

The Fourth Annual MTSU Summer Language Institute took place in the Paul W. Martin Honors Building May 8-12 and June 19-23. Dr. Shelley Thomas from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures originally began the institute in 2003 with seed money from a *Special Projects Grant*. This year Dr. Thomas coordinated two classes of Spanish, one class of Mandarin, and a new class of English for local Hispanics from St. Roses Church. Each class was held four hours per day over a five day period.

Professional consultants from California, Colorado, and Shanghai who are trained in the methodologies called TPR (Total Physical Response) and TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling) taught the courses. The methods enable people to achieve in approximately 25 hours a level of proficiency in the new language that normally takes anywhere from 45-90 hours. Participants ranged in ages from 11- 72 and included students, educators and professionals.

Sophia Wentz, retired faculty member and former Dean of Faculty at St Andrews-Sewanee School, attended the Mandarin session in June. She was initially concerned about tackling Mandarin at age 72. After her five-day experience at the institute, she enrolled in a Mandarin class at the university and stated, “As I look forward to my university class this fall and look at the textbook, I am further convinced that TPR/TPRS are superior to textbook based learning.... instead of feeling intimidated, you feel empowered.” When asked by a Chinese teacher from St. Andrews-Sewanee if her experience made her think Chinese was a difficult language to learn, she responded, “It made me think learning Chinese was fun.... what a great experience!”

Dr. Thomas, who was invited to India to train teachers in TPR/TPRS during the month of July, has been asked to return next May to create a similar language institute in Coimbatore, India.