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Next newsletter deadline is
Nov. 15, 2013

Message from the President



Over the past year, our team of highly dedicated VATESOL board members has been faced with many challenges, some of which have been resolved quickly and without much ado, while others have led us to make very difficult decisions.

One of those difficult decisions was that of postponing the 2013 VATESOL Fall Conference. As I mentioned in the statement sent to membership in late September, we made this decision with the best interest of the organization and its members in mind. We are already regrouping, and we look forward to sharing our plan for

rescheduling the conference at the **2013 VATESOL General Meeting.**

VATESOL General Meeting

Saturday, November 16th, 2013

10am-12pm

*J. Sergeant Reynolds
Community College
(Room TBA)*

At this meeting, we will present updates on a number of important items of business for VATESOL, and we will induct and welcome our 2013-2014 VATESOL board.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me regarding your questions and concerns.

Sincerely,
Laura Ray

*2013 VATESOL Fall
Conference Co-Chair
2012-2013 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
Message from Jo Tyler, jtyler@umw.edu



Teacher Education/Program Administration SIG

Introduction to RLCCs

By Jo Tyler, Chair

The focus of this report is on Virginia's Regional Literacy Coordinating Committees (RLCCs).

Unless you are the coordinator of a local adult education program in Virginia, you are probably unaware of the work performed by the RLCCs, but they have potential to provide significant support for ESOL professionals. They are local groups that consist of representatives of service agencies such as local school boards, community-based organizations, employers, state, local and regional correctional facilities, community colleges, and other state institutions of higher education. These regional interagency groups meet on a regular basis to discuss how to improve adult education and literacy services in the region through collaboration among businesses, local programs, and other agencies.

The RLCCs coordinate local adult education services including everything from GED test preparation, to workforce readiness, to English

language-based life skills. In most regions adult ESL instruction is a major service addressed during RLCC meetings. Yet these services are seriously underutilized in the communities. According to the Virginia Office of Adult Education and Literacy's Strategic Plan for 2012-2017, "Only about three percent of adults who could benefit from OAEL-funded programs in adult basic literacy, high school equivalency, and English language instruction participate in these programs annually" (p. 9; available at

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/about/tech_and_career_ed/adulted_strategic_plan_book.pdf).

ESOL teachers and administrators in public schools and colleges can benefit from learning about the work of their local RLCC. For more information about RLCCs and other resources for leadership in adult education, contact your local adult education office or visit

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/leadership/index.shtml>

Secondary Education SIG, Angelique Clarke
Angelique_Clarke@ccpsnet.net



Secondary Ed Chair

Using Technology to Promote Student Progress

By Angelique Clarke

I hope you are getting ready for an awesome experience at this fall's VATESOL conference. I am especially excited about this year's theme as it is so relevant to the 21st century direction many of our school systems are taking (and many teachers, myself included, struggle with learning and adapting to). In addition, I look forward to meeting and networking with other educators who strive to be the best and most relevant teachers that they can possibly be. In line with the theme of uniting technology and methodology in mind, I have chosen to highlight one of my go-to websites for student projects. I think this site is especially relevant for ESOL students as all of the products have a focus on images/photographs. You know the old saying, "a picture is worth a thousand words," and these projects are no exception. It is a perfect way for students to show understanding of content without having to write large amounts of text. It is also a way for teachers to motivate their students, decorate their classrooms, or provide visual examples of content.

Now that I have thoroughly whetted your appetite, I will end the anticipation. One of my current favorite sites is Big Huge Labs (<http://bighugelabs.com/>). Our Chief Academic Officer, Donna Dalton (Chesterfield County) wrote about it in one of her blogs last school year. I was immediately intrigued by her description, and I went to the website after finishing the article. I loved it so much that I used in my class lesson the very next day. Before I give you a few examples of how to use this site in your classroom, let me tell you the five things I love most about this site.

- It is easy and user friendly. Even if you or your students are not tech savvy, you can still complete professional looking projects.
- It is picture based. Each project centers around a picture, one you take or download from the internet.
- It doesn't require you to download any software.
- it is totally paperless, if you want to have students create and submit their work digitally.
- IT'S SUPER EASY. I know I said this already; but, you literally upload a picture, click the options you want, add text (if needed), and click to create!

Before I share the things that I have done with my students, let me say that there is so much MORE I can do with my students than the few examples that I am sharing with you. So, please, go and explore on your own. (I would love for you to share back how you used this awesome resource). I have used the *Motivator feature* to make posters for my classroom as well as have my students make posters of key historic people, their achievement, and a description of the event. I have used the *Magazine Cover feature* to have students introduce themselves or have them highlight the important characteristics of an era or event. I also used this feature to have students present self-selected books and participate in book talks. When studying the Civil Rights Era, I had students design a *CD Cover* and describe the importance of protest songs in the movement and include a top ten list of songs that aided in the success of the movement. You can have students design a cover and create a playlist that describes their life or a main character in a book. I have had students use the *Billboard feature* to summarize the day's lesson. My favorite of the favorites is the *Trading Card feature*. You can literally have the students create trading cards about anything: presidents, famous

mathematicians, inventors, etc. Each trading card has a picture with a title, nifty background, a description, and you can add icons. I had students work in groups to create sets as a project for Black History Month. They had to have ten cards in a set, and they created their own theme and wrote their own descriptions.

I hope this technology tip helps you as much as it has helped me. Look for me at the next VATESOL conference to share your ideas, including ways that you integrate technology and

methodology, to improve our instructional practice!

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

Elementary Education SIG, Carol Zurat, Chair
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Elementary Ed SIG



Welcome to School: Tips for Newcomers

By Carol Zurat, Chair

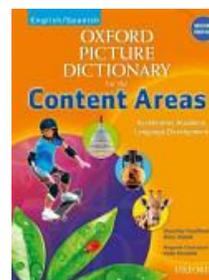
A student new to the country with few or no English skills can be overwhelming for any teacher, whether it is at the beginning of the year or later. Inexperienced teachers may panic, but after teaching a number of newcomers, you will realize that a SMILE goes a long way, for both of you!

Please remember that language acquisition takes time, and some the new language during a Silent Period. This time period can last from a few months. Judie Haynes, an expert in the field of ESL, and author of the website www.everythingESL.net suggests asking bilingual parents to help newcomers available to volunteer. Also, pairing students up with a buddy who can speak and interpret can also help.

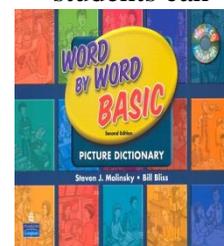
Next, Haynes suggests making a packet of beginning activities, which introduction to colors, numbers, shapes, and survival vocabulary. Next, make flashcards of things they see in the classroom, and go over it with a buddy. For older elementary students, keeping a word journal and a folder with their vocabulary materials will help them stay organized.

Using picture dictionaries is an excellent tool for all students, not only the newcomer. Oxford Picture Dictionary now has dictionaries for use in the Content Areas, with CD's that complement the chapter topics with games and text-highlighted passages that go with the illustration of many topics, including science and social studies. Dorothy Kauffman is the author and developer of this wonderful teaching tool. She has been a presenter at many of our conferences. Word by Word by Steven J. Molinsky and Bill Bliss, has a picture dictionary with a CD to assist with pronunciation for students. This is published by Pearson.

These are just a few quick tips that can help your newcomer learn basic vocabulary, without having to spend hours downloading or cutting out photos. Have a good new school year, and enjoy your newcomers!!



students absorb weeks to a few out, if they are their language include students can



Adult Ed SIG, Daniela C. Wagner-Loera, Chair
daniela.loera@gmail.com



Adult Ed SIG Tips for Teachers

By Daniela C. Wagner-Loera, Chair

Do you want to try something new this year to spice up your grammar lessons? Do you teach beginner to low-intermediate learners of English? Here is the ultimate resource for you.

While teaching a grammar elective this summer, I came across the following website:

<http://www.teach-this.com/>

Teach-this.com has ready to download games, activities, and lessons focused around grammar. It includes answer sheets and instructions that are ready to use within minutes. Using one or two of the activities for each grammar point not only

changes up the textbook routine, but gets students moving and helps them remember the newly learned structures more easily. The games are designed for young adult learners, but some can be easily used with high school or middle school students. A tip within a tip: I previewed the materials carefully and removed any topics that would cause cultural discomfort in order to help keep the environment positive and friendly. My students absolutely loved the materials and so did I. Thank you teach-this.com! I hope all of you will love the website and materials as much as I do. Happy grammar teaching!

Submit your teaching tips or questions to daniela.loera@gmail.com to be included in the next newsletter.



Treasurer's Report, William Ziegler

Previous balance: \$40,753.73

Debits and service charges:

\$9.17 fee for buying vatesol.com domain

\$2.00 service charge

New balance as of Aug. 7: \$40,742.56

Articles by our members

FEATURE ARTICLE

“Reflections on the Dream: Signs of the Times”

By Jo Tyler

On August 28, 2013, the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, I watched a video of the entire speech given by Martin Luther King, Jr. at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. While his stirring refrain "I have a dream!" remains the most famous and powerful

legacy of that day, the words that moved me most this time were:

“We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating ‘for whites only’.”

Although the signs stating “for whites only” are no longer posted at drinking fountains and lunch counters, there are many signs remaining in our country today that strip people of their self-hood and rob them of their dignity. The signs do not have to be written or publically posted in order to be evident.

“English Only” is a sign that strips English language learners of selfhood and dignity. You may not find this sign posted in many classrooms, but when someone tells the parent of an ELL to speak English to their child at home, both the parent and the child are being robbed of dignity. Moreover, this practice robs children of the crucial interaction with parents that supports their learning. “When parents and children speak the language that they know best, they are working at their actual level of cognitive maturity ... through asking questions, solving problems together, building or fixing something, cooking together, and talking about life experiences” (Collier, 1995, p. 318).

“Standards of Learning” is a ubiquitous sign that allows education has to become a dull routine of rote memorization and multiple-choice tests, robbing children of creativity, critical thinking, and the joy of discovery—essential ingredients of selfhood and dignity.

“The Melting Pot” is a popular expression that many consider the sign of an ideal America. However, it actually signifies a population in which diversity is devalued and individual identities are obscured, robbing immigrants and minorities of their cultural, linguistic, and ethnic selfhood and dignity.

“Comprehensible input” is a theory of second language acquisition that emphasizes the linguistic input that students receive over the language that students produce. In classrooms it is a sign that strips students of their dignity and selfhood by denying the obvious fact that language does not exist unless there is output. It is a view of language instruction that “involves receiving language and not producing it, listening to what one is told and not talking back” (Bomer, 2006, p. 12).

“No new taxes” is a sign that places individual greed over the common good. It robs citizens of their selfhood and dignity by promoting the view that their government is valueless, leading to apathy, inaction, and ignorance.



AFP/AFP/Getty Images; retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2013/02/50-years-ago-the-world-in-1963/100460/>

“The Dream Act,” though originally a measure to restore justice and self-determination to thousands of children, has now become a sign representing the radical partisanship in congress that has taken precedence over those children’s selfhood and dignity.

It was first introduced in the U.S. Senate over 12 years ago, which calls to mind another quote from King’s great speech. An undocumented child who has spent most of his life in the U.S. is, like an African American of 1963, “still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land” due to a dozen years of partisan intransigence.

“Tolerance” is a sign that often belies its intent and ends up robbing individuals of their selfhood

Although the signs stating “for white only” are no longer posted at drinking fountains and lunch counters, there are many signs remaining in our country today that strip people of their selfhood and rob them of their dignity. The signs do not have to be written or publically posted in order to be evident.

and dignity. It suggests that there is something unwelcome to be tolerated in the different ways people identify and express themselves—like tolerating a cranky neighbor or a toothache. Instead of tolerance we should be talking about affirmation. “Affirmation of others’ cultural foundations as valid for them would enrich all our lives and would empower *all* students in their understanding of the world” (Clayton, 2003, p. 9; emphasis original).

“**No Child Left Behind**” has become a sign that robs teachers of their selfhood and dignity. It has led, for example, to the widespread use of scripted “teacher-proof” lessons that deny the complexities of teaching and learning. Policies such as test-based teacher assessment and adequate yearly progress

have engendered fear and frustration among educators, leading to convergent thinking rather than creativity and reflection.

“**Colorblindness**” is a sign that tells people of color that their selfhood and dignity do not matter. When Martin Luther King, Jr. dreamed of a nation where individuals would “not be judged by the color of their skin but by their character,” he was not dreaming in shades of beige. He recognized that the dignity of African Americans comes from their heritage of persecution and suffering, a heritage defined by skin color. To deny that skin color matters in America is to deny the courage of those like King himself who confronted oppression and changed society forever.

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- King, M. L., Jr. (1963, August 28). *I have a dream*. [Speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom]. National Archives. Retrieved from <http://www.archives.gov/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf>

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.

Why We Need to Keep the Students’ Brains Happy

By Daniela Loera-Wagner

“Creating a positive learning environment”, is a phrase all teachers are well-familiar with. Stimulating students with positive reinforcement and meaningful tasks seems to be the natural thing to do in the classroom. But why? Why should we try to stay positive when students are permanently tardy, come unprepared, and display the wrong attitude?

Neuroscientists have been inspiring education for quite some time, revealing valuable information about the brain’s physical and biochemical structure; yet, what is most important to us teachers is the complexity of thought, feelings, perceptions, and reasoning behind our students’ eyes (Goswami, 2008; Wasserman, 2007). Many studies have focused on understanding these emotional patterns, with one main finding: Emotional stressful environments counteract learning. So, regardless of the stressors and regardless of age, feelings of anger, frustration, tension, and fear decrease the ability of the brain to learn. But, how can we prevent students from experiencing stress?

This is easier said than done. While we can base our classroom instruction on concepts of safety, positive reinforcement, and encouragement, we can neither influence a student's personal environment, nor can we take away the extreme pressure of passing gateway courses, such as the TOEFL or IELTS to get accepted into the university of choice. Yet, gaining students' trust as well as our continuing efforts to reinforce a positive learning environment will help students stay focused and alert during their learning (Goswami, 2008).

Why do we punish students for being late? Why do we discuss missed deadlines and behavioral issues? Why not set and emphasize clear rules in the beginning, then try to focus on praising students verbally and in writing for what they have done correctly (Wasserman, 2007). Praise the notorious late-comer when he/she is on time one day, announce that 90% of the assignments were submitted on time and thank the students. Avoid talking about tardiness in front of the few who actually made it on time – spend their time in a meaningful way instead, hoping they will communicate the value of being in your class on time.

Last but not least, remember to continue to create a relaxed atmosphere. Now, here is where teacher strength and focus is required. A relaxed atmosphere is not *a movie and popcorn*, but rather a reliable and consistent approach. The more organized the classroom routine, the more relaxed and reliable the learning is for the students (Wasserman, 2007). Without knowing what to expect, even our adult learners feel tension and frustration. So, consider your week carefully and establish a routine over the first two weeks of the semester. While this does not mean that you can never get off track and modify your lesson to the students' daily needs, do not let the routine slide completely. Allow students to communicate and

even vent when appropriate or beneficial, but then guide them back on track and praise them for their efforts.

An interesting study by Nelson, Young, Young, and Cox (2010) revealed that by creating a positive learning environment in a middle school, which was reinforced by writing praise notes for successfully using pro-social skills, negative behaviors were significantly decreased. Interestingly, this did not only result directly from the praise notes, but also from the ability of teachers to shift their awareness and energy more towards recognizing positive behaviors (Nelson et al., 2010). The teacher evaluations submitted by students reflected a positive change not only towards learning, but also towards instructors.

So, this year, let's start out strong and stay positive to encourage our students and keep their brains open to learning and exploring. – And in turn, save ourselves from frustration, lack of energy, and near burnout. Let's keep our brains happy!

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Daniela C. Wagner-Loera, Adult ED SIG Leader

ODU Faculty Summer Institute 2013

By Christine Hoppe

Every summer around May 21-22 the Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT) at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, organizes the Faculty Summer Institute. Professors and instructors from any university may attend and the workshops

for the two days are free. I encourage ESOL and foreign language educators to mark your calendars and attend if you are able. The workshops are all excellent.

This year the keynote speaker was Dr. Ken Bain, Provost and Professor of History from the University of the District of Columbia. He spoke on “Learning by Design: How to Foster Deep Learning” with a focus on deep learners who love to analyze, create, solve problems, synthesize and think critically, unlike the surface or strategic learners. The workshops that followed from 9am to 4pm included such themes as ‘Reflecting About your Own Teaching Practice,’ “Transitioning from Face-to-Face to Online Teaching” and “Using Teaching and Learning Technologies.”

I was particularly intrigued by the many workshops about online teaching and technology. Helen Miller brought in iPads for everyone and shared some good Apps for the classroom. Some of the Apps were Dragon Dictation(which records your voice in writing), Flipboard (for fun topics like travel in magazines), Idea Sketch (which makes bubbles or mind maps to create digital stories or do brainstorming), Educreations (creating interactive lessons which can be accessed any time) and Creative Book Builder (to create interactive books).

Another workshop, “Turn on Your Mobile Devices!” was also fascinating. Professor Declan De Paor who teaches astronomy to over 300 students in the auditorium carries a cellphone while lecturing and the students are invited to text him at any time with their questions. And he responds to their questions in real time. He also polls the students, using PollEverywhere.com polling software asking them to answer questions in class on their smartphones. He also encourages students to stay in touch with him via a Facebook Group and Twitter.

For more information about the CLT and the Faculty Summer Institute, go to the ODU web site or call 757-683-3172. Check their calendar in April or May for the dates of the workshops in 2014!

Christine Hoppe teaches ESOL at Granby High Evening School for Adults in Norfolk. She has also taught French, EFL, and Italian in the U.S. and abroad.

Note: Do you have experience teaching overseas? If so, your VATESOL colleagues would love to hear from you! Write up your experience and submit it to the VATESOL newsletter. VATESOL always welcomes new contributors!

English Language Fellow Program in Turkey

By Martha Young

Living in Ankara, Turkey and working as a regional senior English Language (EL) Fellow turned me into a Gumby, the bendable, go-anywhere figure. I thought my previous responsibilities of English language teaching (ELT), intensive English program administrating, and teacher mentoring in community colleges and university IEPs had made a flexible, open, patient professional of me. Alas, no. This job, these responsibilities in Turkey asked of me to both lay aside everything I knew about a normal workday in the world of ELT and

simultaneously draw upon absolutely everything I knew about working in this world of ELT.

If you are interested in being an EL Fellow and wants to find out more about the EL Fellow Program, the first step is to attend a regional TESOL conference

(<http://www.elfellowprogram.org/elf/tesol/regional.cfm>). The Department of State (DOS) booth can be found at any of these TESOL conferences, staffed by very friendly, informative staff. Approaching the booth may make you feel shy. Don't let it. Forge in and ask any questions you might have

(<http://www.elfellowprogram.org/elf/faq/applicant.cfm>). Searching for “English Language Fellow” yields the link to Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED), Georgetown University.

CIED manages the center for DOS. Applying for the job is less easy for the faint-of-heart or the overworked. Give yourself time to be thorough as you present yourself in the application (<http://www.elfellowprogram.org/apply/preliminary-question.html>).

The program itself is a DOS program, falling under the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). ECA oversees the Fellows program and the EL Fellows work under the guidance of the Regional English Language Officer (RELO). RELOs, with respect to regional embassy relationships, design English language projects to align with goals which also correlate with expressed or observed needs of the host country.

Many projects for Turkey entail work with universities: teaching integrated English skills, sometimes explicit skills, and perhaps teaching future teachers of English. These fellows have the rich reward of working with Turkish students and colleagues and of answering the never ending questions of language use or American culture. Behind the scenes during prep and conversations, these EL Fellows work almost non-stop to establish newer methodologies of teaching and learning, of thinking and of communication for those with whom they are in contact.

EL Fellows, especially at the senior level, are invited into curricula writing projects, into training projects outside of stated university needs, into being a liaison in community or institutional relationships. Occasionally, Senior EL Fellows are asked to become Regional Coordinators as well. I was asked to fill a Regional Coordinator Senior English Language Fellow position, based in Ankara, Turkey.

My local host was actually not a university, but a city hall! Much like New York City has boroughs, Turkey's cities are divided into smaller municipalities, each with its own personality. This particular municipality has community education centers where languages, Ottoman arts, and job skills courses are taught. My local project in Ankara was to bring English language and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) methodology courses to the leaders and English teachers in the community centers of Kecioren, Ankara

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kecioren>). I taught "suits": vice mayors and their directors who needed advanced English conversation skills. Once I secured the trust of leadership (four months), I was connected to the educational community centers. Two days a week I had an office in the City Hall, taught the vice mayors and directors, and went to a center to teach the language teachers, observe them, and meet adult and adolescent students who had never seen an American before! Most rewardingly, I was able to mentor (in-depth) the teachers with their teaching.

Three days a week, I took a bus or flew throughout the middle of Turkey (Central Anatolia) from the Black Sea down to the Mediterranean Sea. I traveled to give support to the English Access Microscholarship Program

(<http://eca.state.gov/story/supporting-next-generation>) for Turkish high school students, to participate with the National Ministry of Education in their efforts to reach K-12 public school teachers with encouragement and professional development in all eighty one Turkish cities, and to train private university and K-12 English faculties. I also traveled to partner with Fulbright's English Teaching Assistant Program by supporting the teaching endeavors of young Americans placed in Turkish universities

(<http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/fulbright-english-teaching-assistant-program>).

For two years, I taught, trained, traveled to and learned from the teachers of Turkey. Reading the description above you could perhaps see yourself doing much the same. To say "yes", however, to this job means saying "no" to a few things. You will be saying "no" to taxes easily done, to having electricity every minute of every day. You may be saying "no" to quick, easy re-entry employment, but you will *certainly* be saying "no" to a routine teaching day! The disadvantages hold a dim candle to the opportunities that being a Fellow provides, as well as to the rewards of saturating yourself in the language and culture of the people you are serving.

Martha Young, MA TESL, has been in the field of education for more than 20 years. Her experience

includes English teaching, teacher mentoring, teacher education and intensive English program administration both abroad and in Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond VA. She was a Senior EL Fellow with the U.S. Embassy of Ankara, Turkey, US Department of State and focused on English language teaching in Kecioren Municipality, Ankara while also collaborating in many professional development opportunities with Turkish

Fulbright and the National Ministry of Education. She currently trains and mentors teachers for the Turkish American Association in Ankara and all TAA centers in the country. When not at TAA, she trains teachers throughout Turkey in English language instruction on primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

