Message from the President

“Then followed that beautiful season... Summer.... Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light; and the landscape Lay as if new created in all the freshness of childhood.”
~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Dear Colleagues,
As the school year or semester comes to an end, teachers are either preparing for a well-deserved summer vacation or summer teaching. Now that the end-of-year/semester madness has subsided, I hope that we can all take a few minutes to reflect on how we have grown this year as teachers and how we have helped students feel more confident about their learning. Last year, President Jen Kuchno had board members recommend books for summer reading. Following her lead, I have asked all VATESOL members to share recommendations for movies that teachers might enjoy watching during what I hope will be a relaxing summer. Some titles are also well-suited for classroom use, and almost all relate to the theme of our upcoming SETESOL convention, “Celebrating Heritage.” Please look for the titles and reviews in this issue.

While it is hard to think about next fall at the start of summer, please mark your calendars for October 13-15 when VATESOL will be hosting the SETESOL regional conference in Richmond. The deadline for paper proposals is Sept. 1, 2011.

SETESOL Conference in Richmond!

VATESOL is delighted to be the host of the 25th Southeast TESOL conference in Richmond, Virginia: October 13-15, 2011. See page 2!
(Message from the President – continued from page 1)

has passed for proposal submission, but we had an excellent response and look forward to sessions on a wide variety of topics of interest to educators of all levels of instruction. Among our featured speakers are Craig Storti, author of Figuring Foreigners Out and Dr. Ann Hudley, author of Understanding English Language Variation in U.S. Schools. Back by popular demand is Richard Lederer, author of the Anguished English series. We will also have PCIs and workshops by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, WIDA, and U.S. Department of Education OELA. For more details about SETESOL, I refer you to conference chair, Lily Mirjahangiri’s, article in this issue.

We will vote to fill several VATESOL board positions when we convene our business meeting at the SETESOL convention in October. I am including the list of 2011-2012 vacancies and names of people who have been nominated. If you would like more information about any of these positions or would like to be nominated for one, please contact Tanya Gray at internatgal@hotmail.com.

Have a wonderful summer!
Laurie Weinberg
VATESOL President

"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass on a summer day listening to the murmur of water or watching the clouds float across the sky, is hardly a waste of time."
~John Lubbock

Board changes slated

Board Vacancies 2011-2012
Elementary Ed SIG (2 year term)
Webmaster

Slated (to be voted on at VATESOL meeting at the SETESOL conference):
Second VP: Paul Phillips, VCU
Treasurer (1 year term): Kimberley Cossey, J. Sargeant Reynolds CC
Newsletter Editors (2 year term): Nancy Ball, Rappahannock Area Adult Education & ETS
    Brendan Downey, Doctoral Candidate at the University of Virginia
    Audrey Short, VCU
Dear Colleagues and TESOLers!

VATESOL is delighted to be the host of the 25th Southeast TESOL conference in Richmond, Virginia: October 13-15, 2011. Registration is now open, and I encourage and invite all of you to start early and benefit from the early registration rates, available **ONLY UNTIL JULY 31st!!!**

My extended thanks to Dr. Jo Tyler, our Proposal Chair, and her team who have completed the proposal reviews for SETESOL 2011. We have received many proposals, and we are running sessions at full capacity. This was indeed promising for VATESOL and Southeast TESOL. SETESOL 2011 conference is a great opportunity for TESOLers to gather, and explore many effective ways of cherishing and celebrating cultural and heritage diversity through language teaching.

The conference site is located in the heart of the beautiful historic downtown Richmond with restaurants and shops minutes away. Also, the famous Richmond Folk Festival, which is a three-day free event with music, dance, and food from across America, is held at the same time of SETESOL 201, and it is only few blocks away from the conference site.

For more information and early registration please visit VATESOL web site at: www.vatesol.cloverpad.org. We look forward to seeing our TESOL colleagues at SETESOL 2011 in Richmond, Virginia!

Lily Mirjahangiri
SETESOL 2011 Conference Chair
Focus on Teacher Education by Jo Tyler

The Seventh International Conference on Language Teacher Education was held at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis) from May 19 to 21, 2011. For anyone involved in the preparation of ESL teachers, this was a superb conference! All language teacher educators in Virginia should plan to attend the next conference, scheduled for 2013 in Washington, DC. The conference this year was entitled “Expanding our Horizons” and focused on the following themes:

- Knowledge Base of Language Teacher Education
- Social, Cultural, and Political Contexts of Language Teacher Education
- Collaborations in Language Teacher Education
- Practices of Language Teacher Education

The hot topics during the breakout sessions this year included academic language, content-based language instruction, learning strategies, university-school partnerships, online instruction, and collaboration.

Among the highlights of this year’s conference were numerous pre-conference workshops including ones on infusing technology into teacher education, exploring learner language, and program evaluation. On the final day of the conference participants were able to enjoy “Lunch with the Authors,” to meet and converse with leading experts in the field such as Dick Allwright, Karen Johnson, Elaine Tarone, Anna Uhl Chamot, Marjorie Hall Haley. The plenary speakers, including Adriana González Moncada, Brian Morgan, and Diane J. Tedick, were also noteworthy.

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.

First VATESOL Writing Contest a Great Success

The first VATESOL writing contest coordinated by the Higher Ed Special Interest Group was a wonderful success. The contest—brainchild of VCU’s Audrey Short—focused on the theme of this year’s SETESOL conference: Celebrating Heritage.

Laura Ray (ODU), Audrey Short (VCU), Martha Watkin (JSRCC), and Paul Phillips (VCU) reviewed thirteen student entries from various colleges around Virginia.

Third place with a $50.00 prize went to MyChi Pham (Martha Watkin) who wrote a delightful essay called A Bowl of Pho. MyChi attends JSRCC. Shenandoah University’s Joaquin
Gonzalez (Sara White) was awarded second place and a $75.00 cash prize for his thoughtful writing—*Building the Future from the Past*. Torki Alssagher (Sara White), also attending Shenandoah University, was awarded first prize and a $100.00 prize for the beautifully written *The Responsible Seed*. We can be proud of the work all 13 students submitted.

Special thanks go to those who contributed to the cash prizes: JSRCC-$50.00, VATESOL-$50.00, ODU-$100.00, and VCU-$100.00. This contest would not have been possible without their support.

We look forward to making this an annual event that offers students a venue for showcasing their writing skills. With your help, we can make next year’s event bigger and better. Let’s talk this up for next spring!

*Paul Phillips has been on the faculty of VCU’s English Language Program since 2008. Paul began his career in ESL/ESOL in 2002 with adult education programs and private tutoring. He holds a master’s degree in Curriculum/Instruction/ESL.*

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**Secondary Education SIG, Angelique Clarke**  
*Angelique_Clarke@ccpsnet.net*

Please email me at angelique_clarke@ccpsnet.net or angeliqueclarke@gmail.com with websites that you use in your classrooms, and I will be glad to review them (or submit your review) for the next newsletter. Happy Teaching!

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

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**Elementary Education SIG, Melinda Leitner, Chair**  
*mjleiter@henrico.k12.va.us*

Please look for the upcoming Elementary ESOL link and webpage on the VATESOL website! This will be a place where Elementary ESOL Teachers can share lessons, ideas and resources with each other.

We are just beginning this new endeavor.

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

**Teaching Tip Adult ED**  
*Daniela C. Wagner-Loera, Adult Ed SIG Chair*

Are you trying to integrate content-based learning in your classroom? Are you wondering how to accomplish this task while using technology? Do you maybe not have enough computers available for your students to use; or do you have only a few students who know how to use the computer? Here is this month’s Adult ED teaching tip making it all work:

Choose a period of 5 – 12 hours of class time. Choose an *umbrella* topic such as: Global Warming, Awareness, Technology, etc. Choose about 2 -3 readings on the subject and/or listening sections. Then divide your class into groups of 3 or 4 students and have them brainstorm subtopics; e.g. *umbrella topic*: Awareness; possible subtopics: extinct animals, pollution, cancer, etc.

Then have your students research the topic in the library or on the computer. Ask them to find *fun facts, did-you-know facts*, and ask them to write ONE short research paper. Then let them design an academic poster on their topic using the facts and paper they wrote. Ask them to add pictures. If you like, you can ask them to design flyers and handouts as well. The last step is the actual presentation. Choose a day and invite other classes in your
program to check out the posters and discuss the presented knowledge. This content-based learning project empowers students to take charge of their own work and allows them to practice all skills.

Submit your Teaching Tip to daniela.loera@gmail.com to read your tip in the next newsletter.

Daniela C. Wagner-Loera is an instructor at the English Language Institute at the University of Maryland.

**Articles by our members**

**Follows Directions Well by Paul Phillips**

As I look back on my early years as a student, I fondly remember getting a report card every six weeks with the Satisfactory/Needs improvement/Unsatisfactory grading system. As children we were graded on “subjects” as getting along with others, sharing, being courteous, and—most importantly (at least in my mind)—following directions. I prided myself on getting a string of S’s for my ability to follow directions well. I was good at doing what I was told. Math, reading, and science were not my long suits, but I was excellent at giving my teachers exactly what they wanted. Little Paul “follows directions well.”

Decades later I work—as we all do—to prepare students for academic success. We teach ELLs to read, write, speak, and listen to English effectively. As educators we help our students develop critical thinking skills, give well-organized oral presentations, and craft thoughtful five paragraph essays replete with topic sentences and well-supported ideas. It is listening, however, that I find in many ways to be the most challenging skill to teach. Though listening to lectures is onerous for many students, it is the task of listening to and following directions that seems most elusive.

During VCU’s Summer I session I taught Oral Communication 400 (OC 400) which includes speaking, listening, and pronunciation. This advanced level course ushers students out of the English Language Program (ELP) and into the world of academia. What concerns me is the limited ability of many students to follow directions. A number of my students are new to the ELP, so we really can’t fault the program for their limited ability. Still, it is the teacher’s responsibility to help students develop the necessary skills to achieve success in their degree programs.

Because of the challenge of following directions, many students have difficulty correctly completing assignments. In my OC 400 I struggled with convincing students that when I give verbal instructions, I mean what I say. Many students either listen to the first part of instructions or stop listing altogether. The students are not much better with written directions. Out of frustration I decided to conduct an informal experiment in hopes of gaining insight. Before class one day I wrote instructions on the board:

- At the top of a piece of paper, write your name and today’s date
- Next, write the following sentence below your name: Fourteen green monkeys ran for garbage collector in the city of Richmond.
- Fold the paper in half
- Tear it horizontally at the fold
- Finally, place your paper on the table in the front of the room

As students arrived for class I left the room for five minutes without making mention of what I had written on the board. Upon return I noticed a small stack of papers on the table. Though I was calm on the outside, inwardly I was performing back flips. I did not say anything about the experiment yet the students made attempts at following the directions. I could not wait until I had opportunity to assess my students’ performance of the task. The next three hours of teaching were interminable.
Test Subjects and Environment

This class included nine students: one female Iraqi student, two male Saudi students, two female students from China, and four students—two male and two female—from South Korea. The environment was a traditional classroom with students seated in rows facing the whiteboard at the front of the room. The teacher, when seated, was located at a table in front of the whiteboard facing the students. The room was located in a remote location of the building and had one window with a large tree blocking view to the outside. There were virtually no distractions.

Results

Of the nine students in class, all of them correctly completed the written part of the instructions. Of those nine students, seven of them placed their papers on the table as directed. The two remaining students held their papers in the air at the end of class and asked me what they were to do with them. Three of the students completed the instructions with 100% accuracy. These students (one male from South Korea and the two students from China) were the only ones who tore their papers in half.

Analysis

The written aspects of the task were easy enough. Where the activity fell apart was in the psychomotor arena. Though all nine students folded their papers in half, only three tore their papers in half. Though they were given step-by-step instructions, the majority of the students became confused—even when helping each other after I left the room (I found them consulting one another when I returned). There was little difficulty with at least the first three steps of the directions.

There were questions I wanted to consider:

- At what point did the students lose cognition of the task?
- Were the students able to give meaning to the task?
- Were students waiting for additional instruction?
- What role did learning styles play in the task?
- What role did culture and educational background play?
- Were there too many steps for the students to process?
- Did students simply not want to complete the task?

What did I learn from this activity? I realized that, even at the advanced level, there are basic skills many of our students lack. I will continue to give similar tasks to help students develop the skills they need to achieve academic success. Did I find concrete answers to my questions? Not really, but I did gain valuable insight. My goal: students will earn an “S” in follows directions well. Next, we’ll work on runs with scissors.

Paul Phillips has been an instructor in VCU’s English Language Program since 2008. Prior experience includes adult ESL/ESOL education, private ESL/ESOL tutoring, and teaching English in public high school.

An Assessment Form for Tutoring ESOL Students
by Christine Hoppe

I enjoy tutoring or “need-based teaching” very much. The first day that I meet with the foreign student is especially important because I feel that it is necessary to learn more about the background and goals of the student. For this purpose, I made up a kind of assessment form which ESOL educators might wish to use in order
to assess the student’s needs during the very first lesson. After the initial warm-up or chat, during which we both introduce ourselves and talk a little about our backgrounds, I ask the student the following ten questions.

1. Where are you from? (The student points to her/his city and country on a world map which I have brought with me to our tutorial session. We talk a little about that country.)

2. How long have you been in the state? And where?

3. What kind of work do you do? What are your hobbies and interests?

4. Do you use English at work or for what purposes? (Social, business, pleasure etc.)

5. For how many years have you studied English? And where? (In high school or college?)

6. Did you learn British English mainly? Or American English?

7. Do you want a particular type of textbook or shall we create one together?

8. What are your needs? (Some “needs” might be: writing e-mail messages, practicing role play and situational dialogues, making PowerPoint presentations, participating in meetings, doing phone work, ordering from catalogues, watching movies or television, listening to the radio, reading newspapers, doing research etc.)

9. In what areas do you want to improve on in order to communicate well in English? (Here I name the following areas of importance: the speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills, grammar, spelling, American culture, and coping with survival skills (seeing the doctor or dentist, filling out forms, dealing with the boss etc.)

10. What is your learning style? How do you learn best? The student may be a visual or verbal learner, an analytic learner, a mathematical learner, or a kinesthetic learner. She/He may also be an interpersonal learner (enjoying teamwork and learning with other people) or an intrapersonal learner (preferring to do independent work on her/his own).

For this last question I usually give the student a two-minute visual questionnaire, where the student circles the pictures showing her/his areas of interests or the eight multiple intelligences (the ideas of Dr. Howard Gardner). This user-friendly questionnaire called “The Real Me” can be found in Dr. Spencer and Laurie Kagan’s book: The Kagan’s Multiple Intelligences Structures Workbook, (www.KaganOnline.com). *Source: This material has been adapted from the following book with permission from Kagan Publishing and Professional Development: Kagan, Spencer & Kagan, Laurie. The Kagan’s Multiple Intelligences Structures Workbook, available through the Kagan Cooperative Learning Multiple Intelligences workshop. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing, 2009. 1 (800) 933-2667 www.KaganOnline.com

Christine Hoppe teaches French and Italian at Old Dominion University in Norfolk and also tutors ESL, French, Italian, and Spanish. She has taught languages to students of all ages for over 25 years in the states and abroad. Her e-mail address is: choppe@odu.edu

Are You a Leader? by Daniela C. Wagner-Loera

Do you like to raise your hand? Do you like to be in charge? Do you like to volunteer? Do you like to stand up for an opinion? Do you like to present, lead, manage, or supervise? Perhaps you answer a lot of these questions with a strong YES, but then you come to think about the situation in which you like to execute these skills. Maybe you manage a family dinner, present a group presentation in your class, or supervise your nieces’ homework. Are those leadership skills?

The answer is: Yes. A leader is not just a person who runs a great business, stars in his/her
field, and supervises hundreds of people. Leading starts in your community, your family, your classes. Stand up for what you believe in. Share your ideas, thoughts, and opinions. All of us have leadership skills. In order to be a strong leader, you need to lead from behind. Guide people in a smart way instead of a dominant and dictating way. Think about a response instead of a reaction. Beware of the immediate speed of our technology and media. A smart response, rather than a quick one, will bring you to success. Be proud of what you have reached and try not to complain about the parts you still have to work on.

A university in New York advertises its business program with the term “The top 10 jobs of 2015 do not exist today”. We are the future. You are the future. You might feel weak and like a follower, but deep inside we are all leaders. Be smart and motivated. Be informed and active, when the time comes you will be able to show off your talent and make this world a better place.

Daniela C. Wagner-Loera is an instructor at the English Language Institute at the University of Maryland.

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**Treasurer’s Report, Bob Faychak**

**Balance as of 4/25/11 = $16,158.53**

Acct History 2/1/11-4/25/11

- Deposits from PayPal = $400.17 (includes $173.64 not posted to acct)
- Deposits from checks = $200.00 (includes $50.00 not posted to acct)
- Debits from PayPal = $600.00 (Wild Apricot server fees)
- Debits from checks = $1,625.00 (includes $225.00 for Writing Contest not posted to acct; $1,200.00 for President travel conference expenses; $200.00 VATESOL membership dues to TESOL)

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**Featured Film**

*Walkout*

*Walkout* is a feature-length movie, produced and directed by Edward James Olmos (who also gave us the movie *Stand and Deliver*), based on the true story of a group of Mexican-American high school students in Los Angeles who, in 1968, conducted a mass protest to improve conditions in their schools.

The movie opens with students listening to their history teacher direct them to locate information about the Civil War in their textbooks. But there the familiarity ends, for the students are asked to locate the “Chicano Regiments” at the Battle of Gettysburg and General Mariano Vallejo’s meeting with President Lincoln. When the students are unable to locate these in their textbook, their teacher mentions the 3,000 Mexican-American soldiers who served in the U.S. Civil War. “Which side were they on?” one student asks. “Both sides,” replies the teacher.

Some of the conditions that the Mexican-American students protested against were: restricted bathroom privileges, doing janitorial work as a form of discipline, being tracked into secretarial and shop classes, being prevented from applying to college, and many other forms of humiliation and barriers to educational
advancement. The use of “foreign” languages was strictly forbidden in the Mexican-American high schools of East Los Angeles until these students successfully protested this and other degrading conditions in their schools.

From the opening scene until the end, Walkout will not let you forget the suffering and struggles of earlier generations of minorities and immigrants. I recommend sharing this movie with your students so that this aspect of their legacy will not be lost.

Jo Tyler, University of Mary Washington

**Other Films of Cultural Interest to Teachers**

1. **Amreeka (2009)** – A Palestinian woman moving to the U.S. with her son finds unexpected problems trying to make a new life in the Midwest. Much to her dismay, her son is drawn to the negative influences of American teenage culture while she has to take a job far below her skills and experience, which she tries to hide from her family.

   Donna Schatz, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

2. **Bella (2006)** – This is a story about a soccer player about to sign a multimillion dollar pro contract when a tragedy derails his plans. He befriends a co-worker who has just hit a life-changing event of her own. The film is set in NYC, with a distinct multicultural focus and has an ending that you won’t predict. My advanced writing students have loved this movie and have gone on to write powerful essays about it.

   Marty Watkin, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

3. **Gran Torino (2008)** – This story brings together a tough-minded, unhappy Korean War vet, Walt Kowalski and his teenage Hmong neighbor, Thao. Under the pressure of his gang member cousin, Thao is pressured into trying to steal Walt’s prized possession 1972 mint condition Gran Torino. This ends up drawing Walt into the world of Thao’s family where he ends up taking steps to help Thao and protect the family from the gangs that infest their neighborhood.

   Laurie Weinberg, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

4. **In America (2003)** – An Irish immigrant family adjusts to life in the United States and forms an unlikely but ultimately special bond with their neighbor from Nigeria.

   Laurie Weinberg, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

5. **The Karate Kid (2010)** - The film tells the inspiring story of a 12-year-old boy called Dre Parker who had to move to China with his single mother because of her career. The movie portrays the challenges of this young man as he adjusts to his new home and school life in China. The storyline is very enlightening and easy to follow for almost all high-intermediate ELLs. The movie sheds light on many cultural (family) values of Chinese people which makes it a great educational tool to be used for promoting multiculturalism in many different capacities in teaching and learning. Also, the film shows the transitional phases that a young American kid goes through to assimilate in the Chinese culture and life style.
Lily Mirjahangiri (Virginia Commonwealth University)

6. **Outsourced (2006)** – A manager in a high tech Seattle country is losing his job and is sent to India to train his replacement. He moves through the various stages of culture shock as he tries to navigate the Indian culture on his terms.

Donna Schatz, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

7. **Rabbit Proof Fence (2002)** – Set in 1931, three aboriginal girls escape after being taken from their homes to work as domestic workers. This leads them on a challenging journey through the Australian Outback.

Donna Schatz, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

8. **The Stoning of Soraya M (2008)** – This is an American film adapted from French-Iranian journalist Freidounce Sahebjam’s 1990 book *La Femme Lapidee*, which is based on a true story. The story takes place in 1986, just as Khomeini is coming into power in Iran. Undercover French journalist Freidounce Sahebjam (Jim Caviezel) is traveling though a small southwestern village when his car breaks down. Surrounded by strife but left with little choice other to wait until his car is repaired, the anxious Freidounce is soon approached by persistent local Zahra (Shohreh Aghdashloo), who convinces him to follow her into the courtyard behind her home. There, she reveals to him that she has just borne witness to a most heinous crime. Just the previous day, Zahra had watched the men of her town stone her innocent niece, Soraya, to death. Zahra tells the reporter her story to help get the word out about injustices against women in her country. The movie communicates very powerful messages through the voices of those who can still suffer the penalty of stoning. The intense storyline successfully engages the audience throughout the movie. The film is a great teaching tool for ESL writing and speaking classes since it leaves its audience emotionally charged and energized to reflect on what they learned from the movie.

Lily Mirjahangiri, Virginia Commonwealth University

9. **Triage (2009)** – This is a story about a photojournalist (played by Colin Farrell) who goes to Kurdistan with a colleague to shoot what he hopes are award-winning photos. Something happens while the two men are there, and only one man returns home. It is part mystery, part story of how PTSD can manifest itself, part war movie. It is sort of a guy film, but I loved it, too. I can see how it would make a great conversation starter for any ELLs coming from war-torn countries.

Marty Watkin, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

10. **The Visitor (2007)** – An emotionally unfilled Economics professor travels to New York to attend a conference and finds a young couple living in his apartment. He ultimately befriends the Syrian young man and his Senegalese girlfriend. The film puts a real face on the lives of illegal immigrants, showing illegal immigrants as the individuals that they are.

Laurie Weinberg, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College