Dear Colleagues,

Summer is here and it is time for some well-earned time off! Relax! Take time to recharge your body and mind. I surveyed the VATESOL Board for their recommendations for inspirational reading that might rekindle you this summer. Please check out the titles in this edition. I also encourage you to share your own inspirational readings via the LISTSERV and through your SIGS.

For even more ways to be inspired please plan to attend the annual VATESOL fall conference at the University of Mary Washington on October 2, 2010 where the theme is “Rekindling Our Joy for Language Teaching.” The keynote speaker is Robert Lederer. Conference session proposals are being accepted through July 1st. Information can be found on the VATESOL web site.

There are a couple of changes to the VATESOL Board that I want to make you aware of. Our Treasurer, Charlotte Young, will be stepping down this summer due to the birth of her second child. Thank you, Charlotte for your service to VATESOL.

We wish you the best with your family. Please keep in touch! Bob Faychak, an ESL teacher from Stafford County, will be taking over as Treasurer. You can read Bob’s bio in this edition. His email is: faychakrm@staffordschools.net. Welcome, Bob!

At the 2010 Fall Conference’s VATESOL business meeting, the membership will vote to fill several VATESOL Board positions. I am including the 2010-2011 vacant positions here and information about the members who have already nominated. If you would like more information or to be nominated for any of these positions, please contact Tanya Gray at internatgal@hotmail.com

(continued on page 2 – President’s message)
(Message from the President – continued from page 1)

VACANCIES - 2010-2011

**Elementary SIG Leader** – accepting nominations

**Secondary SIG Leader** – accepting nominations

**Treasurer** (filled in June due to maternity leave)
Bob Faychak  faychakrm@staffordschools.net
ESOL Teacher, Stafford County Public Schools

**SETESOL Representative**
Laura Ray (Also staying on as Higher Ed SIG Leader) lray@odu.edu
Coordinator in ELI, Old Dominion University

**Tidewater Regional Representative**
Kathleen Calhoon – Newchok  kcahoon@nps.k12.va.us
ESOL Teacher, Norfolk Public Schools

**Central Virginia Regional Representative** –
Sarah Chittum  Sarah_Chittum@ccpsnet.net
ESOL Teacher, Chesterfield County Public Schools

Finally, I have some personal news to share. I have accepted an ESL position at Zayed University in Dubai, UAE, and my family and I will be moving in August. After five wonderful years of serving on the VATESOL Board, I will be resigning as of July 1, 2010. Because I am leaving my position before October, I will be passing the torch to Laurie Weinberg, our President-Elect. It has been a pleasure to serve VATESOL. Thank you for the opportunities to grow and learn in the roles I’ve undertaken. I encourage YOU to get involved. Making a small change in your life can be very inspirational, and you never know where it may lead!

Have a wonderful summer and keep in touch!

Jennifer Kuchno
VATESOL President
jkuchno@gmail.com

VATESOL Board’s Recommended Summer Reading to Rekindle the Spirit

Check out these titles for some inspirational summer reading. Amazon links have been provided for your convenience.

1. *An Island of English – Teaching ESL in Chinatown* by Danling Fu
A wonderful book about one public school's journey in teaching English to Chinese students in New York's Chinatown. (JEN KUCHNO)


Don't be put-off by the title; this is a page-turner of a book. An excellent read for ESL professionals (JEN KUCHNO)

3. *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson


The story of an American man who builds schools for girls in Afghanistan. (LAURA RAY)


About the life of an American-born boy whose family is from India and the cultural differences that exist between him and his parents. (JEN KUCHNO)


http://www.amazon.com/Tipping-Point-Little-Things-Difference/dp/0316346624/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1276291129&sr=1-1

A thought-provoking book. Opens one's mind to ideas that can be applied to all areas – even education. (JEN KUCHNO)

6. *An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students* by Ron Berger

http://www.amazon.com/Ethic-Excellence-Building-Craftsmanship-Students/dp/0325005966/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1276292213&sr=8-1

A good, quick read about a public school teacher from Massachusetts who has not given up on public education. Offers many practical solutions for schools. (JEN KUCHNO)

7. *When My Name Was Keiko* by Linda Sue Park

http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=When+My+Name+Was+Keiko

About the occupation of Korea by Japan. I used with a group of Korean students. It opened their eyes to the reality of their grandparents' childhoods. (LESLIE BOHON)

8. *The Kids from Nowhere* by George Guthridge

http://www.amazon.com/Kids-Nowhere-George-Guthridge/dp/0882406515/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1277232993&sr=8-1

From the world-award-winning writer comes the gripping, true story of a group of Alaskan Eskimo students who, despite nearly impossible odds, achieve one of the most stunning educational feats in the history of American education. In 1982, George Guthridge brought his wife and two young daughters to Gambell, Alaska, a small village on the edge of the remote blizzard-swept St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea, one of the harshest and most remote places in Alaska. Guthridge was there to teach at a Siberian-Yupik school—a school so troubled it was under threat of closure. For its own reasons, the school district enters the students into one of the most difficult academic competitions in the nation. The school has no computers and very few books. The students lack world knowledge and speak English as a second language. Still, George resolves to coach them to a state championship. But the students have an even greater goal of their own. Hilarious, disturbing, densely atmospheric—and packed with surprises at every turn—The Kids from Nowhere is a powerful, poignant story that will make you want to cry and cheer at
9. _The Awakening_ by Kate Chopin

[http://www.amazon.com/Awakening-Kate-Chopin/dp/1452894337/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1277233023&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Awakening-Kate-Chopin/dp/1452894337/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1277233023&sr=1-1)

_It isn't about a teacher but is an inspiring book about a doctor who goes against the odds and makes changes.–_ Michael Berube, author of _Life As We Know It._ (JO TYLER)

10. _The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down_ by Anne Fadiman


"This is a captivating riveting book—a must-read ... for anyone interested in how to negotiate cultural difference in a shrinking world. Fadiman’s ability to empathize with the resolutely independent Hmong as well as with the remarkable doctors, caseworkers, and officials of Merced County makes her narrative both richly textured and deeply illuminating. Sometimes the stakes here are multicultural harmony and understanding; sometimes they’re literally life and death—whether in wartime Laos or in American emergency rooms. But whatever the stakes and wherever the setting, Fadiman’s reporting is meticulous, and prose is a delight. “From start to finish, a truly impressive achievement.” —Michael Berube, author of _Life As We Know It._ (JO TYLER)

11. _Bel Canto_ by Ann Patchett


Judy Richardson gave a talk about this book at one of my first VATESOL conferences. The book is based on the real life hostage-taking by Peruvian terrorists that began on December 17, 1996. High-ranking diplomats, government leaders, military officials and businessmen were taken hostage at a party by Tupac Amaru guerrillas. Only one person at the party, the interpreter of the Japanese guest of honor, spoke enough languages to be able to facilitate communication among the various language groups. This is recommended for teachers of language learners to get a sense of the frustrations and misunderstandings that arise when people of various cultures and languages are thrown together in a large group but are unable to communicate with the people who do not speak their language. (ROSS RETERER)

12. _The Blind Side_ by Michael Lewis


I used this in a high school class in which I had three senior males for whom school has been a real struggle, not unlike the struggle that Michael Oher went through in trying to learn to read as a high school student. The fact that my students like American football also helped sustain their interest. We read the book during football season, and it took pretty much the whole season to get through the book, but the students were also able to follow Michael Oher's progress with the Ravens, helping to sustain their interest. The book was an inspiration to me as well as the students. They loved this book, and these are boys who do not like to read. (ROSS RETERER)

13. _Mountains Beyond Mountains_ by Tracy Kidder

[http://www.amazon.com/Mountains-Beyond-Farmer-Randome-Readers/dp/0812980557/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1277233203&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Mountains-Beyond-Farmer-Randome-Readers/dp/0812980557/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1277233203&sr=1-1)

It isn’t about a teacher but is an inspiring book about a doctor who goes against the odds and makes changes—It inspired me to continue on with my own dreams. (TANYA GRAY)
Annual VATESOL Fall Conference – Saturday, October 2, 2010

University of Mary Washington
College of Graduate and Professional Studies
Fredericksburg, VA

Theme: “Rekindling Our Joy of Language Teaching”

VATESOL is so pleased to host our keynote speaker for the Annual Conference:

Richard Lederer

Richard Lederer is the author of more than 30 books about language, history, and humor, including his best-selling Anguished English series and his current book, Presidential Trivia. He has been profiled in magazines as diverse as The New Yorker, People, and the National Enquirer and frequently appears on radio as a commentator on language.

Dr. Lederer's syndicated column, "Looking at Language," appears in newspapers and magazines throughout the United States. He has been named International Punster of the Year and Toastmasters International's Golden Gavel winner.

2010 VATESOL Conference
Mark your calendar!
Where:
University of Mary Washington
Fredericksburg, VA
When:
Saturday, October 2, 2010

2011 SETESOL Conference
VATESOL will host this regional conference!
Mark your calendar!
Where:
Richmond, VA
When:
Thursday-Saturday, October 13-15, 2011
The Arizona Department of Education has ordered school districts in that state to remove teachers with “accented spoken English” from classes that include English language learners.
We use the terms *native speaker* and *nonnative speaker* “as though they are neutral terms despite the evidence that they can no longer be validated on linguistic grounds” (2010).

Perhaps more surprisingly, they declared that “There is no such thing as ‘unaccented’ speech” (2010). And they went on to explain that, in reality, every speaker of English has an accent. In linguistics, the term *accent* is defined as those aspects of dialect that pertain to pronunciation. For example, as part of my Michigan dialect, I tend to pronounce words like *pat, bad,* and *tan,* more like *pet, bed,* and *ten.* Meanwhile my friend from Tennessee pronounces *ten* like *tin.* Should we be banned (benned? binned?) from teaching ELLs in Arizona?

Another way of saying “There is no such thing as ‘unaccented’ speech” is to say that accent is relative. Someone from Tennessee may think my Michigan accent is corny, or lazy— or unintelligible. To some people from Michigan a Tennessee accent is quaint, or sloppy— or unintelligible. Just like the people measuring time in the quote from Stephen Hawking above, the people measuring accent in Michigan and Tennessee need not agree in order to be “correct” in their observations.

How then can we say that the pronunciation of a speaker of English from Russia, France or Mexico is any different than a speaker of English from Michigan, Tennessee or Arizona? If everybody has an accent, what makes some accents “better” or “worse” than others? Is it because speakers from Russia, France and Mexico are not native speakers?

When you think about it, the categories “native” and “nonnative” are just as relative as the categories “unaccented” and “accented.” Imagine two families, both consisting of one English-speaking parent from the US, one Japanese-speaking parent from Japan, and one baby. In both families, the baby is raised bilingually and by age 10 speaks and reads both languages well. The difference is that one family lives in the US and the other lives in Japan. How should those children’s language be described in terms of “native” vs. “nonnative”? To many people in the US, the child raised in Japan would be a “nonnative” speaker of English, reflecting a nationalistic bias, even though no linguistic difference exists.

With minor adjustments to this scenario, it is easy to see how the terms “native” and “nonnative” are relative. Suppose both parents are bilingual and the child is raised in Japan... or that both parents are Japanese speakers and the child is raised in the US... or that both parents are monolingual English speakers, and adopt a child from Japan who is 6 years old... or that the bilingual child from the US in our first scenario moves to Japan at the age of 10... Now go further and imagine the adult who learns to speak a second language “like a native.” In each of these scenarios, different observers will have different interpretations of what “native” and “nonnative” languages are.

Understanding the relativity of “native” vs. “nonnative” language status is even more important when you realize that monolingualism is NOT the norm in the world. In fact, it is not even the norm for children to acquire one language in early childhood and other languages later. Worldwide, native bilingualism (or multilingualism) is the norm (Ortega, 2009, pp. 3-4). From this perspective, Ortega states that “When we [contrast] L1 acquisition to L2 acquisition, a subtle but dangerous monolingual bias seeps into our imagination” (p. 5). In fact, she goes on to point out that even the terms *first language acquisition* and *second language acquisition* are relative: “these labels should be taken to reflect more of an analytical abstraction made within a disciplinary tradition and less of a black-and-white reality” (p. 5).

As our world becomes more globalized, individuals are exhibiting a greater variety in their knowledge of and experiences with languages. This makes it more and more difficult to define terms like *accented speech, native language,* and *bilingualism* with any objective clarity. These terms are relative. Becoming sensitive to this relativity is a challenge—like understanding Einstein’s theory of relativity! — but as specialists in ESOL, it is also an opportunity to confront the artificial ideal of a “native speaker” and better serve our students.


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**Message from Laura Ray, Higher Ed SIG Chair**

**lray@odu.edu**

**Higher Ed SIG News – Summer 2010**

- **The HESIG E-mail List** is currently being updated. Please e-mail your HESIG Leader, Laura Ray (lray@odu.edu), if you would like to be added.

- **Members of the HESIG** are instructors, teacher trainers, and administrators working in K-12, university, community college and adult education. Our members are currently interested in teacher training (i.e. how graduate programs can improve teacher preparation), current trends in TESOL, linking the humanities with ESL, and ELLs in community college programs. If you have resources or information to share about any of these topics, please contact your HESIG Leader (lray@odu.edu).

- **The State Board of Education recently granted approval to the School of Education at the College of William & Mary to offer a professional preparation program leading to endorsement in English as a Second Language (ESL) PreK-12.**

  - The ESL program at William & Mary is intended to be **complementary to** and, therefore, to **build from** the current approved programs in elementary, secondary, and special education. As such, the ESL program at William & Mary is open only to teacher candidates in the College's general education and special education preparation programs. By completing an additional 9-12 credit hours and participating in clinical experiences with ESL populations, these prospective teachers are able to add the ESL endorsement to their elementary, secondary, or special education credentials.

  - According to Chris Gareis, Associate Dean for Teacher Education, developing the ESL "add-on" endorsement was a wise way to take advantage of the College's strengths in education and in modern languages without the addition of significant new resources--an important consideration in the current economic environment. More important, this new program will allow teacher candidates to be even better prepared to serve the linguistically diverse student populations that are increasingly present in our nation's K-12 schools.

  - For more information about programs in the School of Education at The College of William & Mary, visit [http://education.wm.edu/index.php](http://education.wm.edu/index.php).

*Do you have any other issues you would like to share with the Higher Ed SIG? Please e-mail me at lray@odu.edu*
Chris Urynowicz, Secondary Education SIG Co-Chair
christine.urynowicz@mpark.net
Journey in the Afternoon by Amy Owens

Editor’s Note: Amy Owens, a Middle School English teacher at Elizabeth Davis Middle School, was a scholarship winner for a SIOP implementation project. As her implementation project, Amy organized an after-school group tutoring session for her six ESL students. She had excellent results and shares her experiences in this report:

I started this journey last November with six ESL students. All of these students are Hispanic except for one, who is Punjabi. I didn’t really understand what kind of ride I was in for, but buckled myself in snugly. I was prepared for everything except what I really got!

I was “Super ESL Teacher.” I was their Superhero that would change their lives. I didn’t expect that they’d be the Superheroes that changed mine.

I started my after school sessions every Tuesday with a snack. I think that’s their favorite part about Tuesdays. They always dig in my snack box trying to find something. I learned quickly that snacks are different in many cultures. My Indian student is from the Sikh religion. He always picked the trail mix. I didn’t realize that my choice of snacks didn’t meet his dietary needs. He eats no eggs. That translated to no cookies, cakes, or crackers—which is what I mainly had to offer. This was my first culture snack experience. Along these same lines came prizes for Punctuation Bingo—no eggs. It made me think about what I offered to them. Who knew my first lesson I learned would be about food.

When we started in November, all of the students were making D’s and F’s in classes. As we began to have lessons, I began to see measurable growth in their progress. Two of my students were very reluctant learners. In my classroom I use the interactive board almost daily. All students love this. I assumed so would these two, but no. I would ask them to go to the board and they would politely refuse. They did not want to go in front of the others in the class. I thought it would be something that would allow them to come out of their shells. They were almost none talkers when they were first with me. It did not work out the way I planned. I did not understand about their embarrassment. After about three after school sessions, I started to notice that they would raise their hands in class to answer orally. Wow! This was progress! After about two more after school sessions, they were volunteering to come to the board and write their answers.

I started asking my colleagues what was happening with these ESL students in their classes. All of their teachers had noticed the same thing. These students’ confidence was growing. They were participating in classes and volunteering to answer questions in class. Because of our small group atmosphere, they were uninhibited when coming forward to volunteer. This began to start transferring to the regular classroom. Teachers are still noticing the increasing amount of confidence in these students. This was my second culture lesson! Boost their confidence and they blossom like flowers!

Two other students, David and Michael, both come regularly on Tuesdays. David is my student whereas Michael is not. David was very active at the beginning of the year and I believed he was going to be my biggest behavior challenge out of all of my students. In contrast, Michael was quiet and reserved. What changes these two have made! David is now one of my most dependable and reliable students. Today in class he helped me read a children’s book that contained Spanish phrases to the whole class. He was responsible for the Spanish words and translating them for us. Also this week, I received a new ESL student who speaks almost no English. David has been my go to guy for this. He has been trying to engage the new boy in
conversation and is trying to break into his shell. He uses both Spanish and English to try to help. I saw the new boy smile for the first time when talking with David. In September, I would have put David at the back of the room to keep his distractions down, but now he can easily help keep others on track. Michael’s math teacher could not get him to respond in class. After just a few sessions she told me how much he had changed. He was asking questions and responding to her questions. He has now become a great social butterfly that we sometimes have to reel back in!

Another lesson for me has been physical touch. That is such a taboo thing for teachers to have with their students especially at the middle school level. Rosa has been my teacher for this. I have learned that because of her culture she is a very loving child that needs physical attention to learn. Rosa came to me about 3 weeks after school started and was very needy for attention. I remember that she was so needy for physical touch that she laid her head on my back one day and followed me across the floor with her head there. I had to actually talk to her about this not being appropriate for teachers and students. I didn’t understand that that is part of her culture. Most all of these students have some of these characteristics. Rosa has to hug and touch her teachers and others. I have had to alter my vision with this student. She needs this.

As far as grades go, they have all begun to increase. Where they were making D’s and F’s, they are now consistently C’s and D’s. On our last Benchmark test my students did improve. The Benchmark is a county prepared test that each student takes in every core subject. They are “formatted” to mimic the SOL, but don’t even get me started on their validity. The first nine weeks, none of my students passed. We started our after school program the week after they took this test. This last nine weeks our results were much different. In my students, two out of the four students passed this test with no accommodations! My two that didn’t pass improved their scores from the last test and were only one question from passing. I hope that by continuing our test taking strategies like highlighting and reading questions first I can get them all to pass the SOL.

My favorite part of our after school sessions is just talking and connecting to students. They have such valuable information to share. They are smart, funny, thoughtful, and loving students! They have all taught me so much in these few weeks we’ve been together. I love seeing them on Tuesdays! I have some that don’t want to leave at 4:30. After all day at school, they want to stay – AMAZING!

This really has been a huge journey for me and my knowledge of ESL students. It is my first step on a never-ending trip.

(Students’ names are changed).

Margaret Whitt, Elementary Education SIG Chair
mwhitt@rcs.k12.va.us

William Chambers, Adult Ed SIG Chair
Wlc19@earthlink.net

Treasurer's Update:
Farewell to Charlotte Young, our current VATESOL Treasurer. Charlotte is expecting her second child in July and is unable to continue as Treasurer. We’d like to take this opportunity to wish Charlotte much success in her upcoming position as "Mom of Two" and in her ESL teaching at ODU and TCC. We appreciate your service to VATESOL. Enjoy your maternity leave, keep in touch and send baby pictures!

/MEET.... Robert "Bob" Faychak, VATESOL's New Treasurer/

My ESL teaching career began late in 2003 when I volunteered at my church to conduct English classes for adults. At that time, I was working for a government contractor in Richmond, Virginia and simultaneously pursuing a graduate degree at the University of Mary Washington, College of Graduate and Professional Studies.
A year later I contacted the Rappahannock Area Regional Adult Education office in Spotsylvania, and was offered a position as an ESL teacher for evening classes. Subsequently, I scored writing prompts administered by other ESL teachers while continuing my "day job" and evening courses in pursuit of an M.Ed. with an ESOL endorsement.

I interviewed locally for high school ESL positions, but was offered an elementary position in Stafford County in the summer of 2005. I accepted and have been teaching elementary ESL at Rockhill Elementary since September 2005.

I continued to conduct adult ESL classes, including a special school-based program through 2008. In 2009, I had the opportunity to teach an adjunct section of Cross-cultural Education at the Stafford Campus of the University of Mary Washington. This year I offered a mini-version of the course as professional development for staff at my school.

It has been a whirlwind change of careers over the past decade, but a positive and productive change. I look forward to working with the members of VATESOL and its board. Thank you for your vote of confidence. My previous career experience will be of value in the position of Treasurer.

-- Bob Faychak, faychakrm@staffordschools.net

**Articles by our members**

**My International Experience** by Pinar Gürdal

Among the good times, bad times, and amazements that I have had during my international travels, the international experience that I would like to share is probably not one of the most exciting or life changing one but it allows me to absorb the knowledge in my master’s studies in a much brighter light and reinforces the way I teach my ESL students at my work.

I lived in Holland with my family for some years ago due to my husband’s work. In the process of looking for a public school for my daughter, who was in the eighth grade at the time, I had a meeting with a middle school principal in the town where we were living. It is common practice in that region to place students in low academic levels regardless of their skills and interests due to lack of language skills, and I was concerned about that. The principal, who was very polite and helpful, described the three academic levels, one of which was for “stupid” children. That was the level where my daughter was going to be placed because she lacked language skills.

Foreign language education in Holland starts at a very early age. Everybody is very fluent in English and two other languages, so I knew when the principal talked about “stupid” children, it was not a slip of the tongue, and he was not talking about children with special needs.

In my studies, we read and write about, and reflect on how to make the education better for our children and in my case, for ESL and ELL students. I have opportunities to work with refugee children, and I see how lack of language skills can push a child into so dark a hole. I also see how a refugee child shines when she can help her mother with her bilingual skills. In the classroom, we try to handle the curriculum and the student’s background knowledge in the most beneficial way for the student. If the student is lacking language skills, we try to make the process meaningful for her by having her use her own language through story telling or produce artifacts reflecting her own culture.

Did they do that in that particular school or did they think that utilizing cultural and linguistic resources of the student was a “stupid” thing to do? I did not have a chance to find out; things worked out differently, and my daughter went to an international school where the language of instruction was English.

It is hard to express why one little word caused so much reflection on my part, especially considering the fact that I come from a similar educational background. Maybe it was the fact that the word was used so blatantly or my daughter was
going to be in an environment that could cause a lot of negativity in her life.

Pınar Gürdal is an instructor at the Language and Culture Institute of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. [http://www.eli.vt.edu](http://www.eli.vt.edu)