning grammar and vocabulary; conversation. MW, 2:00-3:50, 3 credits

ARA 212: Second Year Arabic II: Early intermediate grammar and vocabulary; conversation. MW, 6:00-7:20, 3 credits.

All classes meet on the West Charleston Campus.
Questions: Contact Prof. Judy Anderson, 651-7448 or judith.anderson@csn.edu.