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## Message from the President



Dear VATESOL Colleagues,

It has been a challenging start to the year with all of the wild winter weather we have been experiencing. Many institutions statewide have had a number of days cancelled due to the cold, ice, and snow (oh my!), leaving us all - faculty, staff, and students alike - scrambling to readjust so we can meet the goals and objectives we had planned for this semester. Nonetheless, warmer days right around the corner, and I'm sure we are all looking forward to that (including me, a snowbird from upstate NY).

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank a few of our board members, who have been working hard on some important VATESOL projects and initiatives for 2014.

First, I'd like to thank 1st Vice President Paul Phillips, who is currently laying the groundwork for our 2014 Fall Conference, to be held at Longwood University. Please stay tuned for more information, which will be coming soon!

I'd also like to thank our Webmaster, Ben Taylor, who has done an amazing job of

redesigning the VATESOL website, which can now be found at our \*new\* domain: [www.vatesol.com](http://www.vatesol.com). Please take a moment to check out the beautiful new design, to include our brand new VATESOL logo. Feedback on the functionality and content of our website are always welcome from the membership.

Finally, I'd like to thank Kay Gude, who is serving this year as Membership Chair and Central Regional Contact. She has been working tirelessly on not only getting our membership records in order, but also increasing our membership numbers and reaching out to underrepresented VATESOL constituents in K-12 and Adult Ed. In addition, she has been instrumental in organizing the VATESOL 2014 Middle Virginia Mini-Conference, to be held on March 22nd at Thomas Nelson Community College in Hampton, Virginia.

I hope to see you all soon at the VATESOL 2014 Mini-conference, the 2014 TESOL International Convention, and/or the VATESOL 2014 Fall Conference. It's sure to be a promising year!

Sincere regards,  
Laura Ray, VATESOL President

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Send information  
and concerns to  
your SIG Chairs!  
Use emails below.

## Special Interest Group (SIG) News

Teacher Ed/Program Admin SIG Chair, Jo Tyler  
[jtyler@umw.edu](mailto:jtyler@umw.edu)



**Teacher Education/Program  
Administration SIG Chair**

### **Hidden Treasure on the Web: Focus on Parent Involvement**

By Jo Tyler, Chair

I recently came across a valuable but little known website for K-12 ESOL program supervisors and teacher educators—the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA). Their home page is [http://www.idra.org/About\\_IDRA/](http://www.idra.org/About_IDRA/) and their website is extremely well designed for easy navigation.

IDRA is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1973 and based in Texas. Here is how they express their mission and vision:

At IDRA, we develop innovative research- and experience-based solutions and policies to assure that (1) all students have access to and succeed in high quality schools, (2) families and communities have a voice in transforming the educational institutions that serve their children, and (3) educators have access to integrated professional development that helps to solve problems, create solutions, and use best practices to educate all students to high standards. (IDRA, n.d., “About IDRA”, para. 5).

Although many of IDRA’s research and consulting projects have been conducted in Texas, their website provides numerous resources of practical value for school divisions across the U.S. Among the items I found of interest are the many reports and strategies for improving parent and family involvement, an area that IDRA has focused on since their inception. They have developed a family involvement model based on the theory that “When families are treated with dignity and respect, they become the strongest long-term advocates for a quality public education for all children” (IDRA, n.d., “Family Leadership”, para. 3).

IDRA’s family partnership model is based on peer organizing and groups meet in a neighborhood or community center. The parents do not to play “helper” roles in classrooms or bake cookies and tamales for fundraisers, but instead actively make decisions for school improvement by partnering with school leaders to examine data on how their own children, and children across the region, are doing (IDRA, 2012, p. 15). An article about the principles and research behind this model is available at [http://www.idra.org/IDRA\\_Newsletter/September\\_2007\\_Accountable\\_Leadership/IDRAs\\_Family\\_Leadership\\_Principles/](http://www.idra.org/IDRA_Newsletter/September_2007_Accountable_Leadership/IDRAs_Family_Leadership_Principles/)

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Jo Tyler

*Jo Tyler is chair of the Teacher Education/Program Administration SIG of VATESOL and professor of linguistics and education at the University of Mary Washington.*

## Secondary Education SIG Chair, Angelique Clarke [Angelique\\_Clarke@ccpsnet.net](mailto:Angelique_Clarke@ccpsnet.net)



Secondary Ed Chair

### Using Art to Engage ESL Learners

By Angelique Clarke, Chair

The one regret that I have about my college education is that I did not take an art history class. As a history teacher, I have used numerous pieces of art to convey the feeling, achievements, and characteristics of a time period or event. When working with at-risk students, I have used art as a means to get students to discuss difficult life events and emotions. In professional development sessions, I have used art to spark discussion and create a feeling of camaraderie. Art is essential. Art is universal. In essence, art can be and should be integrated into all subject areas as both an entry point into a topic and for developing creative and critical thinking skills. Art provides a unique opportunity in that it immediately involves the viewer. You cannot look at a piece of art and feel or think nothing. It forces you to participate actively by engaging your senses.

Flash forward to Friday, March 30, 2012 at the TESOL Conference in Philadelphia, PA. I was trying to decide whether to attend a session on art and a session on engaging ESOL students. Setting aside my passion for art, I decided to go to the session on engagement. As the session was progressing, I quickly discovered that the session was not about engagement of ESOL students; but

about work books for self-contained ESOL students. I politely gathered my belongings and rushed back to

the session on art. Lo and behold, I saw the error of my ways. When I say this room was packed, I mean every seat was filled (about 200), there were people lining both sides of the wall (standing for the entire 1 ½ presentation), 2 to 3 people sitting in the aisles between each row, and about 25 of us crowded in the doorway at the back! This alone confirmed for me the need to utilize art to teach content.

What you have here is a brief outline of some of the ways I have used art as well as a couple of things I picked up from the session. The short bibliography at the end denotes the books that the speaker suggested as an entry point for those of us who are not art teachers (she isn't an art teacher either).

### Postcard Biography – Famous People & Events (my idea)

- 70 words or less description on the back.
- Image of person/event or symbol representing person/event where the stamp should be
- Appropriate image on the front (photograph of person/event, illustration of something made/achieved by the person or resulting from event, famous quotation attributed to the person or about the event)
- Modification – I also use this idea by providing students with an image from the unit and students write notes home to explain

what they have learned about the place or person that they have studied.

### **Partner Postcard Biography (this idea was from one of the participants)**

- Take an index card, 4x6 in works best, and fold it in half
- On one half, draw half of a face.
- With a partner, exchange index cards (looking only at the blank side of the card).
- Draw the other half of the face as your partner explains what s/he drew.
- Open the index card.
- Discuss
  - Do the faces match?
  - What did you get right?
  - What wasn't the same?
  - What descriptions could have been used to make the two sides match more?

### **Short Compilation of Art Resource Books** (Descriptions are taken from Amazon.com)

#### **Red - Yellow - Blue: Colors in Art by Silke Vry**

This fun-filled book teaches young readers all about color by leading them on a fascinating journey through the history of western art. What better way to learn about art's greatest masterpieces than through the lens of colour? From the richest red through the most royal purple to the cheeriest yellow, this book explores how artists through the ages have used colour in concept, symbolism, composition and theme. As they read the book, children are invited to wander through a virtual art gallery where each room features a different colour. Beginning with black and white, going through the primary colours, the mixed colours, and finishing with brown and gold, the book presents the evolution of pigment in art works from cave drawings to contemporary paintings. In addition, entertaining puzzles, quizzes and activities will spark children's creativity. Beautifully designed for reading alone or with an adult, Red Yellow Blue gives children access

to the complex world of colour in a language and style they will respond to and enjoy.

#### **The Art Book by the Editors of Phaidon Press**

This user-friendly book is an alphabetical reference guide to 500 of the world's greatest painters and sculptors, from antiquity to the present. Measuring roughly 5 by 6-1/2 inches and now in paperback, *The Art Book* is not only affordable, but also light, compact, and extremely portable, completely reforming the concept of an art reference book. It is perfect for the coffee table or for the backpack or pocketbook as well. Each artist is represented by a full-color plate and by explanatory and illuminating information on both the image and the artist. Cross references are provided to other artists in the book, and glossaries of technical terms and artistic movements are also included, making the book a valuable reference tool in the art library. Presented are some of the most famous artists of all time and their greatest masterworks--never before have they been so accessible as they are in this format.

#### **Introduction to Art Internet Linked by Rosie Dickins, Mari Griffith, and Jane Chisholm**

This educational children's book provides an informative and in-depth look at the great art themes, art techniques, art movements and artists from ancient and medieval art up to the present day. Organized by art theme, some of the world's most famous and beautiful works of art are examined in detail: how to look at a painting; the painting of faces; classical art; modern art; the influence of religion on art; the influence of society on art; and war and propaganda. With full-colour photographs, superb illustrations and clear, concise text, this Usborne children's book is a fascinating and very readable introduction to the history of art.

#### **Painters: Masters of Western Art (Fandex Family Field Guides) by Carolyn Vaughan**

FANDEX brings the world of Western Art to your fingertips with a field guide to painters, their legacies and the often extreme lives they led. A chronology from Giotto, the first modern painter, to Frank Stella, whose black paintings proclaimed "what you see is

what you see." Here is Michelangelo, who resented having to paint the Sistine Chapel because it took him away from sculpture. Botticelli and Vermeer, whose work languished in obscurity until the nineteenth century. And Mary Cassatt, the only American to be included with the Impressionists. Illustrating each entry is a portrait of a self-portrait

of the artist plus significant paintings and details.

Angelique Clarke

*Angelique Clarke is Social Studies and ESL teacher at Meadowbrook High School in Chesterfield. She is also a NCBT.*

**Elementary Education SIG Chair, Stephanie Sebolt**  
[ssebolt@gmail.com](mailto:ssebolt@gmail.com)



**Elementary Ed SIG Chair**

**Accommodating  
Emerging ELLs**

By Stephanie Sebolt, Chair

Well, WIDA Access testing is in full swing, although this snow storm has temporarily halted it! An important question arose from a colleague: "While you are testing, Stephanie, what activities can I do with our emerging ELL student during the time that he is no longer pulled out to work with you?" I started thinking about it and decided to create and fill a tub with activities that our ELL student was able to do independently or with minimal assistance. I entered our Reading Resource Room and began searching through books at his level of reading. I chose both fiction and nonfiction and took them up to my classroom. Next, I created activities to go with each book. The activities included only tasks that we had previously done in class so that he could do them independently to reinforce the concept. For example, for a nonfiction book he is engaged with using text features to write

predictions about what he would learn in the book. Next, he reads the book and locates facts, which he writes on a graphic organizer. For a fiction book, he takes a picture walk and writes predictions about the story. He also identifies characters and setting. He completes a graphic organizer in which he illustrates the main parts of the story and writes a phrase or sentence about what happened. I meet up with him each day to collect the work that he has completed for that day. This has worked well ~ he feels empowered by doing the work independently and the teacher's concerns about how to address his needs and facilitate continued learning have been put to rest. If any of you have ideas of how to accommodate emerging ELLs in the mainstream classroom while you are in the throes of WIDA testing, please email your ideas to [ssebolt@rcs.k12.va.us](mailto:ssebolt@rcs.k12.va.us)

Stephanie Sebolt

*Stephanie Sebolt is ESL teacher of K-5 ELLs in Roanoke County. She is also an adjunct for the University of Mary Washington and Virginia Tech.*

**Adult Ed SIG Chair, Daniela C. Wagner-Loera**  
[daniela.loera@gmail.com](mailto:daniela.loera@gmail.com)



**Adult Ed SIG Chair**

**Zeigarnik Effect in the ESL  
Classroom**

By Daniela C. Wagner-Loera, Chair

Recently, psychology, education, and neuroscience have worked closely together providing not only fascinating insight into the human brain while learning, but helping teachers to tailor activities more to the

students' needs. One of the most fascinating and powerful theories is the Zeigarnik effect.

Discovered by Bluma Zeigarnik in 1927, the effect shows that people tend to remember interrupted or unfinished tasks better than completed ones (Gredler, 2009). This means, that an interrupted task leaves us thinking.

So, how can this effect help the classroom? We have two types of information processing: one is serial monotonic learning – or step-by-step instruction (Pollatsek, Reichle, & Rayner, 2006). This means, one unit or step in a series is completed before moving on to the next. Typically, teachers complete one grammar unit or one content unit before moving on to the next. The other type of learning is the Zeigarnik. Taking breaks, introducing several different topics or skills at once, varying exercises, and interrupting students' flow can be useful to learning. While this may sound chaotic – at first – a study showed that serial monotonic learning resulted in wide gaps in students' knowledge, while Zeigarnik left them with more connections and accuracy (Bayes, Heath, Williams, & Ganz, 2013).

How is this possible? When going step by step, the brain is often not challenged. Ideas and information seem to make sense; however, students fail to make their own meaningful connections. When interrupted, however, the brain continues to work unconsciously and begins to form longer lasting connections (Bayes et al., 2013). Naturally, learners want to complete a task – so the unfinished information remains active in the brain.

Let's take a look into our classrooms. Have you had the student who actually remembered that you delayed a task to next week? Maybe you were not planning on finishing the task, but the student actually remembered that you *promised* it? For sure, I wonder sometimes how they can remember the one task I did not want to complete, but they could not remember the grammar rule we so nicely completed within an hour!? Zeigarnik is hiding!

So, by structuring your classroom to allow sufficient time (a day or two) between revisiting what has been introduced can tremendously help students to make connections, ask the right questions, and avoid cognitive overload. Also, taking breaks, interrupting students when they get comfortable by throwing a

curveball or changing the task will positively affect their internal desire to complete a task (Bayes et al., 2013). Yet, be careful, when interruptions are too frequent or too many skills are introduced at once, students can get frustrated. So, carefully incorporate Zeigarnik to spice up the serial monotonic learning process.

Specifically for ESL, we sometimes need to remember that regular college classes do not meet every day to discuss the same subject. So, varying activities carefully will not only make the ESL classroom more entertaining, but also more effective.

### References

- Bayes, D., Heath, A., Williams, C., & Ganz, J. (2013). Pardon the interruption. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 45(3), 64-70. Retrieved from <http://library.gcu.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ofs&AN=84566966&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
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### Teaching Tip

#### Teaching Prepositions to Beginners

From stuffed animals to pictures on the board, preposition learning can be fun. However, not all adult learners enjoy the many props. So, take your class to a window or outside – if the weather allows.

Give them each an object in a certain distance and have them share sentences. For example, *the red car is next to the blue car. The red car is parked across the street. The red car is parked in front of a bakery.* Make sure

each student gets a turn. Once they get comfortable give them a preposition instead and have them identify an object to use with it. For example, *in: The woman is in the car.* Follow-up with collecting the sentences on the board or assign it as homework.  
Have fun!

*Submit your teaching tips or questions to [daniela.loera@gmail.com](mailto:daniela.loera@gmail.com) to be included in the next newsletter.*

Daniela C. Wagner-Loera

### Higher Ed SIG Chair, Linda Sanford [Linda1@vt.edu](mailto:Linda1@vt.edu)



**Higher Education SIG**  
[Linda1@vt.edu](mailto:Linda1@vt.edu)

*Linda Sanford is the Assistant Director for Academics in Virginia Tech Language and Culture Institute.*

**Linda's column will resume in the next issue.**

## Treasurer's Report, William Ziegler



Treasurer's report:

Treasurer's report as of Feb. 11:  
Balance in BB&T account: \$49,214.60  
Balance in PayPal account: \$819.39

## Articles by Our Members



### **The Perfect Square and other perfect books for the Book-after-a-Book strategy**

By Ana Lado

Picture books are ideal resources for teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) because they provide accessible language and opportunities to transfer between oral and written skills. Some of

them have 'tellability,' a term coined by Labov in 1972. Books with tellability prompt highly contextualized conversations (Baroni, 2014). Tellable books in the context of teaching ELLs are those with text, illustrations, and formats which mirror the subsequent instructional interactions between teacher and students (Lado, 2012). For example, on the one hand, a picture book with text rich in dialogue will prompt the Reader's Theater teaching strategy and not word sorting, but a picture dictionary lends itself to word grouping and sorting activities in ways that the dialogue rich book does not.

This teaching tip is about using books with tellability that lend themselves to having students produce a book on their own, the book-after-a-book strategy. I like this strategy because it integrates oral and written skills, provides a language sample that leads to independent usage, and covers the four strands of balanced communicative language teaching: comprehension, expression, language-focused study, and fluency. Let me give an example of the strategy with one book, then follow with a list of picture books with tellability which also work with this strategy.

*The Perfect Square* (Hall, 2011) is essentially a poetic narrative about resilience. Something is done to the square each day of the week, for example ripping or shattering, and the square responds by making itself into something new, for example a fountain. Using this book as a prompt, the lesson begins with ensuring comprehension of the language sample, i.e. the text. Hall has made this easy by transparently illustrating the meaning of each pattern verse of the text. You can reinforce oral comprehension by asking ELLs to point to objects on the page or mimic the actions of verbs. I also reinforce writing by having them copy words and phrases from the text onto separate cards and match their cards with those of a partner.

The lesson would continue with gradual release to more generative oral or written expressions. Students can read it aloud in ways that reflect the tone of the text. Then they can copy their favorite page, illustrate it, and read it to a partner or read it to the class who must work together to arrange their pages sequentially.

This can lead to more language-focused study of the text. Write the sentence for each day of the week, one under the other so students can see the pattern. Have them engage in substitution and rewriting. For example, once they examine the parallel sentences they can transpose the action verbs or the nouns from one day of the week with those of another. Then they can brainstorm new verbs and objects and generate new sentences with these. I like to follow this by having the class rewrite the book with another shape, such as a perfect rectangle or heart. Once written, each student can write their own book.

Finally, the book lends itself to fluency activities requiring repetition. It is short enough to be read several times in one sitting. Afterwards they can choose to orally read or recite either the original picture book or the one they generated.

In sum, books with tellability prompt a balanced set of comprehension, expression, language-focused study, and fluency activities starting with controlled language activities and ending with independent ones. The following are other examples of picture books with features compatible to the book-after-a-book strategy for students age 10 and up.

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- Baroni, R. (2014). Tellability. In: Hühn, Peter et al. (Eds.), *The living handbook of narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University. Retrieved 01/28/2014 from <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/tellability>
- Hall, M. (2011). *The perfect square*. Greenwillow Books.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the inner city, Studies in the Black English vernacular* (Vol. 3). University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lado, A. (2012). *Teaching beginner ELLs with picture books, Tellability*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. [companion web page with annotated book list]

### Poetic Books for Book-after-a-book for ages 10 and up listed in order of difficulty:

- My people*. Hughes, L. (2009). Atheneum.
- Goose*. Bang, M. (1996). Blue Sky Press.
- Fledgling*. Blake, J. (2000). Philomel.
- Up down and around*. Ayres, K. & Westcott, N. D. (2008). Candlewick.
- The world belongs to you*. Bozzi, R. (2013). Templar.
- My many colored days*. Dr. Seuss (1996). Random House.

*A grand old tree.* DePalma, M.N. (2005). Arthur A. Levine/Scholastic.

*Windblow.* Manceau, E. (2012). Owlkids.

*The perfect square.* Hall, M. (2011). Greenwillow.

*A cool drink of water.* Kerley, B. (2006). National Geographic

*The dandelion seed.* Anthony, J. & Arbo, C. (1997). Dawn.

*Paul Hunt's night diary.* Twinn, M. (1992). Child's Play.

*My heart is like a zoo.* Hall, M.(2009) Greenwillow.

*Light.* Zalben, J. B. (2007). Dutton.

*I have a dream.* King, M.L. and Nelson, N. (2012). Schwartz & Wade. [companion CD]

Ana Lado

*Ana Lado is a professor in the Master of Education in TESOL program at Marymount University and curriculum developer at Lado International College.*



## **A Time Ended Too Soon.....Again**

By Pinar Gurdal

Reminiscing, thinking, reflecting, bragging.....bragging about my teaching to our curriculum director, to our associate director, to colleagues whom I did not let pass by me in the hallway without hearing what I have to say, who were all reminded for days about a student's few words relayed to me

by our International Student Advisor. I wanted to write all about that..... I bragged to myself about myself too because remembering those few words put a sprint in my step on my way to the classroom and fervor in my warning against homework not done. Now, I am writing only about ultimate loss and my prayer that my student would hear me.

It was going to be hard for Fahd; that was clear at the onset of the term. As time passed, what became clear was that physically seeing and consequently learning the structure in the subject matter was hard for him. The more we wrote, the more his expression got tangled. What he never was at a loss for were thoughts, opinions, and passion; passion about his family, his friends, what takes place in his country, in the classroom, and life as he perceived it.....I was noticing the existence and emergence of an unexpected abundance and diversity of vocabulary which stemmed from the need to express all the emotion. Our curriculum director suggested having him reflect his speech format in his writing as his speaking skills were extraordinarily expressive and had more structure. He and I worked on his writings this way and it was pleasant to him that we liked what he had to say and made an effort so that we would see his thoughts on paper too. Before my eyes, his sentences were becoming purposefully organized.

It was not hard for him to assume the status of a student despite struggling grades. He hardly ever skipped a class or a homework assignment and never lost sight of college admission. I knew he partied hard. He had to listen to me disapprove his extracurricular activities, but that did not deter him from showing up during tutoring hours or bringing me a piece of writing when it was not assigned. The militancy in my jokes were never wasted on him when I asked him to tell his mother I was very angry because he preferred talking to her instead of reading in class or when I asked him to pay attention in class instead of paying attention to a female student in the class.

Soon after the term began this year, I heard about his acceptance to college which did not come as a surprise because he had let me know about his IELTS score. One day, our International Student

Advisor approached me and said, “Fahd says, ‘thanks to Prof. Gurdal’s pushing, I made it, she was so hard, but I made it’”.

Doesn’t every teacher think that *she* made it after hearing this? The following days, our International Student Advisor had to repeat what she told me in the presence of others so I would brag properly.

We heard that he had had a traffic accident at the beginning of the month in his country and two days ago, he passed away.

I am being reminded of that pang of sadness when we have to accept that a person we have come to know is not with us anymore though I never thought that reminder would come from one of my students. He loved driving, sharing the Halloween spirit with a most outrageous costume and shocking us, writing about injustice to the poor, waving the flame of his lighter to applaud a teacher’s beautiful singing. He accompanied all this with not giving up

on learning. He did not have a single easy day in school, but let his teachers and advisors reach him. In the class and outside school, he was happy; he just loved his life.

I know that his family members and friends are beyond themselves with sorrow and despair. I pray they find peace.

And, I pray that my student hears me thank him for thanking me, for making me smile through mischief, for making me feel the direction I chose in my life may truly be the one for me after all.

Pinar Gurdal

*Pinar Gurdal has a M.A. Ed from Virginia Tech with a concentration in second language teaching. She is a Virginia Tech Teaching and Research Instructor in Language and Culture Institute of Virginia Tech. She can be reached at [pgurdal@vt.edu](mailto:pgurdal@vt.edu)*

