

VOLUME 18  
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## FEATURED THEME: GRANT PREVIEW

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## CLEAR Awarded Funding for 2014-18

CLEAR's directors and staff are pleased to announce that CLEAR has been granted Title VI Language Resource Center funding from the US Department of Education for a sixth funding cycle, which will run through September 2018.

### New co-director

Many exciting changes are in store for this cycle, including the addition of a new co-director. Joining co-director Dr. Susan Gass, who has been with CLEAR since its inception in 1996, is Dr. Charlene Polio, a longtime CLEAR project leader and workshop facilitator. Charlene is a professor and associate chair in Michigan State University's Department of Linguistics and Germanic, Slavic, Asian, and African Languages. She has published in the areas of second language writing, with an emphasis on research methods and language development, and classroom discourse, with an emphasis on how teachers focus on language in advanced foreign language classes. We welcome her as the incoming co-director and anticipate many valuable contributions as she adds her expertise and oversight to our activities.

Sue Gass begins her nineteenth year as CLEAR's co-director with this funding cycle. Sue is a University Distinguished Professor in and is currently chair of MSU's Department of Linguistics and Germanic, Slavic, Asian, and African Languages. She also directs the English Language Center, the Second Language Studies Ph.D. program, and serves as co-director of the Center for Language Teaching Advancement. Sue has published widely in the field of second language acquisition and her recent research interests include attention and how it relates to acquisition. CLEAR looks forward to four more years of Sue's leadership and guidance on our diverse initiatives.

### Project previews

We look forward to four more productive years reaching out to the language education community through new projects and continuation of our most successful past endeavors. Following are previews of a just a few of our upcoming projects.

### Materials development

Users of CLEAR's Rich Internet Applications will be glad to hear that the RIA program will continue to be improved and expanded. Among the goals of the RIA expansion are programming the RIAs in HTML5, creating a curated Showcase of successful RIA implementations, and developing a Sharesite to serve as a library from which users

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Readers,

Greetings from CLEAR, where we are celebrating the beginning of a new grant cycle and our nineteenth year of service to the language education community. CLEAR and Michigan State University have been awarded another four-year Title VI Language Resource Center grant from the US Department of Education, and we're so pleased that we'll be able to continue our work to bring you tools and opportunities to help you in your language classrooms. We also congratulate the other LRCs that have received funding for the 2014-18 cycle, including four new ones, and look forward to continued collaboration within the LRC community. Find links to the sixteen centers here: <http://clear.msu.edu/clear/other-lrcs/>.

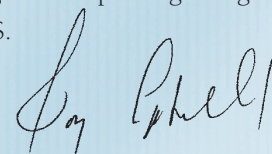
In this issue of *CLEAR News*, we offer an overview of our proposed projects for the upcoming grant cycle, and also introduce our new co-director, Dr. Charlene Polio, who joins Dr. Susan Gass in leading CLEAR's activities.

We enjoyed meeting many of you at our summer workshops, where we had our highest number of participants in several years. We strive to bring you high-quality and low-cost opportunities for training and development, and were

happy to see so many teachers this year. Our 2015 summer workshops will be posted soon, and will offer new topics as well as some popular encore offerings for the same low prices as in the past.

We continue to visit regional and national conferences to give sessions and run exhibits about CLEAR's free and low-cost products for world language teachers. We hope to meet some of you at ACTFL in San Antonio this November. Come visit us at Booth #9072 in the LRC Pavilion to say hello and learn more about CLEAR and our products (as well as other LRCs) in person. You can also always visit our website for the latest information about CLEAR and our projects: <http://clear.msu.edu>.

On behalf of CLEAR's directors and staff, I wish you all a fruitful and productive school year, and look forward to meeting you at conferences, workshops, and online as we work toward the common goal of improving foreign language teaching in the US.



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### SUGGESTIONS WANTED!

We strive to publish *CLEAR News* articles that represent current topics in foreign language teaching, and we want to hear from you! If you have an idea for an article or would like to see a particular subject addressed, please let us know at [clear@msu.edu](mailto:clear@msu.edu). We will consider your idea for future issues of the newsletter.

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The US Department of Education awards grants through Title VI funding to a small number of institutions for the purpose of establishing, strengthening, and operating language resource and training centers to improve the teaching and learning of foreign languages. There are currently sixteen Language Resource Centers nationwide: the Assessment and Evaluation Language Resource Center (AELRC), a consortium of Georgetown University and the Center for Applied Linguistics; the Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research (CALPER) at The Pennsylvania State University; the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota; the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon; the Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR) at Indiana University; the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy (CERCLL) at the University of Arizona; the Center for Integrated

Language Communities (CILC) at City University of New York; the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) at Michigan State University; the Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning (COERLL) at the University of Texas at Austin; the Center for Urban Language Teaching and Research (CULTR) at Georgia State University; the National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) at Indiana University; the National East Asian Languages Resource Center (NEALRC) at The Ohio State University; the National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa; the National Heritage Language Resource Center (NHLRC), a consortium of UCLA and the UC Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching; the National Resource Center for Asian Languages (NRCAL) at California State University, Fullerton; and the Slavic and Eurasian Language Research Center (SEELRC) at Duke University.

can take basic activities already created for their language and level and place that activity in their own RIA account for modification. Other materials development projects include a multimedia text for Chinese that focuses on cross-cultural awareness and socio-pragmatic competence.

### Professional development and outreach

We look forward to welcoming language educators to campus each summer and will of course continue our summer workshop program. In addition, we are pleased to formally reinstate our onsite workshop program, in which faculty members travel to K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities across the US to give workshops tailored to the needs of each host institution. A third professional development project will focus on the assessment literacy of K-16 foreign language teachers and will use the results of research and observations to inform the professional development of pre-service language educators through workshops and curricular changes. Finally, CLEAR looks forward to hosting the annual conference of the Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO) at MSU in 2016, welcoming language educators and administrators to campus to share ideas and research on computer-assisted language learning.

### Research

Several planned projects will keep CLEAR at the forefront of research in second language acquisition. The first will examine the perceptions about and the reality of differences in the difficulty of learning various languages. Claims have been made about language “difficulty,” but these may do more harm than good in that they can either lower teacher and student expectations or set unreasonably high expectations. This empirical study will attempt to provide insight into this area. Another project in this category will create a powerful resource for teachers and materials developers in the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). This database (dubbed LCTLBase) will make available to the public a database of oral production data from LCTL students. Tags will make the database searchable by various criteria (e.g., age, proficiency, first language), a valuable feature for researchers who might not otherwise have access to the linguistic output of these learners.

### Collaborative projects

CLEAR has long enjoyed fruitful collaborations with other Title VI entities, drawing on the diverse strengths of this community in order to develop the best possible materials and professional development opportunities. In this way, CLEAR acts as a conduit to bring you the best the field has to offer. For example, we will continue to co-sponsor the respected online journal *Language Learning and Technology*, produced in partnership with the National Foreign Language Resource Center at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. In addition, CLEAR will partner with MSU's Asian and African Studies Centers to provide quality professional development opportunities for targeted language groups. Michigan teachers will be pleased to learn that the popular World Languages Day event will be reinstated, with CLEAR spearheading the effort and working with several MSU Title VI centers, as well as the language departments and other campus entities. Finally, CLEAR will continue its role as a facilitator in promoting the LRCs collectively through the LRC web portal, conference presentations, and joint publications.

### All this and more

Of course, the array of materials and tools created by CLEAR over the last eighteen years remains available via our website. Without a large advertising budget, we rely on you to help spread the word about CLEAR, and we draw on your feedback, creativity, and enthusiasm to bring you materials best suited to your needs. We know that the needs of language educators and students in the United States are great and it is in your excited receptivity to new ideas and materials that CLEAR finds its strongest motivation to provide the highest quality products. Thank you for your support over the last eighteen years, and we look forward to continuing this relationship into our nineteenth year and beyond.

### NEW LOOK!

CLEAR launched a redesigned website to kick off our new grant. Check it out and let us know what you think!

<http://clear.msu.edu>



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*CLEAR News is a publication of the Center for Language Education and Research and is intended to inform foreign language educators of the Center's ongoing research projects and professional development workshops, to report on current foreign language research and publications and their applicability to the classroom, and to provide a forum for educators to discuss foreign language teaching and learning topics.*